

Journal of African Elections

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Published by EISA
14 Park Road, Richmond
Johannesburg
South Africa

P O Box 740
Auckland Park
2006
South Africa
Tel: +27 (0) 11 482 5495
Fax: +27 (0) 11 482 6163
e-mail: publications@eisa.org.za

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ISSN: 1609-4700

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Copy editor: Pat Tucker
Printed by: Global Print, Johannesburg

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The Editor, Journal of African Elections
EISA: P O Box 740
Auckland Park 2006, South Africa
Tel: +27(0)11 482 5495 | Fax: +27(0)11 482 6163

Business correspondence, including orders and remittances, subscription queries, advertisements, back numbers and offprints, should be addressed to the publisher:

The Publisher, Journal of African Elections
EISA: P O Box 740
Auckland Park 2006 South Africa
Tel: 27(0)11 482 5495 | Fax: +27(0)11 482 6163

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DIRECT DEMOCRACY IN SOUTHERN AND EAST AFRICA

Referendums and Initiatives

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ABSTRACT

There seems to be a worldwide trend towards direct democracy instruments such as referendums and initiatives. The African Union Charter (2007) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) strategy papers (2003) recommend these instruments. Is direct democracy the panacea for the problem of strong personalisation of African party politics? If electoral democracy is the problem, is direct democracy the solution? The article describes the legal framework and the implementation in countries in Southern and East Africa. Referendums, which are solely implemented at the national level, were often used to support regime change in the 1960s (independence) and in the 1990s (multiparty systems) and to strengthen and finalise conflict resolution. Plebiscites, characterised by strong executive governmental campaigning and party dominance predominate and citizen initiatives are not common. The implementation of citizen initiatives at both national and local level could be an additional way of strengthening accountability.

INTRODUCTION

In the old advanced democracies direct democracy instruments such as referendums are often regarded as sophisticated, but because they give power to the people they are also regarded by politicians with a great deal of scepticism.

Some countries, for instance the United States, use them predominantly at the local level (Kersting 2007). At the national level they are extensively used in Italy (abrogative and constitutional referendums) and in the motherland of direct democracy, Switzerland. But in most countries referendums are restricted to the (supra-) national level (see, eg, Germany).

The direct inclusion of citizens may have a strong influence on the development of policies and institutions. In Europe, the Eastern European states held successful referendums supporting membership of the European Union (EU), a positive attitude which vanished in some countries during the debate over the EU's constitution. After a long process of deliberation involving political elites in the Constitutional Assembly and an agreement by heads of state in the European council, the citizens of most of the countries were asked to approve the new draft of the constitution. In France and the Netherlands the people failed to do so and the process of implementation of the new legislative framework was halted.

Other continents, however, have had more positive experiences. In some Latin American countries, Uruguay, Ecuador, and Venezuela, for instance, direct democracy seems to be enjoying a new honeymoon (Altmann 2003).

With few exceptions, among them Uganda, Malawi, and Kenya, there has been almost no research into African referendums. This paper, which is intended to be a starting point for such comparative research, shows the existing legal framework without providing an in-depth legalistic perspective. What kind of direct democracy instruments have already been implemented? Do referendums work in the neo-patrimonial systems that often predominate in Africa? Do they make sense in de facto one-party democracies? Is there a need for more direct democracy in the African context, as requested in the African Union Charter (2007) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) strategy paper (2003)? All these questions must be analysed.

Direct-democratic procedures can be considered in terms of two criteria. The first is the quality of direct-democratic processes that are brought to the fore, the second is to what extent these processes qualify for a public discourse. Are propaganda, public manipulation, and demagoguery central characteristics of referendums or will referendums lead to a better understanding of society and responsiveness (Arnstein 1969; Hatchard, Ndulo & Slinn 2004, p 57). Most investigations of direct democracy have been based only on empirical non-reviewed hypotheses. Analysis has shown that the historical arguments on the subject do not stand up empirically because they have relied on traditional prejudices against direct democracy.

This paper is merely a starting point for a deeper analysis of direct democracy in Africa. More information about the legal framework and the implementation of referendums is still to be gathered (Marques & Smith 1984; Butler & Ranney 2000; IDEA 2008) and once it has been, typologies of referendums will be developed. The analysis of the effects of referendums will include their function and their influence on the stability and legitimacy of different African political systems (Dahl 1971). The analysis of direct democracy here is restricted to Southern and East Africa. Avoiding West Africa and the 'semi-presidential' francophone

political systems leads to a more homogeneous selection of cases (Bratton, Mattes & Gyimah-Boadi 2005, pp 61ff). The influence of French colonisation on the implementation of 'presidential referendums' can be seen as an additional disturbance factor. Because of the low profile of referendums in the British system, where direct democracy has only recently enjoyed a honeymoon, anglophone African countries are not expected to be frontrunners, a colonial factor that will be analysed in a later article.

I describe only briefly the situation in most Southern and East African countries, apart from Zimbabwe and Kenya, which may be considered typical cases of failed referendums.

The analysis begins with definitions of the range of instruments of direct democracy in order to correct misleading misconceptions about these instruments. In the next section the main arguments for and against direct democracy will be discussed. This will be followed by examples of the implementation of direct democracy instruments in Southern and East Africa and an attempt to analyse the reasons for the existence of such instruments in Africa. Were they implemented for nation-building purposes, or to strengthen incumbent elites, or to reinvigorate inclusive governance? Finally, the pro- and contra-arguments will be analysed in the African context and the first conclusion will be drawn.

DEFINITION OF DIRECT DEMOCRACY

Modern democracies, and especially political systems in Southern and East Africa, are frequently regarded as electoral democracies because their citizens are able to vote for political parties. However, these political parties often do not offer options and the elections are 'choiceless'. Nevertheless, elections are the only instruments for broad mass participation (Kersting 2007, p 141; Lindberg 2004). Civil society engagement, demonstrations, and so on, are often instruments for the political participation of a small elite.

Direct democracy, which is direct engagement in favour of or against certain political issues (Schiller 2002), is issue-oriented, not person-oriented (IDEA 2004). Direct election of the mayor or the president and forms of recall are considered to be representative democracy. Regular direct elections in representative democracies are not included in the concept of direct democracy used in this paper. Recalls as proactive instruments initiated by citizens are included, but are analysed separately (IDEA 2004).

In our definition direct democracy refers to different forms of political participation in which people vote in favour of or against certain constitutional, legislative, or policy issues. This means it focuses on issues, on a vote, and on majorities, or, as Schmitter & Trechsel (2004) define it, it is part of 'numeric

democracy'. The term 'referendum' is frequently used, as it is in this article, in place of 'direct democracy', although in some countries a referendum, as we will see, is only one particular form of direct democracy.

Direct democracy instruments share at least three main characteristics, but they differ in terms of initiation, thresholds, and quorums, topical regulations and their binding character. Because of the many different institutional settings the evaluation of direct democracy is complex (Schiller & Mittendorf 2002; Kaufmann & Waters 2004).

Initiation

A direct democracy instrument can be proactive and initiated from below (citizen initiative) or 'from above' (by the legislative or the executive bodies). In a decision-making process it can be seen as the final decision.

The opportunity for citizens to initiate a decision-making process which, after passing through Parliament and the executive, is finally decided by themselves (by the people for the people) is regarded as an advancement in democracies (Rousseau). This right of initiation results in a higher responsiveness within the representative political system, with politicians formulating policies in such a way that they pre-empt the necessity for turning to the people for approval.

The Ugandan Constitution (1995) provides for a bottom-up citizen's initiative. Article 255 of the Constitution states that:

... parliament shall by law make provision: (a) for the citizens' right to demand the holding by the Electoral Commission of a referendum, whether national or in any particular part of Uganda, on any issue ...

To avoid a plethora of referendums this process is highly formalised and restricted. In some cases an initiative begins with the collection, within a stated period, of a certain number of signatures; a form of petition. In general, the barriers to and costs of starting such a political process are relatively high.

The quorum for this submission (an initiative petition) depends on the size of the political entity involved. In Europe in bigger municipalities or provinces it is normally about three per cent of the population, while in small local authorities the percentage of signatories required may be as high as 15 per cent.

Article 74 of the Ugandan Constitution requires that a constitutional referendum be requested by half the members of Parliament and by a majority of the total number of members of each of at least half of all district councils. Or,

(c) if requested through a petition to the Electoral Commission by at least one-tenth of the registered voters from each of at least two-

thirds of the constituencies for which representatives are required to be directly elected under article 78(1)(a) of this Constitution.

This can be regarded as a high threshold for a national referendum.

In some cases no 'supporting civil society' actor is necessary to initiate a direct democracy vote. Referendums may be abrogative, when applied to certain laws enacted by Parliament (Suksi 1993). In the case of such 'abrogative referendums', which are held to oppose a parliamentary decision, some countries impose a time limit on the collection of signatures for the petition.

Some countries, Ireland is one example, require that a mandatory referendum be held on international agreements and/or any constitutional amendments (Rourke, Hiskes & Zirakzadeh 1992).

Referendums may also be initiated by Parliament. In such cases a two-thirds majority of parliamentarians is generally required. The executive may also initiate a referendum and so, in some countries, may qualified minorities in Parliament.

In (semi-) presidential systems (such as those that govern most former French colonies and also those with 'Westminster presidentialism') 'presidential plebiscites' prevail. In some countries the president may propose a referendum without approval from Parliament. Such presidential referendums, or plebiscites, are often used strategically either as a reaction to public pressure or to resolve deep internal divisions over controversial policies (Suksi 1993).

Quorum

A petition carrying a minimum number of names is one barrier preventing the misuse of direct democracy, another is the use of quorums. So, in some countries, a relative, not an absolute, majority is sufficient to win a referendum. In general higher quorums are set for constitutional amendments (IDEA 2008).

There are two different types of quorum: a 'turnout quorum', which means that, for example, 50 per cent of the population must participate and if this quorum is not achieved, the referendum fails, no matter the result. This kind of quorum often leads to parties which oppose the goals of the referendum trying to demobilise voters by calling for a boycott.

Referendums today, however, largely take the route of the 'approval quorum', which mean that a certain number (in most cases 25 per cent) of registered voters must be in favour of the goal of the referendum and must constitute a majority.

There are advantages and disadvantages to setting quorums. On the one hand a quorum may diminish the success of the referendum, on the other, it precludes easy constitutional changes.

Seychelles is the only country in East and Southern Africa to use a quorum, with electoral laws setting the percentage of the electorate required to endorse constitutional changes at 60 per cent.

In federal system such as that in Switzerland regional quorums require referendums to meet two goals – they must be won not only by a majority of the country’s voters but by a majority of provinces.

Topical regulation

Direct democracy cannot be implemented in all areas of policy. Among those that are excluded in some countries are constitutional areas such as the Bill of Rights, budget policy, fiscal and financial policies, and decisions about personnel. In addition, in most countries (South Africa is one example) sensitive issues such as the death penalty cannot be decided by a referendum.

Relevance and sustainability

Direct democracy instruments may be consultative, their purpose being to advise the Parliament. They may also be binding, with the final decision made by citizens. They can have a ‘suspensive’ impact, which means a policy will not be implemented until the referendum is over, or a commitment impact, which means that another decision, for example one made by a Parliament, cannot overrule the decision made by the people.

TYPES OF ‘REFERENDUMS’

There are three main instruments of direct democracy (Suksi 1993), all of which are frequently referred to as referendums:

- Plebiscites are optional referendums initiated by political institutions, which allow the citizen a direct vote on a constitutional or legislative issue or a specific policy. Plebiscites are mostly facultative referendums initiated by the president or the Parliament (ruling or opposition party). Presidential plebiscites rarely require parliamentary approval.
- Obligatory referendums are mandatory and apply to particular circumstances and issues, set out either in the country’s constitution or in other legislation. Amendments to the constitution, or disputes between the president and the legislature, may require a mandatory referendum.

- Citizen initiatives are referendums in which the electorate votes on a measure proposed by the people. In such cases the proponents must collect enough signatures on a petition to support their argument. Citizen initiatives may focus on constitutional, legislative and policy matters. They may be proactive, which means they focus on an issue which is not on the agenda of the Parliament or government (a non-decision). They may be orientated towards a certain decision made by Parliament (abrogative referendum). In some cases the people are allowed to submit a proposal which must be dealt with in Parliament but which does not require the electorate to vote (agenda initiative).

In a citizen initiative the type of polling may be relevant to the success of the referendum. In some countries signatures may be collected on the streets, in others they may only be collected within the town hall and during office hours. Time limits for the collection of signatures differ – in some cases there is no time limit at all, in others, the period allowed may be very short.

Voter education is an important aspect of all referendums. In some countries voters are presented with printed information about the issues, in others, the initiators of a referendum are given financial support.

DIRECT DEMOCRACY: PROS, CONS AND FUNCTIONS

The discourse on direct democracy reveals deep divisions within the academic community. On one hand direct democracy is seen as the 'royal route', on the other, it is regarded as an instrument of mass manipulation and populism. The underlying assumption is that direct democracy is an instrument used in inclusive democracies – that referendums lend legitimacy, while representative democracy is elite driven and exclusive. Direct democracy is seen as a complementary instrument and not as an alternative to representative democracy.

Referendums, and especially 'bottom-up' citizen initiatives, have two different effects on the pre-legislative process. One, which is difficult to measure empirically, is their ability to diminish 'non-decisions' – political issues that are not discussed and are not on the agenda because elites fear a political discourse on the topic.

Since opposition parties and non-governmental organisations may use a citizen initiative as an additional instrument against a ruling party the mere fact that such a possibility exists may have its effects on politicians. The other effect can be measured more easily. After the initiation of a referendum or petition Parliament frequently takes over the idea and the process is stopped because Parliament has decided in favour of the initiators of the referendum.

The most important argument focuses on the quality of the discourse. A referendum campaign is seen as a deliberative discourse of alternative issues, which leads to a higher rationality and to newly empowered citizen and politicians, factors that are missing when only Parliament debates an issue.

Arguments against direct democracy focus on the fact that it may lead to irrational decisions about complex issues and that it is possible to manipulate the masses to vote in a particular way (Rourke, Hiskes & Zirakzadeh 1992). Indeed, empirical research shows that political parties use these instruments for their own ends and that opposition parties frequently try to use referendums when other methods of getting their way have failed.

In the African context, according to Bratton & Van de Valle (1997, p 78), plebiscitary one-party systems, military oligarchies, settler oligarchies, competitive one-party systems and competitive multiparty systems predominate in neo-patrimonial African regimes, with ruling parties and presidents using plebiscites to claim legitimacy.

At the national level referendums may have three main functions, which may interact. These are:

- *National identity, nation building and state-building*: In the process of state or nation-building referendums have a strong symbolic value, helping to legitimise new political institutions. In Africa, with its ethnically heterogeneous societies, referendums may be particularly important. Independence and the creation of new constitutions are often the result of agreements between elites. Referendums are seen as a way of democratising and legitimating these processes. Here they often have an acclamatory symbolic value, internally towards the citizen as well as outwardly towards the international community.
- *Strengthening incumbent authorities*: In some countries the playing field is not level and referendums appear to be predetermined. Incumbents employ controlled referendums in response to public pressure, using their power and control over the state to strengthen and extend their executive powers (Rourke, Hiskes & Zirakzadeh 1992).
- *Inclusive decision-making*: In some countries the government, the executive, and the leading parties in Parliament are not strong enough to implement certain strategies. Deep internal societal divisions and controversial issues may be the motive for holding referendums. In others a stalemate requires an external judgement in the form of a referendum. In this situation the interests of ruling and opposition parties as well as other stakeholders come into play.

The evaluation of direct democracy instruments, as is the case with other forms of decision-making processes, is complex, and depends on the target and goals that are set. The legitimacy of both the input and the output are difficult to measure empirically. Input legitimacy can be evaluated by opinion polls focusing on, for instance, the degree of trust in government institutions. Higher input legitimacy may strengthen political stability. Output legitimacy can be analysed by measuring the quality of policies. At the micro level output legitimacy is also an attitude to certain policies. So, opinion polls are relevant here as well.

The evaluation of referendums encompasses their effects. Both binding and consultative referendums should have an impact and their results should be accepted. It is possible to analyse whether the goal of the referendum has been achieved or whether the executive has blocked the decision made by the voters.

REFERENDUMS IN SOUTHERN AND EAST AFRICA: LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION

All countries in Southern Africa and most in East Africa make legal provision for referendums (see table 1), with referendums constitutionally embedded. Kenya has no constitutional framework for referendums, although a constitutional referendum was held there in 2005.

Some countries make legal provision for referendums, but never hold them. In Angola, Lesotho, Swaziland, Tanzania, and Sudan this failure may be related to long periods of autocratic rule or to civil war.

Those countries which do make legal provision for referendums largely use them as a mandatory form of direct democracy, especially when it comes to constitutional amendments. Some also provide in their legal framework for referendums as optional instruments (see table). This is the case, for example, in Angola and the Sudan, where the option to hold a referendum has never been exercised. The option also exists in Namibia, which has also never held a national referendum, though it uses the instrument at sub-national level; the only country in either East or Southern Africa to do so.

South Africa held referendums at various times during the apartheid era but has not yet done so in the post-apartheid era. Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, and Djibouti have used referendums, mostly in the form of a presidential plebiscite – a referendum held without the approval of Parliament, which is used more in francophone than in anglophone countries, though there is also provision for it in Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Uganda.

Apart from Uganda no country in either Southern or East Africa provides for a citizen or agenda initiative.

Referendums in Southern and East Africa are largely restricted to constitutional issues, with countries in these regions using plebiscites or mandatory referendums to deal with certain constitutional amendments. These obligatory referendums have legal frameworks even in autocracies and dictatorships. Among the countries to make such legal provision are the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Tanzania, Zambia, Eritrea, Rwanda, Somalia, and Sudan (IDEA 2004). Botswana and Madagascar have made extensive use of plebiscites (IDEA 2008), while Madagascar and Djibouti also allow the president to call a referendum, which, in Djibouti, may be held without the approval of Parliament.

Forty-six referendums, most of them plebiscites, have been held in the two regions. The 1960s was a boom period, with 12 referendums. The number fell to eight in the 1970s and to four in the 1980s, but increased to 12 with the wind of change in the 1990s. Between 2000 and 2008 there were nine referendums.

Every political regime uses direct democracy to give it legitimacy, but the character of referendums can be oriented towards inclusive nation-building or inclusive decision-making or towards self-legitimacy, which focuses mainly on strengthening the incumbent authority.

Nation-building and inclusive decision-making

Referendums have largely been used in the nation-building process and in political systems in transition. Apart from those in South Africa and Malawi they have mostly been symbolic instruments used at the end of a process of constitutional engineering. In South Africa the whites-only referendum held in 1992 came in the middle of such a negotiation process. In Malawi the referendum represented the symbolic end of authoritarian rule. Referendums were also a successful starting point for reconciliation and nation-building in countries such as Burundi. In other countries, the Seychelles, for instance, the debate on the Constitution continued after the referendum. In others, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, the referendum on the new Constitution and the new political systems failed to resolve political conflicts.

South Africa

South Africa has held referendums at various points in its history, with the referendum in 1980, over whether the country should become a republic and that on 1983, on the issue of the establishment of a tricameral Parliament, exclusively for the white population. In 1992, during the negotiation process that would result in the creation of the post-apartheid state with a new constitution, South African President F W de Klerk, asked for the support of his white constituency for the reform process (Sussmann 2006; Strauss 1993; Kersting 2009, p 339).

Voter turnout at this critical point of democratic transition was high (85,1%), with 68,7 per cent supporting the process.

The South African Constitution of 1996 allows the president to propose a referendum without the approval of Parliament, though there have been no referendums since that date. The inclusive process of negotiating the new Constitution resulted in a document which was almost universally accepted, obviating the need for a referendum on the subject (Kersting 2007).

Burundi

The referendums in Burundi in 1991 and 1992 were constitutional referendums relating to the move towards a multiparty system. In March 1992 the most controversial topics were a five-year presidential term, renewable once, and the question of a proportional representation electoral system. Voter turnout was very high (97%), with 90,4 per cent supporting the new Constitution. National unity was even stronger in February 2005 when a constitutional referendum focused on power-sharing between the two ethnic groups, with Hutus to have 60 per cent of positions in governmental institutions and Tutsis 40 per cent, a reconciliation policy that was strongly supported.

Rwanda

On the eve of independence in 1961 Rwanda held a referendum through which the monarchy was abolished.

Djibouti

In May 1977 the electorate voted for independence.

Eritrea

In a referendum in April 1993 the people of Eritrea voted on the question: 'Are you in favour of Eritrea becoming an independent, sovereign state?' A total of 99 per cent of registered voters cast their ballots, with 99,8 per cent of those supporting independence, support that had a symbolic value.

Malawi

In Malawi in the 1990s critics of the Banda regime emphasised human rights violations and the centralisation of power, among other concerns. President Kamuzu Banda called a referendum on the one-party system, which, according to the law, he could do without the approval of the National Assembly. Although the referendum focused on the 'introduction of a multiparty system' it also offered the option of a single-party system. For better control he favoured an open ballot with different ballot boxes for each option (Dzimhiri 1994).

Voter turnout in the referendum, in June 1993, was 67,1 per cent, with 64,7 per cent of voters supporting a multiparty system and 35,3 per cent a single-party system. In the Central region 67,5 per cent voted in favour of keeping the one-party system, while, in the Northern region, the vote in favour of multipartyism was 89,3 per cent and in the Southern region 85,2 per cent. Here the strong influence of the old system can be recognised. Less than a year after the referendum Malawi held its first combined elections, electing both the president and members of Parliament.

Seychelles

In the Seychelles, where there is no constitutional provision for a referendum, but legislation provides for a required minimum of 60 per cent in order to effect constitutional change, a referendum was held to legitimise the country's new Constitution, which was largely written by the 15 members of the dominant party, the Seychelles People's Progressive Front (SPPF), with little input from the eight representatives of the opposition Seychelles Democratic Party (SDP).

The Seychelles has held two constitutional referendums – in November 1992 and in June 1993 – both focusing on the same topics: the presidential republic, multiparty democracy, and the official status of the leader of the opposition. In 1992, 53,7 per cent were in favour of the new Constitution, an insufficient number to meet the required minimum of 60 per cent. The political elite did not accept the outcome. Seven months later, a second referendum was held in which the Constitution was accepted with a vote of 73,9 per cent. Repetition of referendums is always problematic.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

A constitutional referendum was held in the DRC in December 2005. Voter turnout was relatively high (62%), with 84,3 per cent of voters supporting the main elements of a draft constitution, whose critical points were the direct election of the president and the limitation of the president's tenure to two five-year terms. Other important issues were the citizenship of all ethnic groups living in the Congo on the eve of independence in 1960 and the division of power among the president, prime minister, and Parliament.

Botswana

Referendums were held in Botswana in 1987, 1997, and 2001. In October 1997 Botswana became the only independent country in East and Southern Africa to hold a referendum that covered several different issues. A mere 16,7 per cent of the voting population turned out to vote on the question of the development of an independent electoral commission and the abolition of the Office of the Supervisor

of Elections, which had been introduced in 1987. Of those 73,2 per cent were in favour. On the same day 70.4 per cent expressed their approval of voting rights for 'Batswana living abroad', and 58,7 per cent asked for the law to be amended to 'lower the minimum voting age from 21 to 18'.

In November 2001 voters expressed their views on seven different issues regarding the High Court, the Judicial Service Commission, the Industrial Court, and the Chief Justice. Their views were solicited on the qualifications for appointment, retirement age, methods of nomination, and competencies. Voter turnout was a tiny 4,9 per cent and the percentage of 'Yes' votes ranged from 53,9 per cent to 76,8 per cent.

Strengthening incumbent authorities

Most referendums in East and Southern Africa are aimed less at fair decision-making than at strengthening incumbent authorities and are, in the main, presidential plebiscites. Populist policies are connected in an effort to strengthen the executive, with new constitutions characterised by the allocation of more powers to the president. The head of the executive controls the electorate and expects certain results. Botswana is an exception to this rule. In some countries referendums have been used to strengthen the executive and legitimate one-party systems. An example is the 1981 referendum in Burundi.

In 1992 a constitutional referendum in Djibouti focused on the introduction of a multiparty system. The voter turnout was 75,5 per cent, with 96,8 per cent voting in favour. A supplementary question relating to limiting the maximum number of parties to four was also supported by 96,8 per cent – strong support for a less fragmented political party system. However, the opposition abstained from voting in the referendum.

Ethiopia has held only one referendum, in February 1987. This focused on the Constitution and on the question of a one-party system. Voter turnout was very high – 96,3 per cent, 81 per cent of whom supported a Constitution providing for a one-party state.

Somalia held constitutional referendums at independence in 1961 and in 1979. The first was supported by 90,1 per cent of the population. In 1979, 99,8 per cent voted for a constitutional amendment establishing the framework for a single-party presidential republic.

In Rwanda in 1981 the limit on the term of office of the president was abolished and a one-party system approved. In May 2003 a constitutional referendum focused on a new political system, including such aspects as a 'presidential Republic' and a 'bicameral Parliament'. Another issue was a ban on 'inciting racial hatred'. The voter turnout was 89,9 per cent, with 93,4 per cent voting in favour.

In Uganda, where the president can propose a referendum autonomously, the no-party system was under pressure and, in June 2000, the people were asked to choose between it and a party system (Therkildsen 2002). The voter turnout was 51,1 per cent, with 90,7 per cent voting in favour of a non-partisan system and 9,3 per cent in favour of a multiparty system. This vote reflected strong support for a dominant government and was a signal to international donors, who were pressing for democratisation. Bratton & Lambright (2001) argue that there was an extensive 'secret boycott'.

Five years later, and still under the control of the old regime, in July 2005 the people were asked again about the introduction of a multiparty system. This time the question was framed differently. 'Do you agree to open up the political space to allow those who wish to join different organizations/parties to do so and to compete for political power?' On this occasion 92,4 per cent of the voting population voted in favour of the introduction of a multiparty system.

The swing may have been the result of campaigns organised by strong opinion leaders. In 2000 the influence of the ruling elites was strong. The need for a further referendum in 2005 indicates the interest of the population in a multiparty regime. However, it might also be the result of a campaign conducted by the government of Ugandan President, Yoweri Museveni.

In some countries referendums were used to extend executive power. Zambia has held only one constitutional referendum, in 1969. This focused on more powers for the legislature, with the question posed in the referendum relating to allowing a two-thirds majority in Parliament to amend the Constitution without resorting to a referendum. The voter turnout was 69,5 per cent, 85 per cent of whom supported the move.

The law in Madagascar provides for both mandatory referendums and presidential plebiscites. Two referendums were held in the 1970s (in 1972 and 1975) and three in the 1990s (1992, 1995 and 1998). The most recent was held in 2007. In August 1992, 72,7 per cent of the 65 per cent who turned out supported a 'presidential republic' and a 'bicameral legislature'.

Three years later, in September 1995, 63,5 per cent of the voting population voted on a constitutional amendment which would allow the president to appoint a prime minister (formerly appointed by the National Assembly), with 63,5 per cent voting in favour of the amendment.

In March 1998 a new constitutional amendment gave the president the right to dissolve Parliament. Other issues canvassed in the referendum were the introduction of a federal system and the creation of six provinces. Of the 70,3 per cent who participated only 50,9 per cent voted 'Yes', but that was sufficient for the amendment to be endorsed.

Madagascar has made a number of constitutional changes, using referendums

extensively to endorse them, despite the fact that constitutional referendums are not mandatory – the Constitution can be amended with a 75 per cent majority of both the Senate and the National Assembly. The Council of Ministers and the President can jointly decide to refer the matter to a referendum (EISA 2008). In April 2007, 75,3 per cent of the 53,7 per cent who voted in the referendum supported constitutional amendments giving the president new emergency powers, introducing English as the third official language, and redefining the new federal system.

Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) has a long history of referendums. The referendum in 1923 nearly brought about a merger with South Africa; in November 1964, 90 per cent of 105 000 whites responded to the question: 'Are you in favour of or against Southern Rhodesia obtaining independence on the basis of the Constitution of Southern Rhodesia in 1961.' The results were not recognised internationally.

In June 1969, 81 per cent of the country's white voters participated in a referendum that focused on the 'enfranchisement of all groups', the unicameral chamber, and the declaration of a republic. On the question of the voting qualification and the exclusion of most Africans from the voting process and on the question of the unicameral legislature 72,3 per cent agreed. The declaration of the republic was supported by 81,4 per cent.

During the democratic transition process in January 1979 a constitutional referendum was held. A total of 95 000 white citizens registered to vote and 71,5 per cent participated. The referendum focused on the 'Presidential Republic' and, more importantly, on equal voting rights for all citizens – 45,4 per cent of the population voted 'yes'. The referendum formed the basis of the 'internal settlement' and the following election, in April 1979. These elections were not internationally recognised and the guerilla war continued. Nevertheless, the referendum can be seen as a starting point for independence. In December 1979 negotiations began at Lancaster House in England.

Towards the end of the 1990s the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) became an important political player. The MDC, together with civil society groups, supported the idea of a constitutional referendum postulating a new electoral system and a diminution in the power of the president. The ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF) responded by organising its own referendum. At the end of 1999 a Referendums Act (Act 12 of 1999) was introduced which allows the president whenever he 'considers it desirable to ascertain the view of voters on any question or issue, declare that referendum has to be held'.

In January 2000 a constitutional referendum was held. It focused on three different points – increased powers for the president, immunity from prosecution for government officials and confiscation without compensation of white-owned

land for distribution to black farmers. This package vote encompassed policy strategy as well as institutional matters. For the first time in either of the two regions the government failed to get the result it wanted – 54,7 per cent of those who voted opposed the proposals.

This was the first referendum in East or West Africa to fail, although, ironically, the defeat helped President Robert Mugabe to remain in power, because it failed to change the terms of the Lancaster House Constitution, which set no limit for the presidential term. Despite Mugabe's vow to respect the results, 'war veterans' and other civil society groups began to take over white farms, assaulting and forcibly evicting their occupants. Since no action was taken against them, it was clear that the Zanu-PF government did not consider the results of the referendum binding.

In April 2000 the Zanu-PF majority in Parliament voted in favour of an amendment to the Constitution allowing for the seizure of land without compensation (Makumbe 2007). Although the referendum set in motion the establishment of an increasingly authoritarian regime it also launched the MDC to prominence and, in the disputed presidential election of 2008, MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai won a large enough percentage of the vote for there to be a run-off election.

Kenya, the second country in the two regions studied here to hold a failed referendum, has no legal provision for constitutional referendums. However, in November 2005 the people were asked to ratify a proposed new constitution, which, among other controversial proposals, would have increased presidential power by diminishing the role of the prime minister. It also included disputed issues relating to the implementation of a land commission and the extension of land reform.

Certain religious groups were opposed to sections of the proposed constitution, which established a legal framework for existing Islamic courts, resulting in protests from Christian and Hindu groups, which demanded equal rights.

Of the 6,2-million people who voted in the referendum 41,9 per cent were in favour of the proposed constitution, 58,1 per cent against. The Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) was praised for its independent role and the results were not disputed (Cliffe 2006).

The result was a major setback for the president, who dissolved his Cabinet, with the exception of the attorney general and the vice-president. The seven ministers who had campaigned against the draft constitution were not re-nominated for the new, enlarged Cabinet, which was seen as less representative than its predecessor. Parliament was prorogued until March 2006 and President Kibaki appointed a committee to report on the people's views and to identify all legal, cultural, social, and political obstacles impeding the finalisation of the

constitutional process. The opposition Orange Democratic movement and the Law Society of Kenya criticised the structure and membership of the committee and created alternative parallel committees.

The referendum deepened the ethnicisation of Kenyan politics and led to greater political polarisation, which resulted in appalling ethnic conflict in the aftermath of the presidential election of December 2007.

CONCLUSION

In both Southern and East Africa referendums are predominantly presidential plebiscites, allowing only for a 'Yes' or 'No' vote and enabling the president to retain domination over a one-party system. There have been no citizen initiatives in the two regions and Uganda is the only country to have included the possibility of a citizen initiative in its Constitution.

In some anglophone African countries, such as Zimbabwe, South Africa, Uganda, Namibia, and Malawi, the president may propose a referendum without the approval of Parliament, enabling the president or the ruling party to use their influence in campaigning. In both regions considered in this study national referendums are usually supported by the vast majority of voters.

Like elections, referendums may be considered to have been rigged and their symbolic value may be used to legitimate a ruling party in the eyes of both opposition movements within the country and external donors.

The number of referendums held in the two regions has been high and the decisions taken are usually implemented, which is not the case in Latin America. However, as in Latin America, package votes are frequently used to win support for potentially unpopular changes hidden within the package.

There are positive aspects of direct democracy instruments when they are used as a starting point for a new political system, strengthening national identity and internal nation- and state-building processes. Externally, they show the strength and the political will of new political systems.

In this regard, referendums are the ideal instruments for postcolonial countries and those making the transition to multiparty democracy, as was the case during the third wave of democratisation. In post-conflict and post-war situations referendums may strengthen consensus. In this regard, the referendum planned in the Sudan in 2009 may be an important stepping-stone for conflict resolution. They are also useful as a democratic instrument at the end of a peacekeeping process, as they were in Rwanda in 2003 and Zimbabwe in 1979.

Referendums held at the time of independence have an important symbolic value and internal and external effects, playing an important role in creating internal political cohesion. This was the case in Burundi in 2005, although the

referendum in the DRC in the same year did not result in similar cohesion. Referendums targeting international recognition, such as those in Eritrea and Somaliland, were also unsuccessful.

At the national level referendums are largely restricted to constitutional matters and have a strong influence on constitutional engineering with respect to the interests of citizens. In Madagascar a number of constitutional amendments, most of them oriented towards strengthening the executive, have been legitimised by referendums, although these did not result in stabilising the regime.

In the Seychelles the people were allowed to vote twice on the same issue in order for the government to gain the necessary majority, a situation similar to that in Ireland, where two referendums were held on the European Union's Nizza treaty. A similar situation pertained in Uganda, where the people voted twice on the topic of the multiparty system, with two totally different outcomes.

National referendums are used largely in relation to constitutional matters rather than policies such as, for example, structural adjustment programmes, privatisation, and so on. Furthermore, they are often package deals comprising different constitutional amendments and even – in those cases where the referendum focuses on policies – political strategies (eg, Zimbabwe 2000).

Constitutional referendums are generally complex and the complications can only be avoided through an intensive process of pre-referendum discussion and by delineating different issues.

Referendums should not become merely a form of symbolic political acclamation, they can, as they have in Kenya and Zimbabwe, strengthen the deliberative discourse between political parties and within civil society.

Political systems in Africa are predominantly characterised by a strong president and a strong executive and the dominance of one political party (a *de facto* one-party system), tendencies that can be weakened by a proliferation of national and local fair and free referendums.

Most countries do not provide for referendums at the local level but when they do the focus tends to be on policy issues rather than constitutional amendments and the results have a strong influence on local-government policies – the mere existence of such a referendum may lead to better and more responsive governance.

Direct-democratic procedures are an important complementary element in representative parliamentary systems with the 'latent veto function' of such instruments influencing legislators and forcing them into a kind of 'beforehand empathy' and orienting them more strongly towards civic interests (Tsebelis 2002).

Instruments of direct democracy are a kind of 'sword of Damocles' for traditional policy makers (Kersting 2007). They have an important influence on

the pre-legislative decision-making process and the responsiveness of politicians, forcing them to make decisions and to place important issues on the agenda. They could become an important additional element of representative democracy and real participatory good governance.

Referendums in Southern and East Africa

Country	Political system 2007	Referendums	Mandatory	Optional	Presidential +plebiscite	Constitution (C) Other (O)	Binding	Citizen Initiative, Regional Referendum, Agenda Initiative
Angola	Transition	None		X		O	x	
Botswana	Polyarchy	1987, 1997, 2001	X					Agenda Initiative
DRC	Transition	1964, 1967, 1973, 2005	X			C		
Lesotho	Polyarchy	None	X			C,O		
Madagascar	Polyarchy	1972,1975,1992,1995, 1998, 2007		x	x	C,O		
Malawi	Polyarchy	1993	x		x	C,O	X	
Mauritius	Polyarchy	None				C	x	
Mozambique	Polyarchy	None				C,O	X	
Namibia	Polyarchy	(1946,1977)1990 (region.)		x	x	C,O		
Seychelles	Polyarchy	1992, 1993	X	X	x	C,O	X	
South Africa	Polyarchy	1960, 1983, 1992		x	x	x	No	Regional Referendum
Swaziland	Moderate autocracy or mixed	(1964)				C,O	(X)	
Tanzania	Moderate autocracy or mixed		x					
Zambia	Moderate autocracy or mixed	1969	X			C	x	
Zimbabwe	Moderate autocracy or mixed	1964, 1969, 1979, 2000			x			
Burundi	Moderate autocracy or mixed	1981, 1991, 1992, 2005				C	X	
Djibouti	Moderate autocracy or mixed	1967, 1977, 1992	X	X	x	C	X	
Eritrea	Moderate autocracy or mixed	1993	X					
Ethiopia	Moderate autocracy or mixed	1987				O	X	Regional Referendum
Kenya	Polyarchy	2005						
Rwanda	Moderate autocracy or mixed	1961, 1978, 2003	x	x		C,O	X	
Somalia	Dictatorship or civil war	1961, 1979	x			C,O		
Sudan	Dictatorship or civil war	None	x	x		C,O	X	
Uganda	Moderate autocracy or mixed	1964 (regional), 2000, 2005		x	x	C,O	x	Citizen Init., Regional ref, Agenda Init.

(x) = partly or sometimes binding

See for the criteria: Berg-Schlusser & Kersting 1995; Berg-Schlusser 2007; Diamond 2002; IDEA 2008

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THE KEY TO ONE-PARTY DOMINANCE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED STATES¹

Some lessons for South Africa?

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ABSTRACT

Since the ascent to power of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1994 the concept of one-party dominance has dominated the South African political landscape. It is argued that the magnitude of the ANC's victories in four consecutive elections raises questions about whether South Africa is headed for a one-party dominant political system achieved through democratic rather than authoritarian means – a feat achieved by only a few political parties in the past century. The argument in this article is that the ascension to power of parties which have attained dominance has been preceded by extraordinary circumstances prevailing within their states and that it was the successful involvement of these parties in resolving these circumstances that was responsible for their victory in subsequent elections. However, other factors also contributed to the continued electoral success of the parties. The ANC also traces its ascension to power back to the extraordinary circumstances that prevailed in South Africa and which the party assisted in resolving. This article assesses the possibility that the ANC will attain dominance in the South African body politic as parties in other countries have done. This necessitates a study of the factors the parties exploited in order to be continuously voted into power. The ANC emerged victorious from South Africa's fourth non-racial democratic election in 2009, a victory that moved the party closer to fulfilling the criteria of a dominant party – winning four consecutive elections and holding power for 20 years or more.

¹ This article is based on a completed DLitt et Phil thesis in Politics under the supervision of Prof A J Venter at the University of Johannesburg 2006.

INTRODUCTION

The victory of the African National Congress (ANC) in four national elections, with an overwhelming popular majority, has led academics to speculate about the possibility that South Africa will turn into a one-party dominant state (see Welsh 1996; Lanegran 2001; Giliomee 1998; Simkins 1999 for some representative views).

One-party dominance, a rare feat, which has been achieved by only a few political parties in the past century, is considered an anomaly, an aberration, and a deviation from the norm (cf Pempel 1990, p 5). While there is debate about one-party dominance, there is also broad consensus over what constitutes this concept. Sartori (1979, p 194) maintains that it is defined by one party outdistancing all others in several consecutive elections. Duverger (1964, p 308) puts forward the view that it is defined by one party being larger than the others. Like Sartori he argues that the party should outdistance its rivals over a certain period. Both Sartori (1979) and Duverger (1964) express the view that the party must win a majority of votes. According to Shalev (1990, p 83), 'simplistically defined, dominant parties are those that head governments for long periods (on the scale of the number of decades rather than of Cabinets) continuously or with only ephemeral interruptions'. He adds that dominant parties are not necessarily majority parties, but that they always enjoy a plurality of the popular vote. We accept this definition for the purposes of this article.

In order to assess the possibility of the ANC becoming a dominant party the article will focus on five political parties that have become dominant: the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), the Indian National Congress (Congress), the Mifleget Poalei Eretz Yisrael (Mapai) in Israel, the Christian Democratic Party (Democrazia Cristiana, DC) in Italy and the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in Sweden.

The common feature of the rise to power of these parties has been identified as unusual circumstances prevailing prior to the parties' ascension to power. The parties were at the forefront in seeking a resolution to deep divisions in their respective societies. They reaped the fruits of these endeavours when, in the founding elections held soon after the resolution of the conflicts, the parties were elected to power. A political party that comes to power during a crisis has an advantage over its rivals because the voting public will remember its role in extricating the nation from the crisis.² A party that is perceived as a national saviour is difficult to defeat (Thackrah 2000, p 5). However, this tells only part of the story.

2 A full account of the unusual circumstances surrounding the coming to power of the five parties is presented in my doctoral thesis. Constraints of space preclude my going into detail in this article.

The important question to be answered is how these parties, from their advantageous start, entrenched themselves in power by winning elections consecutively for 25 or more years? What did they do to continue to retain the confidence of the voters for two decades? An advantageous start is not an adequate explanation for such domination, other factors over and above this precondition also contributed to the electoral success of the parties.

The article will focus on identifying the factors that consolidated the dominance of the parties and will try to determine whether they are common to all of them. It will then extrapolate the analysis of these factors to the ANC to determine if it is following in their tracks.

FACTORS FACILITATING THE RISE TO ONE-PARTY DOMINANCE

Extraordinary conditions facilitated the rise to power of the five parties under consideration, but their continued victory cannot be ascribed to these conditions alone. When the parties came to power none of them had any notion that they would become dominant. What was important was winning the next election. Dominance, according to Pempel (1990, p 341), 'is more easily recognised in the cycle of its continuance than in the seeds of its regeneration'.

Below I outline the extraordinary circumstances that pertained in each of the countries before the ascent to power of the parties.

- Botswana: The marriage of Sir Seretse Khama to a white woman led to his being forced to relinquish his traditional position as heir apparent of the Bamangwato tribe and to his later being exiled by the British. This upset the Batswana people, who reacted by voting for his party, the BDP, in the country's first election, in 1965, and others that followed.
- India: Congress fought a relentless and sometimes brutal battle with the British for the liberation of India.
- Israel: Jewish settlers fought with Arabs in order to form the state of Israel. The Arabs were opposed to a Jewish settlement in what they regarded as their territory.
- Italy: The ascent to power of Mussolini in 1922 brought to an end Italy's fragile democratic political system. Mussolini had dragged Italy into the Second World War, with tragic consequences. The DC was one of the parties which had participated in the resistance to Mussolini's Fascist Party.
- Sweden: Prior to the 1932 election which brought the SDP to power there was an economic crisis in Sweden which the government could

not solve. Sweden suffered greatly as a result of the Great Depression, which exacerbated the country's economic problems and led to a rise in unemployment and to general unrest.

These parties could not rest on their laurels and continued to rely on the abnormal circumstances responsible for the victory that first brought them to power. In order for them to ensure that they continued to win elections they had to devise other means of maintaining and increasing their electoral support.

The factors that perpetuated the dominance of the parties were: organisational strength, the continued support of a strong socioeconomic bloc, penetration into society, pragmatism, patronage, the role of symbolism and the association with the resolution of extraordinary problems.³ These factors are considered systematically below.

Botswana

Organisational strength

A well-organised organisation is more likely to be successful than a disorderly one. The BDP was better organised than the other political parties in the country and had a head start when it was endorsed by the British colonial authorities, who bestowed on it the status of a government-in-waiting. The colonial authorities also gave the party material and human resources. From the formation of the party the BDP leadership consisted of the wealthy and influential sector of the Tswana community, a sector that included cattle and land owners as well as traditional leaders, teachers, and business people (Molutsi 1991, p 70) who contributed handsomely to the party's coffers during the elections. Danevad (1995, p 398) points out that the party's members provided the financial and organisational assistance that was responsible for its electoral success.

The BDP is the only party in Botswana which is organised nationally, with branches throughout the country (Osei-Hwedie 2001, p 60). It also has a full-time organiser, a luxury the other parties cannot afford (Polhemus 1983, p 414). The party has thus been able to generate sufficient resources to enable it to launch effective election campaigns by producing high-quality pamphlets detailing its programmes, policies and successes (Polhemus 1983, p 416). During election campaigns the party is able to reach voters in remote areas as it has access to four-wheel drive vehicles owned by some of its wealthy members (Polhemus 1983, p 416).

3 See the above-mentioned thesis, especially chapters 2, 3, 4 for a detailed analysis.

Support from a strong socioeconomic bloc

A large proportion of the BDP's vote in the five elections in question came from rural voters. On independence about 90 per cent of Botswana's population lived in rural areas dominated by traditional leaders. Molutsi (1998, p 370) points out that after independence this predominantly peasant society voted overwhelmingly in support of Sir Seretse Khama, who most Batswana recognised as their chief, even though he had been deposed. The BDP used the powerful traditional leaders to mobilise support for the party (Somolekae & Lekorwe 1998, p 196).

Although the BDP is strongly supported by the rural masses across the country Holm (1988, p 191) points out that its mainstay is the Bamangwato and Bakwena tribes, who, together, constitute more than 50 per cent of the population. In the country's first four elections the BDP did not lose one parliamentary seat in the Bamangwato area (Holm 1988, p 191). Danevad (1995, p 396) states that the party continued to receive this support in the country's post-independence elections. The same applies in the Kweneng area, where it has won with at least 73 per cent of the vote. The Bamangwato and Bakwena tribes perceive the BDP as representing them.

Penetration of society

Although when it came to power the BDP reduced the powers of the traditional leaders it was mindful of their influence in the rural areas and recognised that it must establish cordial relations with them if it was to use them to garner the support of the peasants. This support is canvassed through meetings known as the *kgotla*, where representatives of the party inform the rural population of developmental programmes.

Picard (1985, p 203) points out that the BDP also used cooption as a method of penetrating society, targeting senior members and sympathisers of the opposition as well as former civil servants. It encouraged retired civil servants, who were previously not allowed to take part in politics, to contest elections at both local and national level under the banner of the party, in an attempt to prevent them from joining the opposition. In 1979 the BDP government appointed Daniel Kwela, a senior opposition member, as a special member of Parliament.

Pragmatism

From the time of its formation the BDP was a moderate party. Unlike nationalist movements involved in the liberation struggle in other parts of Africa it did not adopt radical socioeconomic policies such as socialism. Beaulier (2005) points out that there were no statues of Marx or Lenin in Botswana and that the party did not discard everything associated with colonialism (Beaulier 2005, p 7). Rather than run from institutions left behind by the colonialists the new government

embraced them, campaigning on the basis of the retention of a multiracial society and a free-market economy. Instead of unsettling the expatriates, forcing them to leave the country, it kept them in the civil service. Although it reduced the powers of the chiefs it retained the traditional system (Molutsi 1998, p 368), a move which, far from antagonising them, won them over to the side of the party.

Patronage

Scholars such as Picard (1985), Tsie (1996), Legum (1981/1982), Charlton (1993), and Danevad (1995) have identified patronage as a strong factor in the BDP's electoral success. Charlton (1993, p 340) states boldly that instances of partisan patronage distribution in Botswana are present in form and intent.

He distinguishes, however, between partisan and evenhanded patronage, stating that Botswana has avoided the highly partisan patronage that takes place in other African countries. Evenhanded patronage benefits all parts of the country irrespective of whether the region is a BDP or an opposition stronghold. But he warns that this does not mean that there is no partisan patronage in Botswana (Charlton 1993, p 342). The BDP uses patronage in the form of development programmes to win the support of impoverished rural voters. Danevad (1995, p 391) points out that the BDP's strategy for rural constituencies and its distributionist policies have been applied as a means of nurturing political loyalties.

It is easy for the BDP to dispense patronage because it has presided over a fast-growing economy and the wealthy land and cattle owners who occupy leadership positions within the party are able to use patronage to attract support. Picard (1985, p 175) uses the example of the 1974 elections to argue his point about the BDP's use of patronage. In those elections, the BDP used the Accelerated Rural Development Programme (ARDP) to win the support of rural voters. The move came after the opposition Botswana National Front (BNF) had won three seats in the 1969 elections, taking the BDP by surprise (Picard 1985, p 179). Tsie (1996, p 605) argues that the ARDP was explicitly political and was designed to garner support from the peasants by demonstrating the benefits of development.

Symbolism

The trials and tribulations Sir Seretse Khama endured endeared him to the Batswana people, who revered him and were impressed by his humility and his readiness to meet his people whenever they asked him to come and address them. Khama, who was both a chief and an intellectual, made common cause with ordinary people. He was a founder member of the BDP and was regarded as the father of the nation, who had led the country to independence without having to embark on the armed struggle so common in Africa.

India

Organisational strength

As a first step towards consolidating its power Congress transformed itself from an all-embracing nationalist movement into a political party that would seek votes, win elections and rule the country (Weiner 1957, p 16). In pursuit of this goal Congress eliminated from its ranks individuals and organisations which were part of the nationalist movement but were not amenable to working with its leaders. It ruled that nobody should owe allegiance to two parties – only to Congress (Weiner 1957, p 17).

Weiner (1967, p 461) argues that Congress owes much of its success to its internal cohesiveness and its relations with its members and the larger Indian community. The party, which was run from New Delhi, was represented in states, cities, towns, dwellings, and villages (Park & de Mesquita 1979, p 129) throughout the country and communicated with its members by using the party's structures. This enabled it to communicate constantly with grassroots supporters and to keep members informed of its activities (Weiner 1967, p 461).

The party also informed members of its activities through publications produced in both English and local dialects. Senior party members made themselves available to grassroots supporters, visiting branches in rural areas to listen to their problems and giving them a feeling of belonging (Weiner 1967, p 462). At the local level party cadres offered assistance to their members, most of whom were poor and illiterate, in dealing with the authorities. Congress arbitrated in factional, caste, and linguistic disputes involving the community as it was considered to be more neutral than an arbitrator from the area. It had members who devoted themselves to settling disputes wherever they occurred, be it in rural or urban areas (Kochanek 1968, p 323).

Support from a strong socioeconomic bloc

While still operating as a nationalist movement the Indian Congress attracted to its ranks diverse members of society, irrespective of caste, language, religion, ethnicity, occupation, or political ideology. The groups came together with the single purpose of supporting Congress in its fight against British colonialism. After independence some of these groups left Congress to contest the elections on their own, but the majority of the Indian community continued to support Congress, resulting in its success in successive elections. Park & De Mesquita (1979, p 134) point out that the party expanded its organisation, and thereby its access to manpower and other resources, to include workers, peasants, students, and other groups. This enabled it to mobilise support, win elections, and implement programmes, which, in turn, contributed to its great popularity.

Congress also has the backing of strong socioeconomic blocs, including the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), the Farmers' Forum and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). INTUC was formed in 1947 with the blessing of Congress, whose policies it has supported (Hardgrave Jr 1980, p 107). INTUC organised manpower and finances that benefited the party during its election campaigns. The union also provided leadership for the party. No less a leader than Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru served his apprenticeship in the labour field (Park & De Mesquita 1979, p 134). FICCI draws its membership from representatives of major industrial and trading enterprises and represents 100 000 firms which employ more than five million workers. Hardgrave Jr (1980, p 135) argues that the members of this organisation took their cue from its president and voted for Congress, hoping to be given preference in the awarding of government contracts.

Penetration of society

Although the Indian Congress had built up a great deal of support during the struggle for independence it did not take this for granted but continued to recruit support throughout the country. Robinson (1982, p 36) points out that during the struggle period Congress did not penetrate all parts of the country. It was only in the 1950s and 1960s, when people were drawn to politics after independence, that it began to attract more people, particularly from the rural areas. According to Suri (1974, p 202) it was only at the start of the Fifties that Congress became a national party. Suri (1974, p 203) points out that while support for Congress came from the poorer classes and the lower castes and rural people were the backbone of the organisation it also attracted business people who were not part of the nationalist movement and finally expanded to include workers, peasants, students and professional people.

Pragmatism

Hardgrave Jr (1980, p 149) writes that Congress was prepared to adapt its policies in order to win support from different groups. During the first two decades after independence it incorporated individuals with different political ideologies and constituencies. In the rural areas it sought and won the support of landowners, villagers, and local cooperatives. It was a pragmatic organisation in which people with different backgrounds coexisted. Suri (1974, p 203) writes,

Indeed, a striking feature of the Congress party's position is that it straddled the past and the present, tradition and modernisation, conservatism and progress; it brings together high castes and low castes, big business and landless labourers.

Candland (1997, p 22) argues that Congress's appeal to a wide range of people was the fact that it was not a revolutionary ideological party. Park & De Mesquita (1979, p 130) describe it as a centrist party, leaning 'somewhat to the left'. It had a rhetorical commitment to socialism, while the economy was still in the hands of the private sector (Park & de Mesquita 1979, p 29), which, they state, allowed it to accommodate people of differing persuasions, from large industrialists to Indian peasants and pragmatic socialists. This ideological flexibility divided the opposition and allowed Congress to attract support in the first five elections.

In the view of Robinson (1982, p 37) Congress's victory in the 1952, 1957, and 1962 elections could be credited to the fact that it frequently adapted its policies to attract a particular constituency. If elements in a state raised the spectre of political separatism Congress would become the voice of regionalism; when a socialist party planned a major thrust Congress resolved to support the development of a socialist pattern of society, he writes. In rural areas it would speak the language of both caste and traditionalism even though it was opposed to both, adopting whatever position was necessary to win support.

According to Hardgrave Jr (1980, p 149), for three decades Congress was the only genuinely all-India party capable of appealing to virtually all sections of society. He adds that in consolidating its power after independence the party sought to achieve a national consensus through the accommodation and absorption of dominant social elements that had kept aloof from the nationalist movement (Hardgrave Jr 1980, p 150).

Patronage

When it came to power Congress, being in control of the country's limited resources, was able to dispense patronage. Morris-Jones (1964, p 216) argues that this patronage was the oil that lubricated the Congress party machine and was an important factor in its dominance. As the party tightened its rule over India the state expanded its developmental role and, in the process, accumulated more resources for distribution to party members. Congress, he points out, enjoyed the benefits of a 'virtuous cycle' in which its electoral success gave it access to economic and political resources that enabled the party to attract new supporters.

Wealthy members of Indian society derived prestige from being associated with Congress. Powerful individuals were proud to be seen with leaders of the organisation, particularly during visits to their areas. Individuals seeking political power and favours were more inclined to join Congress than other parties which had nothing to offer (Morris-Jones 1964, p 216). Membership of Congress opened previously closed doors to advantages such as admission to university or the granting of a trading licence (Weiner 1967, p 450). Hardgrave Jr (1980, p 135) adds that 'contributions to the Congress by business also served to facilitate political

access, and the Congress, as the party in power, frequently extracted contributions from businesses dependent upon Government favour, a process all too familiar in the American context'. In addition, Gupta (1990, p 236) points out that Indira Gandhi, as leader of the party and as prime minister of the federal government, which controlled the strategic points of the economy, could command larger resources to buy support than her opponents.

Symbolism

Gandhi and Nehru, both of whom played important roles in the events that resulted in India eventually being granted independence, were immortalised in India as symbols of the struggle for independence. Their role in the struggle was a constant refrain during election campaigns and Congress derived much of its prestige from its association with them.

Israel

Organisational strength

When the state of Israel was formed Mapai, already a well-established political party, attracted newly arriving immigrants. Medding (1972, p 89) points out that after statehood Mapai grew both in the number of its branches and in membership. Rank and file members were divided geographically and connected to the party through local branch and regional structures which permeated the country, with the biggest in the towns of Tel Aviv and Haifa. By the middle of the 1950s the party had 400 branches and its membership grew from 40 000 in 1948 to 196 000 in 1964 (Medding 1990, p 44).

Support from a strong socioeconomic bloc

Mapai, which ruled Israel from 1949 until 1965, when parties aligned to labour merged, owes its success and dominant position to Histadrut, the labour federation formed in 1920 during the period of the British mandate in Israel, and described by Rolef (1987, p 145) as 'a trade union, a mutual aid society, a productive economic system, and a centre of cultural activities, sports and learning'. Mapai was formed ten years later and the close association between the two was forged at the height of the struggle to establish the state of Israel, in which both participated. Medding (1972, p 46) puts forward the view that no Israeli government between 1948 and the early 1970s could succeed without the steady cooperation of Histadrut.

As Israel did not have a strong working class Histadrut was established specifically to create one. This was done by encouraging the immigration of

European Jews. When this immigration was restricted by the British the Histadrut brought immigrants into the country illegally (Samuel 1960, p 176). The new arrivals, who were offered employment, automatically became members of the Histadrut. Bernstein (1957, p 61) argues that Mapai's status as the party that had led Israel to statehood enabled it to absorb the new arrivals more effectively than its rivals.

Histadrut, with its massive membership, spread its tentacles throughout Israeli society. It controlled two-thirds of the country's economic activities by 1962, operating manufacturing, contracting, and marketing corporations, clinics, and hospitals, rest homes, buses, and theatres (Kraines 1961, p 66). By 1963, 15 years after the new state was created, 90 per cent of the nation's employees were members of Histadrut (Medding 1972, p 48) and wives of members automatically also became members (Medding 1972, p 50).

Penetration of society

According to Medding (1972, p 45) one factor which contributed to Mapai's success was its ability to penetrate organisations. He writes:

... competitive organisational penetration was a major mechanism of political recruitment and socialisation, facilitating Mapai's efforts to integrate and incorporate diverse social forces into its structure and to aggregate their interests. Its main feature was the way in which it sought control of functional and occupational organisations in order to gain secure political support and to impose a degree of political direction over their activities.

Mapai did not rely on individual membership but on large or corporate membership. It infiltrated organisations, took over their leadership and brought their policies in line with its own. It penetrated most structures of Israeli society, including agricultural settlements, industrial workers, artisans, and professionals (Medding 1972, p 19).

The party's greatest success was in penetrating and controlling worker committees, the basic cells of the Histadrut, which exist in every workplace and are elected every two years (Medding 1972, p 49) – each has a secretary and Mapai's aim was to ensure that the secretary was a member of the party, allowing the committee to canvass support for the party.

Eventually Mapai controlled more than 100 000 workers committees, a factor that proved particularly valuable at election times, when Mapai members on the committees actively sought support for the party on a direct, informal and personal basis, either at the plant or by visiting workers' homes (Medding 1972, p 50).

Pragmatism

Mapai recruited increasing numbers of new immigrants, absorbing them into the party and adapting its policies to suit both old and new members. The party was flexible, incorporating a diversity of viewpoints as it co-opted more groups. Initially a large percentage of its members were agriculturalists but, with increasing urbanisation, it directed its focus to town dwellers and assumed the status of a workers' party (Medding 1972, p 16).

Immigration also introduced ethnic diversification and heightened consciousness of differences relating to sex, age and religion (Medding 1990, p 44), which Mapai catered for by adopting different approaches for different groups. In relation to defending the sovereignty of Israel Mapai was flexible enough to explore a variety of avenues to bring peace to the territory (Medding 1990, p 47). On economic issues the party adopted a 'middle-of-the-road' policy which embraced elements of both socialism and capitalism, shunning the nationalisation of property as it was wary of frightening away private investors.

Patronage

Histadrut owned by far the largest construction companies in the country, providing employment for a large number of workers who, invariably, would vote for Mapai (Shalev 1990, p 102). Through Histadrut Mapai controlled labour exchanges which exerted substantial control over the distribution of employment (Medding 1990, p 60).

But Histadrut was not the only source of patronage in Israel, the civil service was another. When the state was created recruitment for the civil service was conducted directly by the ministries – the Civil Service Commission was only established in 1951 (Medding 1990, p 157). The result was that appointments were made on the basis of political and personal acquaintance. Medding (1990, p 157) points out that 'a significant proportion of the early appointees were placed there by their political parties'. As Mapai was in control of government it was also responsible for the appointment of most of the civil servants.

Symbolism

Mapai, one of the biggest parties formed before the state was established, assumed the leadership of the immigrant Jews, becoming a political force to reckon with and gaining a reputation as the party which stood firm against the Arabs and fought for the establishment of the state. It was under Mapai that Jewish settlers formed structures and organised society in the disputed territory. One of the party's original leaders, David Ben-Gurion, has become a legend in Israel.

Italy

Organisational strength

After the Second World War and the fall of Fascism Italy's political parties reorganised themselves in order to contest for power. The Christian Democratic Party's support was bolstered when the remnants of the Italian Popular Party (PPI) joined it. The DC launched a recruitment drive, attracting massive support and growing into one of Italy's strongest parties, under the leadership of Alcide De Gasperi, who became prime minister in 1945. In 1945 the party established 7000 local offices and recruited half a million members, with whom it communicated through its nine daily newsletters and eight weeklies. By 1953 membership had reached one million and by 1973, 1,8-million (Spotts & Wieser 1986, p 22). The DC became a mass party organised on a national, regional, provincial and communal basis, with membership open to people over 18, drawing its members from an array of societal organisations, housewives being the single largest group. Its base unit was the section to which its members belonged at the grassroots level (Zuckerman 1979, p 85).

Support from a strong socioeconomic bloc

Hughes (1979, p 159) characterises the Italian DC as a catchall party, its supporters including a rainbow of social classes and tendencies: the DC was 'a political movement of great landowners, poor peasants, industrialists, Catholic workers and different types of the middle-class', he writes. However, diverse as these people were, they were held together by their belief in Catholicism because, although it is not a specifically Catholic party, the DC has essentially been a party of Catholics and Catholic support, a pre-existing bloc, is seen by scholars such as Sassoon (1986), Zuckerman (1979), Hughes (1979), Pasquino (1980), and Leonardi & Wertman (1989) as the major factor behind the DC's electoral victories throughout the period of its dominance. Pasquino (1980, p 89) points out that from the start the party was dependent on outside support, particularly that coming from and produced by Catholic organisations. The major component of DC strength has 'always been and still is the large, stable support of Catholics who constitute about 98 percent of the Italian population' (Pasquino 1980, p 90).

Sassoon (1986, p 143) goes further, contending that the DC was seen as the long arm of the church, to which many civil society organisations in Italy, including trade unions and organisations for professionals, women, landowners, farmers, youths, and students, are aligned. In order to strengthen its support the DC also formed organisations that, invariably, were dominated by Catholics (Sassoon 1986, p 229). Among these were those for the youth, workers, school teachers, women, and lawyers.

Penetration of society

Sassoon (1986, p 8) argues that the DC, recognising that if it was to maintain its dominant position it would not be able to rely forever on the church, went out of its way to form its own support base independent of the church. This resulted in it developing a presence in all sectors of society through the creation and control of non-party organisations. Spotts & Wieser (1986, p 15) express the view that 'so broad and effective was the DC's control of society that it eventually developed into a veritable symbiosis of party, government, and the state'. The party's influence permeated society through a network of structures which gave it an organisational presence in every community and city quarter in the country (Leonardi & Wertman 1989, p 46). It also effectively used its control of broadcasting to relay its message to the wider community.

Pragmatism

After the fall of Mussolini's Fascist regime Italy had to establish a new political system, a task that was complicated by the presence of Catholicism. De Gasperi adopted a middle position for the DC when he fused Catholicism and liberal democracy (Spotts & Wieser 1986, p 23), integrating the mass of Catholics for the first time into democratic parliamentarism. Leonardi & Wertman (1989, p 46) contend that the DC was forced to become a centrist party because it was operating in a system that was fragmented among various classes, ideologies and socioeconomic organisations. This enabled it not to be identified with any class or grouping within society, which made it easy for the party to act as arbiter among different groups. In the economic sphere the DC adopted a middle position, embracing both socialism and capitalism, a socioeconomic system lying between the alternative of a completely free enterprise system and a socialised economy (Leonardi & Wertman 1989, p 45).

Patronage

The DC used patronage to perpetuate its hold on power and to withstand the challenge of the opposition, particularly that of the Communist Party. It did this by using its control over public money to support specific social groups and interests, developing a network of clientele through its possession of funds and the creation of jobs.

Italy experienced an economic boom, which made jobs in the public sector available and the DC's control over the bureaucracy enabled it to place many of its supporters on the public payroll (Sassoon 1986, p 8), thus transforming them into clients. Zuckerman (1979, p 82) posits the view that the DC's control of the bureaucracy permitted those interest groups and individuals associated with the party to get what they wanted from the government as they had easy access to

ministers. He adds that political considerations coloured appointments to senior positions in government. The DC was also in control of public corporations, which were an important source of employment, investment credit, and DC patronage. Pasquino (1980, p 94) is in two minds about the impact of patronage on the DC's success. In one instance he expresses the view that 'nowhere is clientelism alone the basis of the strength of the party'. However, he later contradicts himself when he points out that clientelism came to constitute one of the pillars of DC support. He argues that the establishment and subsequent enlargement of the public sector resulted in the creation of a clientelist system. Pasquino (1980, p 94) expresses the view that this 'produced the prerequisites for the inauguration of a modern, managerial system of clientelism'.

Symbolism

The defeat of Mussolini's Fascist Party and the end of World War II gave the Italians an opportunity to adopt a new political order. De Gasperi, who survived the excesses of Fascism, applied his mind to this problem from the safety of the Vatican, where he had taken refuge, laying the foundation of Italy's new democratic political system and leading the country away from the crisis and chaos which were the results of Fascist rule, and towards stability.

Sweden

Organisational strength

Board (1970, p 91) states that the SDP was the most highly organised party in Sweden, its support being evenly spread throughout the country. According to Andren (1961, p 27), SDP supporters included local organisations and worker communes based on both individual membership and block affiliation through trade unions. The structures of the party included youth and women's organisations. The party had its own publications, which were distributed throughout the country. It boasted a stable leadership with a low turnover (Hancock 1972, p 115). Between 1932 and 1969 it only had two leaders – Per Albin Hansson (1932-1946) and Tage Erlander (1946-1969) (Hancock 1972, p 115).

Support from a strong socioeconomic bloc

Scholars writing about the domination by the SDP of Swedish politics agree that it was made possible by the relationship between the party and the labour movement, a relationship that was strengthened after the party came to power and persisted through all succeeding elections.

Sweden's labour movement grew in strength when the country experienced rapid industrialisation in the first three decades of the 20th century (Tomasson

1970, p 33). This, according to Castles (1975, p 177), created a large working class, which became the main object of the SDP's social recruitment and mobilisation campaigns. Organised labour was the major pillar of socialist electoral support. The labour movement experienced a phenomenal growth after the rise to power of the SDP and there was a correlation between the increase in the number of workers and the votes received by the party – from slightly fewer than 740 000 voters in 1932 to about 870 000 in 1944 (Lewin 1972, p 281). The majority of workers were unionised and accounted for about 70 per cent of the party's support (Board 1970, p 92).

The fact that a large proportion of the party's members were collectively affiliated to the SDP through their trade union membership ensured funding, membership, and voter mobilisation for the party (Esping-Andersen 1990, p 43). The trade union not only supplied the votes it also put its shoulder behind the wheel, providing manpower, financial support for the party's publications, and actively campaigning for and financially supporting the election of the SDP (Tomasson 1970, p 35).

Penetration of society

The SDP had a foothold in major organisations in the country such as cooperative movements, tenant and pensioner organisations, education and leisure societies (Esping-Andersen 1990, p 43). In an effort to reach consensus on contentious issues the party consulted organised groups throughout the country, seeking their views on various issues (Castles 1975, p 176). By the 1950s regular meetings were held among the prime minister, union leaders, and business people. Explaining the purpose of these meetings, Castles (1975, p 176) states that they 'clearly contributed to the enduring success of the SDP'. Although the SDP was initially opposed to the flourishing of the temperance movement it changed its attitude when it realised that the movement had a strong following. While it was initially opposed to its members forming cooperative movements it was forced to soften its attitude when workers continued the practice (Castles 1975, p 177).

Pragmatism

Although the SDP initially espoused Marxist socialism, on assuming power it introduced a new variant of socialism which did not include the nationalisation of property, but recognised the importance of the free-market system (Board 1970, p 92), adapting its policies in order to attract the support of other sectors of the community. It won over the support of the agrarian sector when it paid attention to its interests (Hancock 1972, p 115) and made inroads into the middle-class constituency by advocating comprehensive measures to sustain economic growth and ensure social justice and welfare (Hancock 1972, p 117). In doing

so, the SDP became a party with broad-based appeal. When the population of farmers decreased, resulting in a large number of people moving from rural to urban areas, the party shifted its attention to the growing number of white collar workers who, though unionised, did not owe allegiance to any party (Esping-Andersen 1990, p 47).

Patronage

The SDP's use of patronage and the benefits it derived from it is clouded by ambiguity. Patronage was underplayed, to the extent of almost being denied – nobody wanted to admit openly that it existed. Despite these denials, what is at issue is the extent to which it manifested itself and its benefit to the SDP. Sweden has a very large public service consisting of dozens of state boards which employ thousands of people. The key positions on the boards are those of the directors-general, which are filled at the discretion of the government (Elder 1970, p 63). Board (1970, p 164) is ambiguous about the existence of patronage, first writing that very few jobs could be regarded as 'political', then going on to state 'but during the past decades, in some departments, party affiliation seems to have played a part in recruitment for some lower positions as well'. He qualifies this by adding that Sweden cannot be regarded as having a highly developed system of political patronage. His assertion is supported by Elder (1970, p 78), who contends that the number of persons with an obvious political affiliation appointed to head politically sensitive boards is quite small.

Hancock (1972, p 96), on the other hand, unambiguously reveals the existence of patronage when he points out that between 1945 and 1965 the governing executive appointed 49 provincial governors, so that there were more governors from the SDP than from any other single party. Elder (1970, p 78) avers that although civil servants were apolitical career officials some were known to be members of the SDP or in open sympathy with its policies and political involvement at the top level of under secretaryship was a source of complaint in the opposition press (Elder 1970, p 85). However, he qualifies this by stating that in Sweden, unlike in Britain, it is regarded as nothing out of the ordinary for under secretaries to be active sympathisers with the government, as they do not have to divorce themselves from politics. Swedish ambassadors, according to Elder (1970, p 85), included a sprinkling of men and women aligned to the SDP.

Symbolism

Before the SDP came to power in 1932 Sweden was faced with economic problems and high unemployment. Efforts to resolve these two issues were unsuccessful. Before the election the SDP had unveiled a socialist plan to solve these problems and, as a result, was voted into power by a population anxious for relief from

unemployment. The party went on to implement a pragmatic socialism which led the country to unparalleled prosperity, endearing it to the people, who returned it to power in successive elections.

ADVERSE CONDITIONS AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF OPPOSITION PARTIES

Although dominant parties won elections through their own efforts, the weakness of the opposition contributed to their unusually lengthy stays in power. Political parties, by their nature, seek to capture state power and form governments and once they do so the defeated parties must pick up the pieces, go back to the drawing board, and plan for the next election in order to take over power. Macridis (1973, p 51) argues that opposition is an organised and structured attempt to replace a government according to certain constitutional rules. The following have been identified as factors responsible for the weakness of the opposition: an inappropriate ideology, similar policies to those of the ruling party, factionalism, a particularistic support base, lack of resources, a proliferation of opposition parties, and a failure to form alliances.⁴

CONCLUSION

The BDP, Congress, Mapai, the DC, and the SDP were confronted with the challenge of intervening in the unusual circumstances that prevailed in their countries and bringing normality to their societies. Their involvement was successful and led to political stability. At the helm of these parties in Botswana, India, and Israel, though not in Sweden, were individuals who made an immense contribution to the resolution of these unusual circumstances, who were in the forefront of the formation of new political systems, and whose inspirational leadership was recognised by the citizens of their countries.

After ascending to power the parties could not continue to rely on the circumstances that brought them to victory and had to devise other means to ensure that they continued to win the support of the electorate. Among these means were organisational strength and coherence, continued support of a strong socioeconomic bloc, penetration into society, pragmatism, patronage, the founding symbolism of the party, and a charismatic leader associated with the resolution of the problems prevailing at the foundational elections.

A weak opposition, ironically, contributes to one-party dominance since it fails to act as a bulwark against the domination of the political system by one

4 Again space precludes me from a full discussion. These elements are full treated in the thesis.

party – without a strong opposition voters have no incentive to transfer their votes from the ruling party, even if they are not satisfied with its performance. The opposition parties in the study were all marked by weakness and by the fact that they had a far smaller support base than that of the ruling party.

ANC DOMINATION OF THE SA BODY POLITIC

I would argue that similar factors favour the ANC retaining its dominance in South Africa for quite some time. Its ascent to power was assisted by the role it played in the resolution of the extraordinary circumstances which existed in South Africa in the early 1990s. The party is also acknowledged to have played a far more prominent role than other parties in the struggle against apartheid and, after the organisation was unbanned in 1990, the ANC, led by charismatic Nelson Mandela, played a leading role in the negotiations which established a new political order. Mandela, with his drive, commitment, personal magnetism, and the respect he commanded, was credited as a major factor in the party's victory in the country's first democratic elections, in 1994. The party is also supported by a strong socioeconomic bloc in the form of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Lodge 2004; Rantete 1998).

Once it was unbanned the ANC absorbed the structures of the United Democratic Front and consolidated its support by creating 900 branches and signing up 500 000 new members. It also devised means similar to those of the other parties in this study to consolidate its support. Although the party has made some progress in improving the lives of its largely African constituency it still has a long way to go to keep promises made during election campaigns, but this has not deterred voters from supporting the party in increasing numbers. The ANC employs a ubiquitous system of political patronage at all levels of government and parastatal bodies, using its control of state resources and institutions to dispense patronage not only to its members and sympathisers but to the black community as a whole.

An internally coherent institution, it has penetrated South African society very successfully, thus ensuring that it maintains control of the commanding heights of the society. Not taking its support for granted, it has gone out of its way to retain and increase its support base by infiltrating the informal settlements which have mushroomed in urban areas and by including prominent black people in its parliamentary election lists.

The party has also displayed pragmatism in extending an olive branch to people who served in the former Bantustans and in appointing individuals from opposition parties to serve as the country's ambassadors. Economically, it has dispelled the notion that it is wedded to nationalisation of property.

The party's three election victories have been aided by the fact that there is a weak opposition – a plethora of political parties has contested all three elections and each of the three leading opposition parties appeals to a particularistic support base, some of them associated with the discredited apartheid ideology. As a result they could not make inroads into the ANC's predominantly African constituency, which suffered the most during the apartheid era. At each general and local government election the ANC could count on its symbolism as the party of liberation to convince the electorate to continue to support it despite its failure to deliver services (Booyesen 1999; Habib & Taylor 2001).

From the above exposition it can be concluded that the ANC is following a similar route to that of the five parties that gained dominance in the countries cited above and that it is likely to maintain a position of dominance for at least 25 years, or five consecutive elections.

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THE ROLE OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ZIMBABWE'S POST-ELECTION CRISIS

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ABSTRACT

The political crisis that beset Zimbabwe following its harmonised elections in March 2008 and the controversial presidential run-off poll in June of the same year has triggered heated debate among academics and policy-makers alike. This paper joins this debate. It proposes an analytical framework for our understanding of the crisis and its political ramifications for democratisation in Zimbabwe. In this regard, it problematises the key question, whether or not elections are meaningful to those who have voted if political elites are able to form a government by other means. It unravels the underlying factors behind the post-election crisis, one of these being Zimbabwe's long trajectory of ZANU-PF's political hegemony to the detriment of a viable multipartyism. It investigates SADC's intervention through mediation and how far this has taken the country on its democratisation path. While a political settlement has been achieved with the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA), the extent to which the key political players adhere to and observe the letter and spirit of the agreement remains moot.

INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the political crisis in Zimbabwe after its first-ever harmonised presidential, National Assembly, senate and local council elections on 29 March 2008 and the abortive 2008 presidential run-off. As no presidential candidate garnered the 50 per cent +1 needed to win the presidential race, a run-off poll was held on 27 June 2008. The run-off fuelled intensified political conflict and violence, resulting in the leader of the opposition Movement for Democratic

Change (MDC), Morgan Tsvangirai, withdrawing from the race and throwing the electoral process into disarray.

Although the candidate for the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), the incumbent president, Robert Mugabe, persisted and ran a one-horse race, the credibility of the process and legitimacy of its outcome had already been irretrievably tarnished. The outcome of the election, therefore, became immaterial other than to ensure that externally propelled mediation would play a role in attempts to manage and resolve the post-election impasse. This mediation process was to be facilitated by then-South Africa President Thabo Mbeki, in his capacity as Special Envoy of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and it is this that forms the fulcrum of the discussion in this paper.

SADC has recently played a key role in mediating post-election conflicts in some of its member states. This is a commendable step by the regional body and is in line with the African Union's decision to replace the age-old culture of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states with that of non-indifference. The process, however, is complex and not without its challenges. The mediator must enjoy the confidence of the contending negotiators and be sufficiently detached. It is clear that the SADC mediator in Zimbabwe, former President Thabo Mbeki, did not enjoy the confidence of all parties. As a sitting president, moreover, there was also the possibility that the internal political dynamics of his own country might influence his role or compromise his mediation efforts.

In the very week that a power-sharing agreement was signed by the main parties in Zimbabwe, namely ZANU-PF, led by Robert Mugabe, and the two formations/factions of the MDC, the MDC-T led by Moran Tsvangirai and the MDC-M led by Arthur Mutambara, Mbeki faced political pressures at home, mainly triggered by faction-fighting within his ruling African National Congress (ANC). This infighting culminated in a decision by the ANC's National Executive Committee on Saturday 20 September 2008 to recall Mbeki from his presidency.

Mbeki's mixed fortunes were tellingly evoked by *The Saturday Star*: 'In Mbeki's moment of diplomatic triumph in Zimbabwe, the storm clouds gathered ominously at home' (20 September 2008). The toppling of Mbeki plunged the power-sharing agreement into uncertainty at a time when the distribution of ministerial positions had led to a deadlock that would require particular intervention by the mediator. It is worth noting that the Zimbabwe talks had been facilitated by Mbeki (on behalf of SADC) in collaboration with the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN). The three inter-governmental organisations, which were also guarantors of the Zimbabwe power-sharing agreement, would now have to make a decision about Mbeki's role. The UN and the AU were expected to take their cue from SADC.

This paper unravels the inner dynamics and intricacies of the political crisis in Zimbabwe. In the process, it interrogates the role of SADC within the framework of the Strategic Indicative Plan of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (SIPO) and the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections. Both policy frameworks were adopted during the 2004 Annual Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Mauritius. What strategies did SADC adopt to resolve the post-election crisis in Zimbabwe? Have these worked? Are they acceptable, and sustainable? The article attempts to answer these and other related questions confronting Zimbabwe's crisis-ridden governance trajectory since the ill-fated 2008 elections. But before I tackle these questions I introduce a conceptual framework to inform my analysis. It is to this that the next section turns.

A CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW: DO ELECTIONS SERVE THE PEOPLE OR THE ELITES?

The discussion in this article unfolds against the backdrop of an emerging debate within both academic and policy communities which seeks to question the value of elections to democracy, peace, and stability, especially in the light of post-election developments in Nigeria (2007), Lesotho (2007), and Kenya (2007).

Nigeria's general election was marred by numerous malpractices, including rigging and mismanagement of the process by the election management body (EMB), leading to a disputed outcome followed by a government-sanctioned electoral reform process. Lesotho's election also had a contested outcome, primarily arising from the misapplication of the electoral model, which had been distorted by the formation of informal election pacts by political parties, which, in turn, distorted the allocation of parliamentary seats. In Kenya, the mismanagement of the elections by the EMB as well as entrenched structural conflicts prompted election-related disputes which triggered a near civil war, only averted by a third-party-mediated negotiation process which led to the establishment of a fragile government of national unity.

It should be noted that in all three cases (Nigeria, Lesotho and Kenya), elections triggered political violence, with ghastly consequences for political stability, socio-economic development and the consolidation of democracy. Lesotho's post-election crisis has not, as yet, been resolved. The political crises in Kenya and Zimbabwe were resolved through negotiations that led to some form of power sharing among the political elites. However, in both Kenya and Zimbabwe, the parties to the so-called unity governments still remain worlds apart. This development clearly demonstrates that this power sharing is merely a political marriage of convenience. At the heart of these 'unholy' marriages is

the desire to satiate the self-serving interests of the political class rather than the aspirations of the people as clearly articulated through the ballot.

The bigger question is whether elections deepen democratic governance or merely act as a political smokescreen for the entrenchment of the interests of political elites. This question has become more relevant with the new phenomenon of negotiated governments (Kenya, Zimbabwe) following contested election results.

In one sense, this trend may be seen as part of the resolution of post-election conflicts and the striving for political stability, peace and national harmony by encouraging consociational democracy. In another, it may as well pose a threat to the institutionalisation of a culture of regular democratic elections that build a foundation for sustainable democratic governance, as elites determine election outcomes on behalf of the electorate. This is a clear case of elites winning state power by losing elections.

Therefore, in the main, negotiated governments pose the dilemma of whether political stability and peace should be prioritised over and above democracy, or vice-versa. I argue that there is a need in Africa to pursue peace, stability and national unity in tandem with democratic governance, through credible and genuine elections.

An election is a key ingredient of democracy (Elklit 2001, 2007; Elklit & Reynolds 2005; Sørensen 2008). According to Lindberg (2006, p 1), 'every modern definition of representative democracy includes participatory and contested elections perceived as the legitimate procedure for translation of rule by the people into workable executive and legislative power'. Thus, while an election has its own intrinsic value (citizens' choice of leadership), it also has an instrumental value, namely, to build, nurture and consolidate democratic governance, peace and political stability. This means that an election for an election's sake is an exercise in futility. An election should not be an end in itself, it must be a means to an end. That end is the movement of society towards a more open and pluralistic politics that allows citizens to participate in the choice of their leaders and the governance of national affairs.

If elections do not contribute effectively to the democratic transformation of society they become mere ceremonial rituals used to camouflage illiberal democracies and authoritarian governance. In a recent seminal work, Sørensen (2008) reminds us that not all elections have led to a transition to democratic governance as some African countries have tended to vacillate between democratic 'transition' and 'standstill', while others have experienced democratic 'reversals'.

Many African countries have experienced a democratic standstill and, according to Sørensen (2008, p 65), 'most of these countries are not on the way

to more democracy and will probably remain in the gray zone'. It is these gray-zone regimes that Fareed Zakaria (cited in Haynes 2001) refers to as illiberal democracies, that is, those regimes that, on the face of it, exhibit democratic tendencies but which, under that veneer of democracy, are deeply authoritarian. Some of the characteristic features of illiberalism include vote buying, legal fine-tuning, ethnic affirmative action, emergency laws, and restrictions on the right to organise, debate and voice opinions (Haynes 2001).

There is abundant evidence (including the role of the election management bodies in elections and their relationships with the ruling party) to suggest that Zimbabwe has been in the gray zone of democratisation since the mid-1980s. This means that political transition in the country remains unfinished (see Sachikonye 2005, 2006). Thus, the political regime in Zimbabwe can justifiably be classified as an electoral authoritarian regime. Sachikonye (2005, p 10) aptly notes that

When the second democratization wave (see Huntington 1991) swept across the African continent following the end of the Cold War, Zimbabwe did not take advantage of it. Perhaps with the benefit of hindsight, it did not move quickly or steadily on constitutional reform with the expiry of some racially protective clauses of the Lancaster House constitution in 1990. Electoral reform was similarly not addressed although there were obvious weaknesses in the prevailing system. Although elections were held every five years and a nominal multi-party system maintained, democracy was not deepened nor infused into institutions, practices and values.

Given the deep-seated political polarisation and the escalation of inter-party political violence following the elections of 29 March 2008 the indications were that Zimbabwe was not ready for the presidential run-off slated for 27 June 2008 and it could be perilous to undertake such a venture. In such circumstances an election might not prove to be an appropriate means of transferring power.

That is why it is important not to close the option of a negotiated (as opposed to an elected) unity government, premised upon the principles of power-sharing, which could be given a set time frame within which to work on reviewing the constitution and holding a fresh presidential election. In any event, whatever the outcome of the presidential run-off, it is incumbent upon the winner of the election to prioritise nation building, peace, harmony, reconciliation, and socio-economic recovery and development by making a deliberate effort to establish a government of national unity.

It should be emphasised that negotiated governments should not replace elected governments, they should merely be a stopgap measure intended to

resolve a specific problem and should not serve the term of an ordinarily elected government. For instance, if an ordinary government would serve a period of five years, the negotiated government could serve a shorter period, perhaps 18 months.

Two very worrying trends are discernible in Africa's recent electoral politics. These relate to protracted post-election violence and to elite pacts that emerge through negotiated settlements that tend (either by default or by design) to undermine the democratic value of elections. Post-election violence has tended to be followed by secret talks involving elites and excluding the voters. Popular choice of government through elections is increasingly being replaced by inter-elite negotiations and popularly elected governments by negotiated governments mediated through third parties sanctioned by regional inter-governmental institutions (eg, the East African Community, with the support of the African Union, in Kenya and SADC, with the support of the African Union, in Zimbabwe).

The political settlement of the post-election conflict in Kenya mediated by Kofi Annan which led to a power-sharing agreement involving the feuding elites who neatly shared the spoils of state power by expanding the executive branch of government and, in the process, shelved the election results, is a case in point. There is no doubt that the negotiation that resolved a deep-seated post-election crisis in Zimbabwe, mediated by Thabo Mbeki as the SADC special envoy, has created another elite pact. A reference group comprising representatives from the UN and the AU supported Mbeki's mediation role.

REGIONAL EFFORTS TO MANAGE THE CRISIS

Since 2004 SADC has evolved a fairly interventionist policy to deal with political crises in its member states within the framework of the Strategic Indicative Plan of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (SIPO). SIPO provides a framework for institutionalising democracy and good governance and promoting peace and security in Southern Africa.

Another SADC initiative that aims to advance good governance and political stability is the 2004 SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, which is aimed at promoting and ensuring credible and quality elections that are able to deliver legitimate governments. These principles and guidelines, which were adopted in Mauritius during the SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government in 2004, are part of the SIPO.

The first line of the foreword of SIPO reads: 'peace, security and political stability are the linchpins for socio-economic development' (SADC 2004, p 5). The principal objective of SIPO is to 'create a peaceful and stable political and security

environment through which the region will endeavour to realise its socio-economic objectives' (SADC 2004, p 6). SIPO is divided into four main clusters:

- The Political Sector (democracy and good governance)
- The Defence Sector (military component of security)
- The State Security Sector (policing and intelligence)
- The Public Security Sector (human security)

The SADC Principles and Guidelines have five main components:

- Basic elements for levelling the electoral playing field
- The establishment and deployment of SADC election observer missions (SEOMs)
- Code of Conduct for SEOMs
- Rights and responsibilities of SEOMs
- Responsibilities of member states holding elections

The Principles and Guidelines commit SADC member states to the following best practices in election management, with a view to ensuring high-quality elections and avoiding political instability:

- Full participation of citizens in the political process
- Freedom of association
- Political tolerance
- Elections held at regular intervals, as provided for by the respective national constitutions
- Equal opportunity for all political parties to access the state media
- Equal opportunity to exercise the right to vote and be voted for
- Independence of the judiciary and impartiality of the electoral institutions
- Voter education
- Acceptance and respect by political parties for election results proclaimed to have been free and fair by competent national authorities in accordance with the law of the land
- Challenges to the election results, as provided for in the law of the land.

Since their adoption in 2004 the SADC principles and guidelines have been used by observers in all the member states that have held elections thus far. It is clear that countries in the region have improved their management of elections, especially

with the introduction of EMBs as the principal interlocutors mediating election contests. However, the principles still face challenges in that SADC member states need to translate them into domestic law by means of deliberate efforts to reform the law. This will ensure that they are not merely a voluntary instrument but that they also become a binding proclamation with legal teeth (Wall, Elis, Ayoub, Dundas, Rukambe & Staino 2006). The extent to which Zimbabwe's governance architecture has lived up to the SIPO and SADC principles and guidelines remains moot, given its gray-zone character.

The unfinished or stalled transition to democratisation remains one of the most intractable challenges facing Zimbabwe and until the governance crisis is resolved it is unlikely that any of the other socio-economic challenges will be dealt with adequately.

Sachikonye (2006, p 16) decries the poor record of Zimbabwe in this regard:

Apart from the significant step of attaining Independence in 1980, there has been no transition from the prevailing political system and culture to a more open, inclusive and democratic one. It is the absence of such a structural transition that explains both the continued prevalence and defensiveness of authoritarianism, and the prolonged character of the political crisis especially between 2000 and the present. Attempts at engineering a transition have included mediation efforts to encourage a settlement between the ruling Zanu-PF party and the main opposition movement, the MDC, and the revival of the constitutional reform process. The stalemate between the ruling bloc and the opposition movement explains the stalled transition in Zimbabwe.

The political crisis in Zimbabwe has had adverse effects, both internally and externally, on the country's governance and development prospects, as well as on peace, stability, and regional integration in Southern Africa as a whole. It was in recognition of the deleterious impact of the political crisis that SADC felt compelled to intervene directly. The SADC Extraordinary Summit of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation held in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, on 29 March 2007 appointed President Thabo Mbeki to facilitate dialogue between the ruling ZANU-PF and the two factions of the opposition MDC.

The primary goal of the Mbeki mediation process was to strive towards a resolution of the governance crisis that would also set the stage for the steady recovery, reconstruction, and renewal of Zimbabwe's ailing economy. There is no gainsaying that at the heart of the country's current dire economic circumstances

lies a deep-seated governance crisis. It was this crisis that the SADC-mediated negotiation process was intended to address, thereby paving the way for a smooth post-conflict economic recovery and development process.

According to a renowned Zimbabwean political analyst, Brian Rafopoulos (*M & G March 2008*), Mbeki approached the inter-party dialogue process with three objectives in mind:

Firstly, both parties should agree to hold parliamentary elections in 2008. Secondly, they should agree on the steps to be taken to ensure that all concerned accept the outcome of the elections as representing the will of the people of Zimbabwe. Thirdly, that there should be agreement by all political parties and other social forces on the measures that should be implemented and respected in order to facilitate a legitimate election.

The mediation, which started in earnest on 17 June 2007, was only concluded on 12 September 2008. The initial agenda agreed to by the parties to the talks included the following:

- i. The Constitution;
 - a. Process
 - b. Substantive proposals
- ii. The Electoral Laws
- iii. Security Legislation
 - a. Public Order and Security Act (POSA)
 - b. The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA)
- iv. Communication and Media
 - a. Broadcasting Services Act
 - b. External radio stations
- v. Political Climate
 - a. Demilitarization of state institutions
 - b. Hostile rhetoric
 - c. Militias
 - d. State aid
 - e. The role of traditional leaders
 - f. The lifting of sanctions

- g. The land question
- h. Cessation of external interference; and
- i. Respect for national events

Although the negotiation process moved at a snail's pace, it yielded modest achievements, including amendments to the Electoral Act, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Act, the Public Order and Security Act, the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and the Broadcasting Services Act. All these reforms led to the amendment of the Zimbabwe Constitution to give effect to the agreed changes.

In the process of affecting the reform measures ZANU-PF called what was, to all intents and purposes, a snap election in March 2008, plunging the negotiations into disarray. The two MDC factions protested the holding of an election before a constitutional review process had been undertaken, while ZANU-PF insisted that the election would go ahead, leading to a deadlock in the negotiations.

The harmonised elections on 29 March 2008 took place in the context of a stalled negotiation process. The president announced the date without prior consultation with the parties involved in the negotiations and well before the negotiations had been concluded, to the chagrin of the opposition parties and the discomfort of Mbeki – it is unclear whether or not he was consulted on the decision. Until that point the negotiations had resulted in a number of constitutional amendments and legal reforms aimed at improving the management of the electoral process and the inclusiveness of electoral politics in Zimbabwe. The major reforms were introduced by Constitutional Amendment 18 of 2007, the main aspects of which were:

- the harmonisation of presidential and parliamentary elections in March 2008;
- provision for two houses of Parliament to sit jointly as an electoral college to choose a new president by a two-thirds majority should the president resign, die, be impeached or become incapacitated in office;
- an increase in the number of members of the lower house from 150 to 210 and of the upper house from 66 to 93;
- the establishment of a human rights commission;
- the establishment of an Independent Electoral Commission

ICG 2007, p 5

The March 2008 election itself was not marred by political violence of the magnitude witnessed during the three previous elections (the 2000 parliamentary

elections, 2002 presidential elections and 2005 National Assembly and senatorial elections). This, in part, explained the political stability that prevailed prior to and during the poll itself. Despite a number of challenges, including questions about the impartiality of the EMB, the opposition MDC won the elections, as is vividly depicted in Table 1.

Table 1
Results of the National Assembly Elections 29 March 2008

Party	Seats	% Seats
MDC-T	100	47.83
ZANU-PF	99	46.86
MDC-M	10	4.83
Independent	1	0.48
Others	0	0.00
Total	210	100.00

Source: EISA Website 2008

The process of managing and announcing the results was long and laborious – it was five weeks before the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) announced the official results ‘amid mounting regional and international pressure’ (ICG 2008, p 5). The MDC-T won 100 seats (47.83%), ZANU-PF 99 (46.86%), and the MDC-M 10 (4.83%), while Jonathan Moyo, an independent candidate, won one seat.

Although the MDC had won the National Assembly elections it remained a divided party. It was (and still is), therefore, susceptible to the political machinations of ZANU-PF. Keen observers of Zimbabwe’s political scene will know that ZANU-PF has been honing its Machiavellian skills since 1980.

One of its major achievements was the 1987 Unity Accord with the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU), which led to the virtual demise of the latter. Furthermore, while Morgan Tsvangirai was able to garner a majority of votes in the first round of the presidential poll, he failed to achieve the required 50%+1 to lay a solid claim to Zimbabwe’s top political office, as the results in Table 2 illustrate.

Table 2
Results of the Presidential Elections 29 March 2008

Candidate	Party	Total valid votes	% votes
Morgan Tsvangirai	MDC-T	1 195 562	47.87
Robert Mugabe	ZANU-PF	1 079 730	43.24
Simba Makoni	Independent	207 470	8.31
Langton Towungana	Independent	14 503	0.58
Total		2 497 265	100.00

Source: EISA Website 2008

The results reflected in Table 2 related closely to a projection of Zimbabwe's premier elections agency, the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN). Using a scientifically sound parallel voter tabulation exercise, which, among other things, involved analysing results posted at polling stations, ZESN projected that Tsvangirai would lead the pack of presidential candidates, securing 49.4 per cent of the vote, followed by Mugabe, with 41.8 per cent. Thus, the ZESN predicted that there would be no outright winner of the presidential race, a development that would compel the ZEC to organise a run-off poll.

While the MDC won the National Assembly race and its leader was a mere 2 per cent shy of winning the presidential race, the senatorial poll produced an initial draw between the ruling and opposition parties, as Table 3 shows. The Senate had been re-established in 2005 and an election held in the same year was won by ZANU-PF (see Chiroro 2005). The size of the Senate was expanded from 66 to 93 by means of Constitutional Amendment 18. Article 34 of the Constitution provides that the Senate comprises 93 members.

As will become clear below, ZANU-PF used the political advantage acquired after the 2008 SADC Summit to appoint further senators unilaterally and, in the process, effectively changed the political complexion and balance of power in the upper house. Ordinarily the Senate would have been fully constituted after the new inclusive government was in place, a process that would have involved political horse-trading between and among the negotiating parties. However, it ended up being a solely ZANU-PF body, with no input from the MDC formations.

Table 3
Composition of the Senate

Number of appointees or elected members	Senatorial designation
60	Elected from single member plurality constituencies (6 from each of the 10 provinces). Special constituencies were delimited.
16	Chiefs elected to the Senate by their peers, on the basis of 2 from each of the 8 non-metropolitan provinces. The 8 Provincial Assemblies of Chiefs met on 31 March 2008 for the purpose of these elections.
10	The governor from each of the 10 provinces, constituting <i>ex officio</i> members of Senate. Governors are appointed by the president of Zimbabwe.
2	The president and deputy president of the Council of Chiefs are also <i>ex officio</i> members of the Senate.
5	Members appointed by the president.
93	Total of 60 elected and 33 appointed

Source: Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Act (No 18) 2007, s 34; EISA Election Observation Mission Report 2008

Table 4
Results of the Senatorial Elections 29 March 2008

Party	Seats	% seats
ZANU-PF	30	50
MDC-T	24	40
MDC-M	6	10
Total	60	100

Source: EISA Website 2008

The political situation deteriorated sharply after the elections of March 2008, thereby setting the scene for a presidential run-off marked by political violence, displacement of citizens, rapid deterioration in socio-economic conditions and the mass exodus of Zimbabweans to neighbouring countries, notably South Africa and Botswana.

It may not be easy to unearth and accurately determine the main factors behind the spate of political violence that followed the harmonised elections, however, anecdotal evidence points to the possibility that ZANU-PF's defeat was not well received by the party, whose tight control of the repressive apparatus of the state allowed it to mobilise to win back its lost glory.

It should be recalled that Zimbabwe was not accustomed to alternation of power (as is, for instance, Mauritius) and this was the first time ZANU-PF's electoral hegemony had been shattered. Undoubtedly, this came as a shock to the party's political heavyweights, 18 of whom lost their parliamentary seats. Among these were Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa (one of the party's chief negotiators), Agriculture Minister Joseph Made, Women's League leader Oppah Muchinguri, Energy Minister Mike Nyambuya, Mines Minister Amos Midzi, Public and Interactive Affairs Minister Chen Chimutengwede, Transport Minister Chris Mushowe, Kumirai Kangai, the longest-serving ZANU-PF politburo member, and former chief of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces Vitalis Zvinvashe (see ICG 2008, p 3).

ZANU-PF was thrown into a political quandary by the outcome of the election and, in its efforts to respond, two factions fought for the control of the soul of the party. These were the moderate faction (political doves) and the hardliner faction (political hawks), with Reserve Bank Governor Gideon Gono, who has enormous influence over Mugabe, acting as a bridge between them.

The dominant group would push its agenda influencing Robert Mugabe to act accordingly and effectively determining the post-election survival strategy for both Mugabe and ZANU-PF. The reform-minded group of moderates was led primarily by Joyce Mujuru and Joseph Msika (both vice-presidents), who 'called privately for Mugabe to step down following a negotiated settlement' (ICG 2008, p 3).

A status-quo-minded group of hardliners (political hawks), led by Rural Housing Minister Emmerson Mnangagwa, with enormous support from the securocrats, including Defence Force Commander Constantine Chiwenga, Air Force Marshall Perence Shiri, and Police Commissioner Augustine Chihuri, pushed for a political-cum-militaristic approach. This approach was meant to reverse the significance of the outcome of the National Assembly elections and re-engineer the ZANU-PF hegemony by fair or foul means.

Gono and the Mujuru faction of ZANU-PF preferred a negotiated settlement of the political crisis which would obviate a run-off poll. Gono made an unsuccessful

attempt to caution the government against organising a run-off, arguing that a negotiated settlement should take place first and raising the following arguments, among others:

- The huge cost of the election (US\$60-million).
- The logistical difficulties of organising a run-off within 21 days.
- The strong possibility that losing ZANU-PF candidates would switch allegiance to the opposition, making them unreliable during the campaign.
- The possible serious rifts the run-off would inflict on Zimbabwe's already polarised society.
- The possibility of 'imperialist forces' smuggling help to the opposition to secure its victory

ICG 2008, p 4

Despite these reservations Mugabe opted for the run-off, a clear signal that the hardline faction (led by Mnangagwa) had won the struggle for the soul of the party. Mnangagwa is perceived as the successor to Robert Mugabe and a possible candidate for one of the vice-presidential positions as long as Mugabe remains at the helm of the state.

The anti-MDC sentiment of the security chiefs is no secret – they have not shied away from making their total disdain for Tsvangirai known – and it is their faction that dominated ZANU-PF and influenced all the processes before, during, and after the disastrous run-off poll. Mnangagwa played a key role as manager of Mugabe's political campaign and the security chiefs played a critical role in orchestrating the state-sponsored political violence. The existence of such state-sponsored violence has been confirmed by various reports, although it has also been acknowledged that the MDC, too, was responsible for some of the political violence. The joint responsibility of the two parties for perpetrating violence ahead of the run-off is acknowledged in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that set the stage for the power-sharing deal that was eventually struck.

Political violence increased as preparations were made for a controversial presidential run-off that Tsvangirai boycotted in protest, perceiving the violence as state orchestrated. Consequently, the run-off, which took place on 29 June 2008, became a farcical one-horse race in which Mugabe ran alone and was, predictably, declared the winner. Immediately after a swift swearing-in ceremony Mugabe left for Egypt to attend the AU Summit as head of state.

It is worth noting that various influential voices, including the United Nations, the AU, and SADC, had cautioned against holding the run-off election, especially after Tsvangirai pulled out of the race. Even Mbeki tried to dissuade

the Zimbabwe government from going ahead. ZANU-PF perceived the poll as strategically significant for its survival and that of its leader in two ways. First, the run-off was meant as a political ploy to make up for the party's loss of the National Assembly election to the opposition. The loss had shifted the political balance of forces decisively in favour of the MDC, a shift bolstered by Tsvangirai's defeat of Mugabe in the presidential poll, even though he had not won the 50%+1 required for him to lay claim to the presidency.

The one-man race in June was a tactic clearly intended to turn the tables, claim the moral high ground for ZANU-PF, and wrong-foot the MDC. Having re-positioned ZANU-PF strategically, the outcome of the shambolic run-off would embolden the party ahead of the tough negotiations aimed at putting in place a power-sharing mechanism in the form of an inclusive multiparty government. The election outcome gave ZANU-PF the upper hand as it negotiated as a sitting government, with the MDC negotiating from a position of weakness, as a divided opposition.

Negotiations continued after the run-off poll and, on 21 July 2008, the negotiators signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Harare. The MoU formalised the power-sharing talks that committed the parties to 'a dialogue with each other with a view to creating a genuine, viable, permanent and sustainable solution to the Zimbabwean situation and, in particular, to implement this Memorandum of Understanding' (MoU, 2008, p 2). The MoU outlined the agenda of the talks as follows:

Objectives and Priorities of a new Government

- ❑ Economic
 - Restoration of economic stability and growth;
 - The termination of sanctions
 - Tackling the land question
- ❑ Political
 - New Constitution
 - Promotion of equality, national healing and cohesion, and unity
 - External interference
 - Free political activity
 - Rule of law
 - State organs and institutions
 - Legislative agenda priorities

On the basis of this MoU the parties entered into a negotiation process that was originally planned to last for two weeks. However, because of heated controversy

over some contentious issues, particularly the power-sharing arrangement, the agreement on an inclusive government was finally signed only on 15 September 2008 in Harare in a ceremony attended by heads of state and government of the 14 SADC member states.

THE OUTCOME OF THE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT

The SADC special envoy facilitating the negotiations had anticipated that a settlement would be clinched within two weeks after the signing of the MoU. However, this was not to be. The negotiations dragged on, punctuated by the suspension of the talks from time to time, as the negotiators failed to agree on some key issues.

President Mbeki thought that even if the negotiators did not meet the original two-week deadline a deal would be reached before the 28th Summit of the SADC Heads of State and Government scheduled for Johannesburg on 15-17 August 2008. However, by this time no deal had been clinched, to the chagrin of the facilitator and the disappointment of civil society organisations, which lobbied the SADC Summit to take a more robust and firmer stance on two political crises – one in Swaziland, the other in Zimbabwe.

With regard to Swaziland, a civil society forum organised by the SADC Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (SADC-CNGO) noted that a comprehensive and all-inclusive constitutional process would have to facilitate:

- free operation and full participation of political parties in the governance of Swaziland, and
- the holding of democratic elections where political parties are free to contest for election in the country.

The statement further observed that

the common values of SADC as expressed in the spirit and letter of the SADC Treaty and its Protocols as well as the legitimate expectations of SADC citizens that democratic principles are fulfilled in the SADC region do not allow undemocratic States to be appointed to head critical organs of SADC. Accordingly, we urge SADC not to appoint Swaziland to head the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security before the constitutional and electoral challenges facing this country are solved and the SADC Principles and Guidelines on Democratic Elections are respected by Swaziland.

The SADC-CNGO expressed grave concern about the crisis in Zimbabwe and urged the heads of state and government to ensure:

- that Civil Society be formally included as participants in the present negotiations so that whatever agreement is reached through the negotiations reflects the true will of the people;
- the immediate lifting of the ban on the activities of all NGOs operating in Zimbabwe, including the social welfare and humanitarian organizations that hitherto delivered critical services to poor and vulnerable communities in rural and peri-urban areas;
- the opening up of democratic space to ensure the unrestrained operation of civil society groups, trade unions and all political parties;
- the instant cessation of politically motivated violence, intimidation and acts of harassment against ordinary Zimbabweans, NGO Activists, and Human Rights Defenders;
- the establishment of just, democratic and accountable governance particularly through de-politicization, demilitarization, review and reform of public institutions such as the civil service, state intelligence services, the police force, the army, judiciary, traditional leadership and the legislature;
- restoration of the rule of just law, through a comprehensive, people-driven and all-inclusive constitutional review process whose product must be endorsed by the Zimbabwean citizenry;
- a clear programme of economic reconstruction based on consensually agreed national development strategies. Such a reconstruction programme must take due cognisance of the need to achieve poverty eradication as well as sustainable and equitable economic growth. In the immediate term, such a programme of economic reconstruction must provide social safety nets for the most vulnerable sections of the Zimbabwean population as well as ensuring the effective functioning of basic social services such as sanitation, health, education, food security and energy

SADC-CNGO 2008

Prior to the 2008 SADC Summit civil society organisations had played various roles in influencing states to find an amicable and acceptable resolution to the Zimbabwe crisis. By far the most remarkable civil society agitation for the speedy resolution of the crisis was the concerted lobby by the trade union movement to block a Chinese ship, *An Yue Jiang*, from docking in the harbours of any SADC

member state to offload weapons that were destined for Zimbabwe just weeks before the presidential run-off poll.

The ship, carrying 77 tons of arms, including bullets, mortar bombs, grenades and assault rifles, initially docked in Durban but failed to offload its deadly cargo when the Transport and Allied Workers Union of South Africa, allied to the Congress of South African Trade Union (COSATU), refused to unload the arms. This prompted a concerted lobby by COSATU that saw other SADC countries, notably Mozambique, Namibia, and Angola, taking a similar stand. This civil society pressure further prompted the then-chairperson of SADC, Zambia's former head of state, Levy Mwanawasa, to call, during the SADC International Conference on Poverty and Development held in Mauritius, for all SADC countries to refuse to allow the ship to dock and unload the weapons.

For their part, the SADC heads of state and government were clearly divided on the Zimbabwe crisis, with some adopting a far more critical position than others, arguing that SADC had failed to arrest the situation and to normalise the political and socio-economic situation in the country. Among those who were most critical were Mwanawasa; the new head of state of Botswana, Seretse Ian Khama; and Tanzania's president, Jakaya Kikwete, who was, at the time, chair of the African Union.

Mwanawasa was, however, seriously ill at the time of the summit and could not attend. Zambia was represented by its Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kabinga Pande. Ian Khama deliberately boycotted the summit because he did not recognise President Robert Mugabe as the legitimate head of state. A press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Botswana ahead of the summit stated that:

Botswana does not accept the results of the June 27th run-off election in Zimbabwe as it violated the core principles of SADC, the African Union and United Nations. The legal process of producing a Government in Zimbabwe has failed leading to the on-going talks aimed at forming a Government in that country. The authorities in Harare under the present circumstances should not be represented at the political level at any SADC Summit as that would be equal to giving them legitimacy.

Government of Botswana 15 August 2008

This statement, together with Khama's boycott of the summit, was the most glaring evidence of the divisions within SADC over the political crisis in Zimbabwe. The communiqué issued by SADC's Organ on Politics, Defence and Security (OPDS), an adjunct or political security unit of SADC, then under the leadership of the

troika of King Mswati III of Swaziland (chair), President Armando Guebuza of Mozambique (deputy chair) and President Jose dos Santos (out-going chair), was optimistic that the negotiations would 'lead to the signing of a global agreement'.

It encouraged the parties to 'sign any outstanding agreements and conclude the negotiations as a matter of urgency, to restore political stability in Zimbabwe' (SADC 2008). But it was also clear that the OPDS was sceptical about a speedy resolution of Zimbabwe's political impasse through negotiations. This may explain why its communiqué also observed that 'while negotiations are continuing, it may be necessary to convene Parliament to give effect to the will of the people as expressed in the Parliamentary elections held on 29 March 2008' (SADC 2008).

A divided SADC seemed unsure how best to respond to the Zimbabwe crisis, a fact that may explain, in part, why it did not deliberate on the subject but delegated this responsibility to the OPDS, creating the dilemma of two centres of power, which has been a problem (real and/or potential) since the establishment of the OPDS in 1996. It also goes some way to explaining why the Summit's communiqué did not pronounce on any substantial aspects of the crisis, merely observing that 'with regard to the on-going challenges in Zimbabwe, Summit noted the outcomes of the Extra-Ordinary Summit of the Organ held during the course of the Summit and re-affirmed its commitment to work with the people of Zimbabwe in order to overcome the challenges they are facing' (SADC 2008).

The OPDS, left with the substantive deliberations and search for a regional solution, noted that because of the lack of progress towards a power-sharing deal through the creation of an inclusive government the National Assembly of Zimbabwe might be inaugurated and be involved in the search for a solution. Since this recommendation was made there have been two developments:

- The National Assembly has been formally inaugurated and an MDC Member of Parliament elected as Speaker of the House.
- The remaining members of the Senate have been appointed and a ZANU-PF member of Parliament elected President of the Senate

The inauguration of the National Assembly placed pressure on MDC-T, which ZANU-PF and Arthur Mutambara accused of stalling the negotiation process by not signing the draft agreement. However, more importantly, in inaugurating the Senate ZANU-PF consolidated its grip on the levers of state power, ensuring that Mugabe appointed all governors and other non-elected members of Senate without consulting with the other parties.

These two developments tilted the negotiation process critically in favour of ZANU-PF and away from an opposition whose electoral moral high ground

had been progressively whittled away. In the process ZANU-PF violated article 9 of the MoU, which provides that

the Parties shall not, during the subsistence of the Dialogue, take any decisions or measures that have a bearing on the agenda of the Dialogue, save by consensus. Such decisions or measures include, but are not limited to convening of Parliament or formation of a new government

MoU 2008, p 4

At about the time the National Assembly was inaugurated and the Senate constituted, ZANU-PF and President Mugabe were also threatening to constitute a new Cabinet without consulting with the MDC.

The political balance of forces had shifted radically in favour of ZANU-PF during and after the 2008 SADC Summit and it was little wonder that even the political settlement agreed upon and signed on 15 September 2008 to all intents and purposes reinforced the dominance of ZANU-PF and relegated the MDC to the position of junior partner in the proposed inclusive government.

The signing of the political deal, however, ultimately averted the crisis and ignited a measure of political optimism. Entitled 'Agreement Between the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the Two Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Formations, on Resolving the Challenges Facing Zimbabwe', the deal covered agreements on a wide range of issues. The key elements of the power-sharing agreement were:

- retention of the executive presidency with Robert Mugabe still at the helm of the state;
- a call for the lifting of targeted international sanctions;
- commissioning of a land audit;
- a referendum on the new Constitution, to be held within 18 months of the signing of the agreement;
- the setting up of a mechanism for national healing;
- re-training of the security establishment in human rights and democratic governance;
- establishment of a national youth training programme;
- no by-elections for one year;
- public media to provide fair and balanced reporting;
- government to process journalists' applications to work in Zimbabwe;
- foreign-funded radio stations to be discouraged;

- Zimbabwean expatriates to be encouraged to return home;
- gender parity to be a major consideration in all spheres of government, especially Cabinet.

For the purposes of this article the most remarkable, if controversial, aspect of the deal related to the power-sharing formula agreed upon, which defined how the elites would redistribute state power among themselves without recourse to electoral outcomes. The agreement endorsed the idea of an inclusive government involving the parties that took part in the negotiations and not those that took part in the elections, hence the glaring exclusion of Simba Makoni and his Mavambo-Kusile-Dawn Movement, despite Makoni's impeccable political and technical credentials. Article XX of the Agreement sets out the framework for the inclusive government, defines its character and powers and its make-up. It consists of:

- a president (Robert Mugabe) who still enjoys executive power and chairs Cabinet and the National Security Council;
- two vice-presidents, both from ZANU-PF (retaining the 1987 Unity Accord, which involved appointing one of the vice-presidents from ZAPU);
- a prime minister (Morgan Tsvangirai), who enjoys some modicum of executive power, is a deputy chair of Cabinet, chairs the Council of Ministers and is a member of the National Security Council;
- two deputy prime ministers, one from MDC-T (Thokozani Khupe) and one from MDC-M (Arthur Mutambara);
- 31 ministers – 15 nominated by ZANU-PF, 13 by MDC-T and 3 by MDC-M. Of the 31 three may be appointed from outside Parliament with rights to sit and speak in the House but with no entitlement to vote;
- 15 deputy ministers – eight nominated by ZANU-PF, six by MDC-T and one by MDC-M.

Ministers and deputy ministers may be relieved of their duties only after consultations among the leaders of the political parties participating in the inclusive government.

With the overall structures of the new government agreed, the major challenge became the distribution of political spoils among the belligerent elites in the form of ministerial and other public posts. This process, which was intended to begin immediately after the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA), was postponed on a number of occasions.

The distribution of ministerial and other public posts (such as the provincial

governerships, the governorship of the Reserve Bank, and the attorney-general) would ultimately signal clearly which party enjoys the political hegemony with the power to shape and influence considerably how the new Zimbabwean state will evolve.

As indicated above, ZANU-PF has managed, since the 2008 SADC Summit, to pull the rug out from beneath the MDC's post-election moral high ground and bulldoze the inauguration of the National Assembly and the Senate. For a party that lost the parliamentary poll and faced global criticism for holding a one-person presidential run-off, it has achieved a good deal.

Media reports attribute the delay in constituting a meeting of Mugabe, Tsvangirai and Mutambara to agree on Cabinet appointments to the fact that the ZANU-PF Politburo itself had first to meet and pronounce on the issue. It must be noted that within ZANU-PF itself there was no unanimity on the agreement and that factional politics took centre-stage when decisions had to be made on how best to implement it.

The moderate faction of ZANU-PF felt left out of the deal (especially the two vice-presidents, Joseph Msika [subsequently deceased] and Joyce Mujuru). The hardliners and securocrats were also uneasy, complaining that the deal ceded too much power to the 'Western-backed' MDC. Against this backdrop ZANU-PF could not agree on how to share the ministerial posts with the two MDC formations.

The heated disagreements revolved around the allocation of the ministries of Defence, Home Affairs, Finance, Trade and Industry, Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, and Information, among others. SADC has tried, through Mbeki's 'quiet diplomacy', to nudge the parties to the GPA to ensure genuine power sharing, but, beneath the diplomatic veneer, the political hegemony of ZANU-PF has been reproduced in a different guise. This, in part, explains why the inclusive government has not worked to the satisfaction of all the parties, with the MDC constantly protesting to SADC.

As a result of the lack of progress in implementing the GPA and problems afflicting the inclusive government SADC convened an Extra-Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government in Pretoria on 26-27 January 2009. This Summit focused specifically on the political crisis in Zimbabwe and took the following decisions:

- (i) The parties shall endeavour to cause parliament to pass the Constitutional Amendment Act 19 by February 5, 2009;
- (ii) The prime minister and the deputy prime ministers shall be sworn in by February 11, 2009;

- (iii) The ministers and deputy ministers shall be sworn in on February 13, 2009, which will conclude the process of the formation of the inclusive government;
- (iv) The Joint-Monitoring and Implementation Committee (Jomic), provided for in the Global Political Agreement shall be activated immediately. The first meeting of Jomic shall be convened by the Facilitator on January 30, 2009, and shall, among other things, elect the chairpersons;
- (v) The allocation of ministerial portfolios endorsed by the SADC Extraordinary Summit held on November 9, 2008, shall be reviewed six (6) months after the inauguration of the inclusive government;
- (vi) The appointments of the Reserve Bank Governor and the Attorney-General will be dealt with by the inclusive government after its formation; and
- (vii) the negotiators of the parties shall meet immediately to consider the National Security Bill submitted by the MDC-T as well as the formula for the distribution of the Provincial Governors

SADC 2009a, p 2

Some of the above decisions have not yet been implemented, including the contentious issue of the appointment of the reserve bank governor and the attorney-general. This, in part, explains why the MDC mounted a campaign for SADC to take a much more robust position in relation to ZANU-PF's stalling on the implementation of the GPA just ahead of the 29th Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government held on 7-8 September 2009 in Kinshasa.

It was anticipated that the 2009 Summit would deal, among other things, with the problems facing the implementation of the GPA. However, the Summit issued a diplomatic statement noting 'progress made in the implementation of the Global Political Agreement' and calling on 'the international community to remove all forms of sanctions against Zimbabwe' (SADC 2009b, p 2).

Interestingly, former President Mbeki, did not attend the Kinshasa Summit to give his progress report, as did SADC's mediators in Lesotho (Sir Ketumile Masire, former president of Botswana) and in Madagascar (Mr Joachim Chissano, former president of Mozambique).

CONCLUSION

By way of conclusion, a number of interesting features of the Inclusive Government Agreement will be highlighted. Some of these features are positive, others negative.

Firstly, the deal is important as it has brought about the political stability that may lay the foundations for post-conflict reconstruction and development in Zimbabwe. It is worth emphasising that while the deal seems poised to consolidate peace, security, and political stability, its value in facilitating democratisation remains moot.

Secondly, while the deal is intended to bring about an inclusive government it includes only the parties that participated in the negotiation process, excluding others, for instance, Simba Makoni, whose party contested both the parliamentary and the presidential elections. Its inclusivity does not, moreover, fully represent the country's variegated political spectrum.

Thirdly, the process leading up to the formation of the new government, and the very composition of that government, excluded those who had voted in the elections as well as civil society organisations, whose voices were severely curtailed. This is an important point because it suggests that instead of empowering people post-election negotiated elite pacts tend to disempower them, empowering, instead, the political elites.

The popular votes of the Zimbabwean people have been set aside and the whims and caprices of the political elite have dominated the process. The agenda for the dialogue was secret, the venue remained secret outside the borders of Zimbabwe, and the deal relating to the new government remained secret until the public pomp and ceremony that marked the signing of the GPA.

Fourthly, the agreement contains no clause limiting the lifespan of the inclusive government. Consequently, it is not clear whether it is a transitional authority or a government of national unity like that created in Kenya after that country's 2007 election. During the negotiation process there were two schools of thought about this issue. The MDC-T argued that there was a need for an 18-month transitional authority to work on a new constitution and call a fresh election at the end of its tenure. ZANU-PF preferred a government of national unity with a lifespan of five years. Currently, there is a constitution-making process underway, coordinated by a Parliamentary Select Committee and aimed at developing a new constitution, paving the way for a constitutional referendum to be followed by a fresh general election. If this is the route the inclusive government takes it will qualify as transitional, but if it takes the route of a normal period of tenure it is bound to fail as a problem-solving mechanism.

Fifthly, the deal establishing the inclusive government fails to address the issue of security sector reform as part of the agenda for governance reform in Zimbabwe. This is a major missing link and a political lacuna, given that Zimbabwe urgently needs to demilitarise its violent politics and depoliticise its security establishment. There is no doubt that Zimbabwean politics has been militarised and the security establishment politicised over time, a trend that has intensified since 2000.

The International Crisis Group report of 2007 acknowledges this:

Zimbabwe's politics was militarized and military coercion became the currency of politics. From March 2000, the state began Operation Tsuro, in which military means were used for political ends. The security apparatus thus became Mugabe's primary source of power.

ICG 2007, p 6

This explains, in part, why the military chiefs declared 'before the 2002 presidential election that they would not salute a president lacking "liberation credentials", a thinly veiled reference to Tsvangirai, a trade unionist who did not fight in that struggle' (ICG 2007, p 7). Consequently, the Joint Operations Command (JOC) plays a central role in policy-making, often overshadowing the Cabinet on many decisions.

The issue of security sector reform cannot be addressed merely by dividing the security sector ministries and departments between ZANU-PF and the MDC, as is currently the case. Much more needs to be done if the GPA is to transcend mere declaratory platitudes and, in the process, transform Zimbabwe's governance architecture and political culture into one of democracy, peace and sustainable socio-economic development.

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DO ELECTIONS MATTER IN ZANZIBAR?¹

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ABSTRACT

Do multiparty elections facilitate or hinder the process of democratic consolidation in Zanzibar? Since Tanzania's return to a multiparty system in 1992 three rounds of general elections have been held in Zanzibar, all of them marred by gross irregularities, fraud, violence, and insecurity. All three elections were also followed by a political stalemate, with a major opposition party rejecting defeat, refusing to recognise the elected government, and challenging the results. Consequently, the legitimacy of the elected government has remained questionable for more than a decade. This puts in question the reliance on the 'election-centric concept' of the 'consolidation' phase, which tends to place a great deal of hope in the holding of periodic elections. This by no means suggests that elections do not matter in Zanzibar. They matter in terms of keeping the flame of democratic struggle alive. Also, as the findings in this article indicate, there is a need to pay attention not only to elections but, equally importantly, to other processes and institutions of governance that enhance the rule of law and individual rights.

INTRODUCTION

Do multiparty elections in Zanzibar facilitate or hinder the process of democratic consolidation? This is the key question this article attempts to address. In a way the arguments set out here bring to the fore the contentious relationship

¹ The United Republic of Tanzania, has, since 26 April 1964, comprised two former sovereign states, Tanganyika and the Zanzibar Islands off the East African coast. Tanzania is a unitary state with two separate governments, the Union government and the Zanzibar government, each with its own executive, judiciary and legislature. Whereas the Zanzibar government exercises sovereignty over all domestic and non-union matters, the Union government exercises jurisdiction over such matters as defence and security, foreign affairs, police, emergency powers, citizenship, external borrowing and trade, mineral oil resources, higher education, the court of appeal, and the registration of political parties, among others.

between elections and liberalism.² That is to say, can elections enhance democratic consolidation in the absence of the rule of law and the protection of individual rights?

Since the return to a multiparty system in 1992 three general elections have been held in Zanzibar – in 1995, 2000 and 2005. Despite this, the prospects for democratic consolidation in the country appear bleak because all three elections were marred by gross irregularities, fraud, violence, insecurity and political stalemate, with the major opposition party rejecting defeat, refusing to recognise the elected government, and challenging the results. The two major political parties, the ruling ‘Chama cha Mapinduzi’ (CCM) and the opposition, the Civic United Front (CUF), are still in a tug-of-war over the fundamental rules of political competition and participation and the legitimacy of the elected government has remained in question for more than a decade.

Thus, whereas elections are widely regarded as being one of the key elements of liberal democracy, in Zanzibar they seem to be inimical to the very process of democratic consolidation. This is largely because it is during elections that mutually agreed rules of the game are breached, violent acts are committed, the rule of law is abrogated, voters are disenfranchised, insurrection is attempted, and human rights are violated. Indeed, rather than enhancing consensus, acquiescence and reconciliation, post-election periods are frequently dominated by mistrust, exclusivity, intolerance and deadlock.

However, although elections do not seem to be instrumental in consolidating democracy in Zanzibar they still matter in terms of keeping the flame of democratic struggle alive. Indeed, the holding of periodic multiparty elections should go hand in hand with strengthening the rule of law and protecting individual rights.

The next section presents the theoretical debate about elections and democratic consolidation, setting out the analytical framework of section three, which analyses the extent to which multiparty elections provide a conducive environment for democratic consolidation in Zanzibar.

ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION: CONTINGENT RELATIONSHIPS

The adversarial, disruptive and violent nature of political development in Zanzibar has made the journey towards democracy a stormy one. Throughout their history of competitive politics voters have been divided almost equally between the two major political parties, the CCM and the CUF. Although a winner

2 For a detailed discussion of this issue see Zakaria 2004; Carothers 2007.

was declared in each of the multiparty elections in 1995, 2000 and 2005 all three have resulted in disputes over which party actually received the majority of votes and should be entrusted with a mandate to rule. Thus, while elections are considered to be a key factor in democratic consolidation in Zanzibar they have not produced the desired effect.

This calls into question the tendency to rely on what Harbeson (1999, pp 42-43) terms the 'election-centric conception' of the 'consolidation' phase, which places considerable reliance on the holding of periodic elections. According to Harbeson this concept relies on certain implicit assumptions. These are:

- that democratic elections will produce a change of government from an incumbent authoritarian to a new democratically inclined regime;
- that initial multiparty elections will generate the momentum necessary to produce subsequent, broader patterns of democratisation and hence consolidation;
- that the polity itself will remain sufficiently stable to sustain the transition and subsequent consolidation phases of democratisation.

In reality, however, various circumstances have resulted in a relationship that has not been unilinear. Among these circumstances are the nature of the political system, the modality of political transition to a democratic regime, and what Snyder (2006, pp 292-310) calls 'extra-electoral factors'.

In assessing the state of democratic consolidation in Zanzibar this article explores some of the conditions (or factors) that facilitate or hinder the process of democratic consolidation. In this context the work of Valenzuela (2000) becomes relevant, particularly to divided societies such as Zanzibar. Valenzuela has identified some key facilitative conditions that enhance democratic consolidation. The focus here is to assess the extent to which competitive elections in the country facilitate or hinder the attainment of these key conditions.

The first condition relates to the centrality of elections as a means of constituting a government. In this case all relevant political players must unambiguously view free elections as the only means through which it is possible to create a government.

The second condition is the role of historical memory and how it affects legitimacy. According to Valenzuela all transitions tend to stimulate collective memories of political symbols, institutions, leaders, parties and social organisations that might be a source of significant division among different segments of the population, thereby making democratic consolidation difficult. Thus, 'a democratic consolidation is favoured by situations in which the evaluations

of the past by different sectors all lead, somehow, to attitudes favourable to an accommodation among political forces ... Accommodation also requires a search for unifying national symbols' (Valenzuela 2000, p 22-23).

Management of social conflict is the third condition that affects the process of democratic consolidation, especially in divided societies. In this case, Valenzuela (2000, p 27) points out: 'The consolidation of democracy is also favored by the creation of the proper frameworks for channeling and resolving social conflicts.' This condition involves the creation of what Valenzuela calls 'social demand processing settlements', which include setting up new institutions (or restructuring old ones) that will receive and process social demands; the establishment or expansion of popular and other associations to voice demands; the development of mutually agreeable procedures that conflicting social groups can follow to settle their differences; and the existence of the proper links between social groups and the political class in Parliament and in the executive. This condition is also emphasised by Young (1999, p 75), who points out that 'the democratic consolidation process should acknowledge rather than ignore cultural pluralism through arrangements that induce inclusionary politics and create incentives for intercommunal cooperation'.

Scholarly discourse on this matter raises yet another problem, this one relating to the attempt to separate democratic consolidation and the quality of the democracy that is being consolidated (Beetham 1999, p 71). What concept of democracy does one imply when discussing the question of democratic consolidation? Is it procedural or substantive? That is to say, is democracy a unique process of making collective and binding decisions or is it a system that ensures certain desirable results? (Dahl 1989, p 5). At times, as Dahl shows, the process of collective decision-making, no matter how 'democratic', cannot be justified unless it produces – or at least tends to produce – desirable results.³

This is particularly applicable to divided societies such as that of Zanzibar, where majoritarian democracy (democracy based on a winner-takes-all system) has not been a useful tool for political representation and participation. Yet, political parties and their supporters seem to have high expectations that competitive elections will resolve persistent political conflicts. It is in this context that democratic consolidation in Zanzibar should go beyond multiparty competitive elections to include other institutional arrangements that would improve the rule of law as well as take into account the diverse interests within the society.

As Rothchild (1999, p 322) correctly points out, 'if majoritarian democracy does seem inappropriate, it will then become necessary to think in terms of

3 Plattner (2005, p 77-81) sounds a cautionary note on the indicators of democracy.

rebuilding state institutions to establish a new, legitimate, and effective intrastate system of conflict management'. In so doing the dichotomy between elections and liberalism that seems to dominate politics in Zanzibar poses a threat to the very process of democratic consolidation. As Plattner (2007, p 5) asserts, '... we cannot allow either liberalism or free elections to be wholly sacrificed for the sake of the other'.

ELECTIONS AND THE SEARCH FOR DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

The transfer of power from one government to another has been a problem throughout Zanzibar's democratic history, with no major political party conceding defeat in any election since 1957 (Mushi 2006, p 13). Elections have been marked by violence, riots, killings, and protests and the subsequent struggles among parties over the outcome have led to a series of societal conflicts both during and after the elections.

Historically, governments in Zanzibar have not only been formed through multiparty and single-party elections but also through violence and bloody revolution, as demonstrated by the 1964 revolution; assassinations, as in the 1972 killing of the first president of the post-revolution government, Abeid Karume; and appointments, as was the case with Aboud Jumbe's takeover after Karume's death.

Pre-independence elections in January and June 1961 and July 1963 reflected deep political divisions between the pro-African-backed Afro-Shiraz Party (ASP) on the one side and the Arab-backed Zanzibar Nationalist Party (ZNP)/Zanzibar and Pemba Peoples Party (ZPPP) coalition on the other. In three elections held prior to the granting of independence in 1963 the ASP was able to secure a majority of votes, but failed to translate these into a legislative majority. This was largely due to inherent defects in the first-past-the-post electoral system. In the 1963 elections, for instance, the ZNP/ZPPP alliance, despite winning only 45,7 per cent of the vote to the ASP's 54 per cent, gained 18 seats to the ASP's 13 and was thus able to form the government.

Thus, independence was granted in December 1963 under the leadership of the ZNP/ZPPP alliance, with the Sultan as head of state, and the ASP never accepted the situation as legitimate. This led to the revolution on 12 January 1964, in which the Arab oligarchy was overthrown and an African-led government installed. It is estimated that more than 5 000 Arabs were killed and many more were detained and their property confiscated or destroyed (Yeager 1989, p 27). The revolution put an end to competitive politics and suppressed all other parties with a significant following and electoral support. It was not until 1980 that

elections were resumed. However, these were one-party elections, which, rather than reflecting the aspirations and wishes of the citizenry, largely endorsed the choice of the party.

As stated above the reintroduction of the multiparty system in 1992 brought periodic multiparty elections, the results of all of which were disputed. In the 1995 elections, for instance, a narrow margin of 0,4 per cent separated the two presidential candidates. According to domestic and international observers the elections were marred by massive irregularities, including intimidation, fraud, rigging and an electoral commission biased in favour of the ruling party, the CCM.

The International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), the Commonwealth Observer Group, the Zanzibar Election Monitoring Group (ZEMOG), and the International Observer Group (IOG) all expressed the view that the elections could not be regarded as free and fair (TEMCO 2004, p 19). Interestingly, prior to the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) officially announcing the CCM's victory, and in response to unofficial announcements of the opposition's victory, the CCM submitted a formal protest against the election results and declared the whole process to have not been free and fair.⁴ This complaint was dropped rapidly when the ZEC declared the CCM's presidential candidate the winner.

The result of the dispute was that the 1995 elections did not pave the way for democratic consolidation but led instead to a political standoff, with the CUF and its followers refusing to recognise the legitimacy of the elections and of the CCM government. For four years after the elections the CUF's members of Parliament boycotted both the Union and the Zanzibar parliaments, thereby depriving almost half of Zanzibar's electorate of parliamentary representation.

During the 2000 elections similar patterns and cases of massive irregularities compelled the Tanzania Election Monitoring Committee (TEMCO) to declare the elections 'aborted' because of 'widespread deliberate and severe violations of electoral rules and procedures, causing a substantial number of voters, candidates, and/or parties to withdraw from the race' (TEMCO 2000, p 190). Institutional manipulation of the electoral process, or what Cowen & Laakso (2002) call 'institutional bribery', was carried out in the form of crafting the rules to prevent certain people from registering as voters.

The five-year residential requirement and its partisan interpretation were used to exclude some, although exceptions were made in the case of government employees, including the military, police and special departments, and international organisations. More prevalent was observed bias on the part

4 See CCM letter to the chair of the ZEC dated 25 October 1995 (reference number CCM/AKZ/U.30/21).

of the institutional infrastructure of elections, including government employees, particularly officials of the electoral body, regional commissioners (RCs), district commissioners (DCs), Shehas,⁵ and the police force. The role of the Shehas as ex officio polling agents of the electoral commission significantly jeopardised the fairness of the electoral process. The TEMCO report (2000, p 108) states, 'evidence from almost all constituencies where TEMCO placed its monitors shows [that] most Shehas abused their powers ... Instead of performing an advisory function as stipulated by law, they became the decision-makers in favour of the ruling party'.

More serious was the cancellation of the vote-counting exercise in 16 of Zanzibar's 50 constituencies, all of them in Urban West Region, and the insecure transfer of ballot boxes and their subsequent disappearance, which left the electoral process in disarray. The re-run of the elections in the 16 constituencies took place without the participation of the major opposition party, the CUF, which boycotted it.

Popular demonstrations in the streets of Zanzibar in January 2001 demanding a re-run of the 2000 elections resulted in a violent encounter between demonstrators and security forces, leaving about 30 people dead and resulting in more than 2000 becoming refugees in neighbouring Kenya (TEMCO 2000, p 20). Thus, instead of being a positive step towards democratic consolidation, the 2000 general elections were a relapse into non-democratic processes.

The 2005 elections were preceded by the preparation and adoption, for the first time in Tanzania's political history, of the permanent voter register (PVR). In the past, voter registration had been undertaken six months before each election, causing a variety of problems, including the exclusion of eligible voters and illegal transfers of would-be voters to other regions. The PVR was expected to be more inclusive, accurate, and cost-effective. In practice, however, it was either inadequate or incapable of creating an accurate, inclusive and credible voters' roll.

The registration process was marred by several instances of irregularity, gross violations of laws and rules guiding voter registration, chaos, and violent conflict. Cases of illegal registration of the under-aged and ineligible were reported in several registration centres. The applicability of a three-year residential requirement for eligibility was manipulated by the party in power, who transferred military personnel to specific areas (Killian & Kamata 2006). In addition, paramilitary forces invaded registration centres, demanding to be registered and creating a sense of insecurity, which ultimately bred chaos. Indeed,

5 The Shehas are functionaries of the central government at the local level. They are appointed by the regional commissioner upon the advice of the district commissioner.

in its final election report even the ZEC acknowledged the intrusive role played by the special forces and their refusal to abide by the ZEC's rules (ZEC 2007, p 68). Moreover, the use of the so-called 'Sheha's residents' register' (popularly known as the Sheha's book) to determine residency became a source of massive exclusion of would-be voters in many regions, particularly in Unguja Urban-West, where about 40 per cent of voters live.

Some improvements in the institutional infrastructure of the elections were noted on voting day. The counting process was more transparent than it had been in previous elections, a total of about 1 600 polling stations opened on time, and, in many parts of the country, particularly in rural Pemba and Unguja, voting was peaceful and orderly (NDI 2005, pp 28-9). Despite these improvements, however, there were significant irregularities, especially relating to the compilation of the votes.

According to TEMCO's report, on election day about 33 per cent of the polling stations it observed had 'unsatisfactory' voters' lists or there were discrepancies between the lists displayed and the register; posting of voter lists was, in most cases, delayed and there was a lack of transparency in tallying the presidential votes (Mushi 2006, p 13). All these irregularities resulted in confusion, both in relation to the results and about the state of civic harmony in Zanzibar. For this reason TEMCO gave the election a qualified free and fair verdict because of the 'aforesaid doubts resulting from lack of transparency'.

As it had in the previous two elections the CUF declared the 2005 elections not to have been free and fair, declined to 'recognize the results of the elections' and 'does not recognize the government of Amani Karume and CCM' (CUF 2005, p 1). The CUF maintained that the PVR, which they dubbed 'Permanent Vote Rigging', was at the centre of the electoral irregularities (CUF 2005, p 35). However, unlike in the past, the CUF decided to join the House of Representatives, while maintaining its position of not recognising the president, boycotting the inauguration ceremony of President Karume and that of the House of Representatives.

Thus, despite the fact that there were noticeable improvements in the 2005 electoral process in terms of peace in most parts of Zanzibar and the fact that no results were nullified and there was no hijacking of ballot boxes, the seriousness of the irregularities that did take place might have been significant enough to affect the freeness and fairness of the elections. In addition, the perception of the major players as to whether the government represents their wishes is critical for democratic consolidation, and this element is still missing.

This leads to another critical question – what kind of electoral outcome indicates democratic consolidation in Zanzibar? As Mushi (2006, p 13) stated, 'there were significant shortcomings in the [2005] Zanzibar elections which make it difficult to determine the reliability and legitimacy of the results'. The same can

be said about the 1995 and 2000 elections. In all three a discrepancy in votes was a recurring anomaly, with only a slight degree of variation.

In 1995 the neutrality and impartiality of the ZEC was seriously questioned after it presented two sets of presidential election results – the unofficial and the official figures. The former showed the CUF candidate leading, with 51,4 per cent, while the CCM candidate trailed, with 48,6 per cent. The later version indicated that the CCM candidate had won 50,2 per cent, the CUF candidate 49,8 per cent (Anglin 2000, p 44).

Other irregularities involved inflating the number of votes, that is, in one constituency the ZEC recorded 25 per cent more voters than those listed on the register, in another, the figures were inflated by 50 per cent (Anglin 2000, p 44). In the 2000 elections the suspension and subsequent nullification of the vote-counting process, hijacking of ballot boxes, and the re-run of the elections without the participation of major opposition parties make it difficult to interpret the outcome meaningfully.

The 2005 election results, particularly the presidential results, were tainted by the lack of transparency in the process of compiling the results. In its report the CUF claims that, as a result of multiple voting and voting by ineligible voters, the number of voters at polling centres such as Potoa, Binguni and Kikungwi, significantly exceeded the allotted number of people (CUF 2005, pp 26-7). As a consequence, instead of building political trust the electoral outcomes have tended to raise more questions than answers about the legitimacy of the government.

The 2005 elections were not very different from the two previous ones in terms of some key political actors questioning whether elections are the only means of constituting governments. The behaviour and beliefs of the elite are recognised as being very important for democratic consolidation (Diamond 1999, p 66). In Zanzibar, it is indeed during election times that political elites tend to threaten to use non-electoral means of changing and constituting governments.

In the 2000 TEMCO report it was concluded that campaign messages 'indicated that neither the CUF nor the CCM was willing to concede defeat'. The then minister for women and children was quoted as saying that since the government had come to power through a revolution the CCM was not ready to surrender that power through the ballot box (TEMCO 2000, p 118). Similar threats were reiterated during the 2005 campaign. President Karume announced publicly that the equipment and personnel used in the 1964 Revolution were still available and could be used again if it was deemed necessary. The regional commissioner for Pemba South reminded the audience during a campaign rally that 'the CCM government was formed through bloodshed using pangas, knives and stones. What about today when we have modern weapons like guns? We shall never let this country go!' (TEMCO 2000, p 10).

During the 2005 election campaign the CUF emphasised the idea of 'people's power'. CUF leaders threatened that if they were denied victory, as they had been in 1995 and 2005, they would resort to 'people's power' for their right to rule.⁶ The emphasis on 'people's power' indeed indicated the possibility that either a military coup or an insurrection would be used as a means of capturing power. As Valenzuela (2000, pp 11-12) argues, 'democratic consolidation cannot occur if military coups or insurrections are also seen by significant political actors as possible means to substitute governments. This is the basic linchpin underlying all the other elements that detract from the consolidation process.'

HISTORICAL MEMORY AND LEGITIMACY

In order to mobilise electoral support and legitimacy major parties tend to evoke collective memory, symbols, and experiences and, in the course of electoral campaigns, to remind themselves and opposition parties what they stand for and why. The Zanzibar experience has indicated that rather than induce a moderating effect election campaigns have tended to emphasise the differences between key social groups, thereby intensifying intolerance and mistrust.

In a paper entitled the 'State of Politics in Tanzania' Mukandala (2004, p 3) summarises the two powerful contending legacies that still inform the policies and behaviour of major parties in Zanzibar. These are: the legacy of slavery, Arab domination and exploitation, and pre-revolution electoral misdeeds and the legacy of the revolution.

Whereas the CUF analyses the colonial past with admiration and glorification, the CCM (whose party slogan is 'Mapinduzi Daima [Revolution Forever]) despises it. Thus, during campaign rallies in 2005 CCM candidates reminded their audiences that, through the 1964 revolution, it had liberated them from Arab domination and colonialism. A vote for the CUF would, effectively, bring back the domination of the sultanate. The CUF, on the other hand, portrays the pre-revolution period as a time when the socioeconomic well-being of the people of Zanzibar was better than it is today. These contrasting interpretations of the past have resulted in further polarisation and confrontation, particularly at election time. As Horowitz (1994, p 40) points out, 'one of the ironies of democratic development is that as the future is being planned, the past intrudes with increasing severity', making democratic consolidation difficult.

Another issue linked to the past and which, therefore, informs the positions of the parties, is that of the union. Whereas the CUF prefers a three-government

⁶ cf CUF secretary general Seif Sharrif Hamad's speech at a campaign rally in Pemba on 8 October 2005.

structure in order to 'bring back the lost glory of Zanzibar as a sovereign state', the CCM prefers the current structure of a two-government union. Despite the fact that both parties would prefer to have more autonomy this element alone does not seem to be sufficient to unify the two sides. As Valenzuela (2000) points out, all transitions tend to stimulate collective memories of past political symbols, institutions, leaders, parties, and social organisations that might be a source of significant division among different segments of the population, thereby making democratic consolidation difficult.

MANAGEMENT OF SOCIAL CONFLICTS

The creation of what Valenzuela (2000) calls 'social demand processing settlements' seems to be critical to the process of democratic consolidation. These settlements include, among other things, the setting up of new institutions (or the restructuring of old ones) that will receive and process social demands, the establishment or expansion of popular and other associations to voice demands, the development of mutually agreeable procedures for conflicting social groups to follow to settle their differences, and the existence of effective links between social groups and the political class in Parliament and the executive.

The introduction of multiparty politics has created alternative spaces in which social groups can express their interests and demands. It is in this context that the reconciliation agreements between the CCM and the CUF and known as MUAFAKA I Accord (1999) and MUAFAKA II Accord (2001) were reached in an attempt to establish new institutions charged with the task of processing social demands and supervising the implementation of mutually agreeable rules and procedures geared to the resolution of conflicts.⁷ Most of the agreements in both accords, however, are centred on elections, covering such reforms as the reconstitution of the Zanzibar Electoral Commission to include members of the opposition, establishing the PVR, ensuring equal access of all political parties to state media, and giving opposition members various government posts.

The MUAFAKA I Accord never got off the ground, largely because none of the agreements was implemented. The 2000 elections were therefore held without any agreed rules. Indeed, it was the fear of losing the elections that made the implementation of the MUAFAKA 1 Accord difficult. Initially MUAFAKA II was credited with bringing about civic peace and social co-existence as well as the successful 2003 by-election in Pemba. A book, titled *Muafaka: The Roots of Peace in Zanzibar* (ESAURP 2004), signalled the people's hopes for lasting peace on the islands.

7 MUAFAKA is the Kiswahili word for reconciliation.

Despite this promising start MUAFAKA II could not withstand the forces of cutthroat competition that are a typical feature of Zanzibar's elections. It proved inadequate in solving the persistent problems, especially those related to elections and electoral competition. Thus, while it is recognised that social conflict in Zanzibar extends beyond elections, there has been a huge reliance on elections to solve all its political problems, but thus far competitive elections alone have failed to bring about lasting civic peace, political tolerance, and democratic consolidation.⁸

CONCLUSION: BEYOND ELECTIONS?

Experience gleaned from the three rounds of elections in Zanzibar since 1995 shows the limitations of elections in consolidating democracy in divided societies. Indeed, elections by themselves have so far proved to be incapable of bringing about democratic order on the islands.

This by no means suggests that elections do not matter in Zanzibar, and that they should be put on hold for a while, as Zakaria (2004) proposed when he wrote that 'the heart of building democracy is building the institutions of liberty, not holding quick elections'.⁹ Rather, the findings in this article indicate that there is a need to pay attention not only to elections, but, equally importantly, to other processes and institutions of governance that enhance the rule of law and individual rights.

At best Zanzibar's elections have been useful in creating an opportunity for its citizens to recognise various instances of violations of human rights. Each mismanaged election has tended to bring about a public outcry calling for constitutional reform and observance of the rule of law. Certainly, the re-introduction of the multiparty system in Zanzibar has opened a window of opportunity by permitting the existence of political pluralism and expression of diverse interests through political parties, civil society, and the media.

Yet, the reforms undertaken in these areas are still limited. The role of the media and civil society is still restricted, leaving little room for the promotion of democracy. Thus, democratic consolidation in Zanzibar needs to go beyond elections to include the transformation of other institutions and processes geared to promoting accountability and the rule of law as well as to establishing an inclusive, legitimate, and responsive political system.

8 As the 2010 elections in Tanzania approach there have been unsuccessful attempts to get the CCM and CUF to return to the negotiating table in order to pave the way for MUAFAKA III.

9 According to Zakaria (2004) institutions of liberty include, among others, a functioning judicial system accessible to the majority of the people, a free press, free speech, and multiple parties.

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AFRICA'S DISAPPEARING ELECTION RESULTS¹

Why announcing the winner is simply not enough

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ABSTRACT

In many African countries releasing election results means simply revealing the winners and losers and publicising their percentage of the national vote. This norm makes it very difficult for researchers interested in studying African elections to collect detailed election data and for citizens to evaluate the validity of the results. This article describes the difficulties associated with collecting sub-national election results in a select set of West African countries, explores some of the potential reasons for these difficulties, argues for an alteration in the status quo and pushes election observers and scholars to demand more of African electoral commissions.

INTRODUCTION

Election results are vanishing in many African countries. Though the exact moment of the disappearance varies from case to case, the trick occurs some time between the casting of ballots and the reporting of winners. Individual voters know who they rewarded with their ballot and the ultimate victors and vanquished are written into the historical record. How the former flows into the latter is largely a mystery because results at polling station level and other intermediary sub-national units are hidden from public view and often expunged from electoral records altogether. Though the losing parties sometimes mourn the loss of this data in the local press, for the most part the missing information goes unnoticed, both domestically and internationally.

1 Observations in Ghana were made as a result of a 2004/5 Fulbright-Hays fellowship. Ghana's Center for Democratic Development assisted with the research that ultimately led to this paper. The author would like to thank Fredline M' Cormack-Hale and Arthur Hollist for pointing him towards data in the Sierra Leonean case and Abubakar Alhassan for help on the Nigerian case. Participants at the American Political Science Association's Accra 2009 Workshop made helpful comments on an alternative draft of this paper, as did the *Journal of African Elections'* anonymous reviewers. All faults with the paper, however, lie solely with the author.

A great deal of pomp accompanies a typical election. Visit a polling station in the early morning hours to witness the official opening of the ballot boxes, revealing to polling station workers, party representatives, and domestic and international election monitors their contents – usually consisting of makeshift privacy screens, full colour ballot papers, voters' rolls, ink pads, and necessary office supplies. Show up at odd times throughout the day to see a queue of voters waiting their turn to present state-sanctioned identity cards to the station attendant to have them crosschecked with the official electoral commission roll.

As voters make their way through the polling station they receive a ballot with a stamp on the back to mark it as official, have their designated fingers marked with indelible ink to discourage the casting of multiple ballots, register their vote behind a privacy screen, and finally deposit the ballot paper in the proper hermetically sealed receptacle.

At dusk, or later if a judge has extended the voting period, polling stations are turned into counting centres. The ballots are removed from their boxes for all interested parties to see, placed in piles according to the marked candidate, counted, and tallied in the official register, to be sent to the regional and then national capitals for aggregation. There the votes are added to others, trickle slowly onto giant chalkboards in the capital city, and eventually find their way into the dailies.

The election-day pageantry and its immediate aftermath have a purpose. Ostensibly, this purpose is transparency, and the resultant 'free and fair election' tag. An amalgamation of international election observers in collaboration with domestic election administrators created this electoral script with its *raison d'être* the legitimization of the ensuing democratically-elected regime (Elklit & Svensson 1997; Schedler 2002).

That this wrought legitimacy might somehow be perverted from its intended mission is, by itself, rather unremarkable. Scholarship focusing on African reinterpretations of the 'state' and 'market' is legion.² The image of a Western institution floundering in the tropical African heat only to be discovered upon closer inspection to be meticulously managed to benefit some corrupt political patron, though it might often be true to form, has become something of a cliché in the sub-field of African political studies (Mbembe 2001).

Certainly, there is some manipulation of elections going on in a handful of Africa countries by insecure leaders seeking the cachet that comes with the mantle of president without the uncertainty that accompanies actual competition. To reduce the unfortunate trend of disappearing results to simple and blatant electoral

2 Texts fitting into this category vary tremendously in both methods applied and theoretical vantage points. Examples are Bates (1981); Bayart (1993); Herbst (2000); Hyden (1980); Mamdani (1996); Young (1994).

malpractice, however, would be to paint over the many nuances of the problem. There are cases, perhaps even the majority of cases, where the officially reported outcome of an election represents the will of the people. Yet here too the votes from villages and neighbourhoods are often swept out of public view. The reasons for this disappearing act are not reported, but the problem is so ubiquitous those engaging in the sleight of hand can do so comfortably within the norm.

THE PROBLEM

In a study I did on Ghanaian political parties and their social foundations I found it useful to look at detailed election results. When these results were analysed alongside available census data I got a pretty good sense of the impact of certain demographic characteristics on a district's partisan proclivities (Fridy 2007). Hoping to apply a similar analysis to Ghana's neighbours to understand better the comparative implications of my research, I set out to compile a comprehensive data set of West African elections at the sub-national level from the late colonial period through to the present.

Cost-effective channels such as the Internet and Interlibrary Loan proved occasionally fruitful, though ultimately unsatisfying. The Internet yields the national results, the names of winners and losers, and hints at the units in which sub-national data might be recorded (Nunley 2004). Texts obtained through Interlibrary Loan are more hit-or-miss. Given only a document's title it is quite difficult to deduce whether or not election results will be reported in an interior table. Occasionally a needle can be found in these haystacks in the form of sub-national election results from a recent election, in the case of the Internet, and some bygone election, in the case of Interlibrary Loans, but invariably these results are given only at the level of a country's primary or secondary administrative division and not at the most basic polling-station level.

With a bit more investment of time, though still relatively inexpensively, one can contact researchers who were in the field during elections and are, perchance, inclined to collect results or know someone who has done so. As a general rule, unless the project is fresh and unpublished I have found scholars willing to share the information they have collected.

For several of Ghana's pre-Fourth Republic elections I was fortunate enough to stumble upon a scholar who just happened to have unpublished election results in his personal library. More often than not, however, scholars can offer only the name of a colleague at a given country's national university, archives, or electoral

commission who might know where to find the data.³ Though no doubt many of these contacts would pan out if I had several weeks in a country to pursue leads and convince officials the information would not be used for dubious purposes, without this investment telephone calls and e-mails are all too often met with one of two predictable results. If contacts can be tracked down they almost always report that the data are not at their disposal or are completely unavailable. Just as frequently, however, the only response is a disconnected telephone signal or a computer-generated bounce-back e-mail reply.⁴

This leaves only the option of a country visit, which is an expensive proposition for non-residents if there are many cases under consideration, and an uncertain proposition even if they are few. Plane tickets and lodging are luxuries few scholars can dedicate to the extraction of a single piece of information, especially a single piece of information that may not even exist. Funds for such an exploration almost always come as part of a larger and more in-depth research project, where detailed election results are but icing on the cake. Unfortunately, instances such as these are few and far between for individual researchers and the scholarly community has, as yet, made no systematic effort to encourage this type of data collection as a collective endeavour.

These challenges to a researcher affiliated with a university can only be multiplied for the average citizen in these fledgling electoral regimes who has neither the material resources, the esteem in the eyes of the applicable bureaucrats, nor the knowledge of the processes and procedures of government necessary to accomplish such a task. The common man and woman is largely reliant on the goodwill of the electoral commissioners and the tenacity and skill of newspaper reporters and party functionaries to bring detailed election results to light. For one reason or another, these key ingredients have, too often, not come together.

3 For pre-independence elections I had some luck in the case of Ghana at the British National Archives, located at Kew. There I found constituency-level results for elections in 1951, 1954, and 1956. For those searching for colonial election results in francophone and lusophone Africa the *Archives Nationales du France, Section d'Outre-Mer* in Aix-en-Provence, France, and the *Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino* in Lisbon, Portugal, would be good places to start. Unfortunately, national archives in independent Africa were poorly prepared to accept their responsibilities at independence and have been under funded in the decades since. The picture Carotenuto & Luongo (2005) paint of the Kenyan National Archives indicates what scholars face at these institutions; so often, as was the case in Ghana, election results will not be housed there.

4 Several years into a project looking at presidential elections in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, and Nigeria, utilising these methods, Ghana remains the only country for which I have a complete data set at the constituency level. Nigerian results at the state level are available in fairly credible forms, save for those for the most recent election, but for Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, and Benin not only is at least one election missing from my database but journalistic sources for the sub-national election results I obtained cannot easily be verified by official figures.

POTENTIAL CAUSES

Unintentional Error

Likely reasons for the disappearing data fall into two broad categories, defined by the motives of the electoral agents doing the sanitising of results. In the first category are cases where election administrators want to hide embarrassing discrepancies in their numbers but do not make a concerted effort to bias results systematically.

Though we tend to reify election results with exact counts and percentages followed by multiple decimal places, close elections and their accompanying recounts in countries around the world consistently dent this fiction. Elections, even those that are run efficiently and use state of the art tallying techniques, have a messy underbelly; voters do not always make their intent clear and counts can be imprecise and calculations inaccurate.

In 2005 I was searching for polling-station-level data for three of Ghana's constituencies for all the elections of the Fourth Republic and, if possible, those of previous republics. I wanted to use these results to compare voting patterns at the micro-level. For the 2004 elections I found the data I was looking for – not in the national headquarters in Accra but rather spread around the regional headquarters. Visits to the Ashiedu Keteke Sub-Metro Area, Ashanti Region, and Upper East Region Electoral Commission (EC) headquarters verified this fact.

Though visiting these regional headquarters required a significant outlay of time (it takes the better part of a day to reach the Upper East Region by road from Accra), once there I found the sub-national commissioners both friendly and helpful. When I asked them about data for pre-2004 elections I got a unanimous response. The results, they proclaimed, had been sent to Accra and no copies had been kept at the sub-national offices.

At national headquarters I asked several people about the missing data and person after person told me it did not exist. When I asked why, I was confronted with quizzical stares and then passed along to a superior. As I worked my way higher up the commission's bureaucratic structure I finally discovered someone who knew where the data had gone. In 1996, he divulged, the aggregated numbers at polling station level did not always match the numbers at constituency level. In addition, many of the regions outside Accra did not send a complete set of pre-aggregation paperwork to the capital city.⁵ The experience of 1996 resulted in the EC not even trying to collect and maintain this data in 2000. Though I could get no one to verify this sanitising procedure independently, when confronted

5 Personal interview conducted by author with Electoral Commission employee at Accra headquarters on 25 July 2005.

with the story two of my informant's superiors acknowledged that his story was plausible. None denied that it had happened as he described.

Ghana's EC is one of the most, if not the most respected electoral commissions in Africa. In each of the Fourth Republic's national elections the EC has gazetted constituency-level⁶ results and released these published results to the general public. The EC has been applauded by the international monitoring community and, though the political parties have been known to criticise the conduct of elections when they lose, all parties, opposition and incumbent alike, have adopted the position that the EC is an unbiased observer that should have the final word in declaring winners and losers. Despite this well-earned reputation, election results in Ghana have disappeared.

In Sierra Leone, where the National Electoral Commission (NEC) has overseen fewer elections, the hiding of data was more ham-handed. Following the 2007 elections it looked at first as if the NEC was going to set new standards for transparency in the region. Its website (<http://www.nec-sierraleone.org/>) posted first-round results regularly from every polling station in the country as they rolled in to national headquarters. When all the counting was done scholars interested in studying the results had access to data from each of the country's 6123 polling stations, enabling them to aggregate up to the chiefdom, district, regional, or national levels and down to the village or neighbourhood, as the research question and other variables dictated.

As no presidential candidate passed the constitutionally mandated 55 per cent threshold, a second round was set for a month later. At first it appeared that the NEC was going to continue with the tradition it had set in the first round. It released polling station-level results intermittently and, on 13 September 2007 at 3pm GMT, the vote from 76,1 per cent of the country's polling stations was publicly released.

This release was followed by days of silence. Then, on 17 September 2007 at 9.30am GMT, the NEC released the final results as a summary of the country's 14 districts, declaring Ernest Bai Koroma president, with just under 55 per cent of the vote. The public was informed that '477 stations have been invalidated due to more ballots than registered voters' but polling station-level data for the validated stations would not be made available.

Since I was working with a colleague on a paper that would benefit greatly from this undisclosed data I sent e-mails to the NEC asking it to reconsider, and contacted party agents and newspapers in search of their unofficial counts. While waiting for responses that would never come I returned to the NEC's press release

6 Prior to the 2004 elections Ghana had 200 constituencies. For 2004 and 2008 the number was increased to 230.

and decided to compare results from the first and second rounds to see if the missing second-round data resembled what one would predict, using first-round data as an independent variable. To find out what the missing data contained I took the results from the known 76,1 per cent of polling stations and subtracted that from the total vote. When I went to gather this last bit of data I opened the NEC's PDF-formatted document and highlighted the table displaying presidential vote by district in preparation for a cut-and-paste manoeuvre.

What I found in the highlighted text were a number of invisible columns of data. My prediction was that these data would probably simply be blank columns the authors of the document used to achieve the spacing they desired. When I opened the document in Adobe Photoshop to slide a black background behind the invisible columns what I found was far less mundane. On what looked like empty space NEC officials had, at one time, stored visible columns of numbers (see Figure 1). I shared this formerly hidden data with a few colleagues to see if we could make sense of it.

At first we were perplexed, and the numbers remained a mystery. Then a document purportedly written by the NEC began to circulate throughout the Sierra Leonean Internet community (see Figure 2). In a case lodged in Sierra Leone's High Court by the losing Sierra Leonean People's Party (SLPP) against the NEC and its head, Christiana Thorpe, the document in question was identified as an NEC publication released on 'Thursday, 29th November 2007 or thereabout' to fulfil the commission's reporting duties as outlined in the country's Electoral Laws Act of 2002.⁷ When the document was compared to the hidden columns in the NEC's 17 September press release it becomes obvious that, notwithstanding a few minor typographical and arithmetic discrepancies, the NEC had had all the data used to construct their 29 November document in house for more than two months.

INTENTIONAL ERROR

If unintentional errors are the unfortunate but inevitable price of universal suffrage, intentional errors are but one of the many tools in the superficial democrat's basket of tricks. Persistent citizens, especially those whose preferences lean towards opposition parties, can sometimes succeed in pressuring disingenuous polling agents actually to count the ballots sitting in the ballot boxes. While this does not necessarily remove all methods of rigging, in forcing election officials to count ballots in full sight of the community in which they were

⁷ The SLPP's application to the Sierra Leonean Supreme Court can be found in the *Awareness Times* archives (http://www.news.sl/drwebsite/publish/article_20057226.shtml).

cast, there is a very real incentive for the ballot counters not to report results too far off community expectations. Give figures that are completely out of line with people's perceptions, in terms either of turnout or of preference, and the risk of vigilante justice cannot be excluded. Though it might not ultimately affect election results at the national or constituency level, at least community members will know that their votes were counted.

All too often, however, this citizen-forced democracy is impractical. In Nigeria's 2007 presidential elections, for instance, international observers noted young thugs stuffing ballots into collection boxes and threatening potential voters in queues and at their homes. Others witnessed election officials at collation centres filling out aggregation forms with no oversight and no reference to actual polling station results (Rawlence & Albin-Lackey 2007). Though I had heard of the widespread problems with the elections, I was interested in comparing these flawed election results with the flawed results from 1999 and 2003, if for no other reason than to see whether the areas where the ruling party had sufficient power to rig results changed over the course of the three election cycles (Kew 1999; Mole 2003).

When I e-mailed Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in search of state-level results just weeks after the 2007 elections I anticipated a failed delivery response. What I got back instead was a personal note from an INEC employee (see Figure 3). The presidential results at state level were not ready for publication but they would be available at some date in the near future. More than two years later the results are still unavailable.

IMPLICATIONS

For the researcher the result of both intentional and unintentional error is frustration. In a world where election analysis routinely requires sophisticated exit polling and an understanding of advanced statistics and/or geographic information systems, many African specialists are being pushed to the margins of electoral studies by a lack of data.

Information which is an e-mail or simple Internet search away for scholars interested in studying elections in other parts of the world, even when some of those elections took place centuries ago, in most African countries, even in best-case scenarios, requires significant outlays of time and money to collect. Under a far too common worst-case scenario, even after this time and money are outlaid the data being sought remain uncollected.

The solution to this dearth of data is quite simple. Electoral commissions can save and publish all their data through the government printer and, if the

resources exist to maintain a website, on the World Wide Web.⁸ At a minimum this data should be published at the legislative constituency level, but the expectations should be even higher. Is there a compelling reason not to make electoral data available at polling-station level? While punishment of opposition strongholds is not unheard of, in all likelihood the perpetrators of this potential harassment, namely agents of the government, have access to all the data withheld from the public. Allowing the rest of the world a peek at the detailed results would not seem to exacerbate this problem.

For reasons of embarrassment or fraud, however, electoral commissions across the continent have, by and large, chosen not to release detailed election results. This is where the international community can play an important role. While observers have a habit of condemning blatantly fraudulent elections, 'they frequently go relatively lightly on elections that, while not obviously fraudulent, nonetheless have significant flaws' (Carothers 1997, p 25). There is a great deal of pressure on domestic and international observers to make an early and strident declaration on the validity of election results, but waiting just a few days for detailed results to be made public would be a step in the right direction.

Probably less influential than election observers, but also less burdened by high-profile political pressures, are scholars interested in sub-national politics. In fraudulent elections it is doubtful that a researcher will be able to influence the government to produce detailed results and even less likely that these results will reflect accurately the will of the voting population.

In elections where the electoral commission is not actively engaged in fraud, however, changing the expectations and norms could make a considerable difference. In the tense days after an election partisans of the losing side already decry all kinds of real and/or imagined malfeasance. Releasing election results will do little to fan these flames and could, especially after electoral commissions gain a reputation for both sincerity and transparency, go a long way towards dampening allegations of wrongdoing before they reach fever pitch.

The social good that can come from even self-interested researchers pushing electoral commissions for more detailed data to test their hypotheses is potentially massive and goes well beyond the ramifications of scholarly output. Electoral commissions whose status quo position requires publishing aggregate results and hiding the constituent parts undercut the ability of citizens, especially those of low economic and social standing, to critique election results systematically.

8 South Africa's Independent Electoral Commission (<http://www.elections.org.za>) and Botswana's Independent Electoral Commission (<http://www.iec.gov.bw>) are the exceptions that will hopefully become the rule. Results can easily be accessed on their websites for the most recent national elections at voting district level. A few other countries (eg, Ghana, Senegal, Tanzania, Zambia) have recently made efforts to publish data at sub-national level, which is a step in the right direction, but they have chosen to do so at a level substantially larger than the polling station.

Villagers might have a pretty good idea that their family, friends, and neighbours supported one party heavily over another, but when these votes are thrown hurriedly into a bin with votes from hundreds or thousands of other villages and towns the costs associated with figuring out whether the will of the people has been honoured increase dramatically. This status quo gives dishonest electoral commissions ample opportunity to defraud the public and makes honest electoral commissions look disturbingly like their dishonest counterparts.

Figure 1

Final Results of Sierra Leone's Presidential Run-off Released by the National Electoral Commission on 17 September 2007, with Hidden Columns Highlighted*



Republic of Sierra Leone
NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION
PROGRESSIVE RUN-OFF ELECTION RESULTS



Final Results Summary

Updated 17 September, 2007 9:30

Tally Progress

National: 5679 of 5679 (100.0%) polling stations reported

District	Stations Reported	Stations Pending	% Reported
Kailahun	332	0	100.0%
Kenema	565	0	100.0%
Kono	408	0	100.0%
Bombali	495	0	100.0%
Kambia	314	0	100.0%
Koinadugu	336	0	100.0%
Port Loko	526	0	100.0%
Tonkolili	405	0	100.0%
Bo	444	0	100.0%
Bonthe	187	0	100.0%
Moyamba	285	0	100.0%
Pujehun	141	0	100.0%
WA Rural	251	0	100.0%
WA Urban	990	0	100.0%
National	5,679	-	100.0%

Turnout

National: 1,783,851 (68.1%) for reported polling stations

District	Voters	% Turnout
Kailahun	125,414	68.19
Kenema	197,350	72.82
Kono	130,771	72.51
Bombali	143,276	69.75
Kambia	78,301	58.11
Koinadugu	68,864	57.66
Port Loko	154,801	71.44
Tonkolili	117,511	69.33
Bo	145,707	60.64
Bonthe	49,843	68.58
Moyamba	78,900	64.96
Pujehun	42,023	42.67
WA Rural	80,336	70.86
WA Urban	370,754	75.31
National	1,783,851	68.09

Presidential Election by District

District	KOROMA (APC)	BEREWA (SLPP)	Berewa	Koroma	Berewa
Kailahun	11,631	111,695	37183	977	74,512
Kenema	32,666	160,699	25044	3005	135,655
Kono	52,908	74,458	2711	702	71,747
Bombali	125,419	14,095	365	6905	13,730
Kambia	61,250	14,449	36	3537	14,413
Koinadugu	42,178	23,130	2701	2480	20,429
Port Loko	132,287	17,789	252	605	17,537
Tonkolili	101,296	12,958	57	2393	12,901
Bo	37,006	105,459	46570	3910	58,889
Bonthe	20,018	28,313	675	80	27,638
Moyamba	26,485	49,886	7970	598	41,916
Pujehun	2,875	38,107	42688	2956	(4,581)
WA Rural	55,332	22,842	217	208	22,625
WA Urban	249,056	115,771	1620	948	114,151
National	950,407	789,651	168089	29004	621562

Summary of Votes by District

District	Valid Votes	Invalid Votes	Total Votes	Invalid To Remove	Total Invalid
Kailahun	123,326	2,088	125,414	385	2,473
Kenema	193,365	3,985	197,350	535	4,520
Kono	127,366	3,405	130,771	52	3,457
Bombali	139,514	3,762	143,276	136	3,898
Kambia	75,699	2,602	78,301	46	2,646
Koinadugu	65,308	3,556	68,864	111	3,667
Port Loko	150,076	4,725	154,801	14	4,739
Tonkolili	114,254	3,257	117,511	18	3,275
Bo	142,465	3,242	145,707	1392	4,634
Bonthe	48,331	1,512	49,843	27	1,539
Moyamba	76,371	2,529	78,900	88	2,617
Pujehun	40,982	1,041	42,023	740	1,781
WA Rural	78,174	2,162	80,336	9	2,171
WA Urban	364,827	5,927	370,754	1,60%	5,983
National	1,740,058	43,793	1,783,851	3609	43,793
					47,402

477 Stations have been invalidated due to more ballots than registered voters

Source: Information downloaded as a PDF file from the National Electoral Commission's website (<http://www.nec-sierraleone.org/>).

*The information in white on a black background was invisible on the original copy and appeared as if it was part of the blank paper. The hidden information is a remnant of an earlier draft of the report that was not fully sanitised. It was retrieved by opening the file in Adobe Photoshop and inserting a black box behind the white text.

Figure 2
Report of Invalidated Votes in the Second Round of Sierra Leone's 2007 Presidential Elections, Released by the
National Electoral Commission



**SUMMARY STATISTICS OF THE INVALIDATED STATIONS IN THE
PRESIDENTIAL RUN-OFF ELECTIONS SEPTEMBER 2007**

Srl No.	District	Total Polling Stations	Stations Reported	No of Stations Affected	Total Registered Voters Allocated to Affected Stations	Total Ballots Cast	Excess Votes Cast	Total Valid Votes	Invalid Votes	DISTRIBUTIONS OF VALID VOTES CAST			% Turn Out
										APC	SLPP		
1	Kailahun	422	332	90	38,273	39,043	770	38,655	388	977	37,678	102%	
2	Kono	630	565	65	27,078	28,584	1,506	28,049	535	3,005	25,044	106%	
3	Kenema	417	408	9	3,301	3,465	164	3,413	52	702	2,711	105%	
4	Bombali	512	495	17	6,856	7,106	250	6,970	136	6,605	365	104%	
5	Kambia	321	314	7	3,493	3,619	126	3,573	46	3,537	36	104%	
6	Koinadugu	349	336	13	4,513	5,292	779	5,181	111	2,480	2,701	117%	
7	Port Loko	528	526	2	850	871	21	857	14	605	252	102%	
8	Tonkolili	411	405	6	2,437	2,468	31	2,450	18	2,393	57	101%	
9	Bo	567	444	123	49,868	51,872	2,004	50,480	1,392	3,910	46,570	104%	
10	Bonthe	189	187	2	773	782	9	755	27	80	675	101%	
11	Moyamba	310	285	25	8,179	8,656	477	8,568	88	598	7,970	106%	
12	Pujehun	253	141	112	44,719	46,854	2,135	46,114	740	2,956	43,158	105%	
13	Western Rural	252	251	1	402	434	32	425	9	208	217	108%	
14	Western Urban	995	990	5	2,419	2,624	205	2,568	56	948	1,620	108%	
	Grand Total	6,156	5,679	477	193,161	201,670	8,509	198,058	3,612	29,004	169,054		

Source: The copy of the document depicted here was circulated on the Leonenet listserv (<http://www.leonenet.net/>)

Figure 3
e-mail Received from Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission

INEC <contact@inecnigeria.org>
To: kfridy@ut.edu
Re: Ticket 512, responded
Dear Kevin S. Fridy
Fri, May 18, 2007 at 11:33 AM

A new message has been added to the service request #512.

Hello Kevin,

Thank you for contacting INEC VCRC.

A state-by-state version of the result for the Presidential Election is not available online right now. However, detailed breakdown of all the approved results for the other elections are available at the same site.

More approved results are still being uploaded, please bear with us, we sincerely apologies for any inconvenience this might cause you.

Thank you

INEC Voter Contact and Response Center
09 222 INEC (4632)
09 780 9339

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CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS, INCOMPETENT CITIZENS, THE STATE AND POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN TANZANIA

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ABSTRACT

Civil society organisations have played a vital role in the relationship between the state and society. In Africa they have come into existence for different purposes, ranging from 'self-help', where the state has failed to help its citizens, to human rights, as the wave of democratisation has peaked, and economic rights, when a country's economy has crashed and governmental capacity declined to the extent that the population has had to take care of itself without help from the government. In Tanzania CSOs have had to play a more extensive role because many citizens are not politically competent and CSOs have had to take the lead in strengthening the demand side of the political equation. But this role is questionable in cases where CSOs have taken to speaking for and representing people in many forums without the consent of those they claim to represent. In the process CSOs, like NGOs, have compromised their autonomy, becoming close allies and partners of the state. The dilemma is that if they do not do this they cannot help the people they purport to help and if they do they are seen to be usurping the power of the people. The way forward is to empower citizens to assume their role as citizens and to ensure that the relationship between CSOs and the state remains beneficial to all.

INTRODUCTION

Civil society organisations (CSOs) are groups set up to assist members of civil society (the space between individuals and the government) in a variety of ways, including politically, socially, and economically. CSOs in general can be divided into formal and informal. The former would include such organisations as labour unions, which adhere to codified rules and require governmental sanction to

operate. The latter are groups of individuals who cooperate in various ways for the benefit of their own communities, offering collective action, financing, and the provision of services. Examples of these are neighbourhood vigilante groups, user groups, and informal support groups such as burial societies.

Some civil society organisations (non-governmental organisations – NGOs) act as go-betweens in the interaction between the state and society, others are community based and will be referred to here as community-based organisations (CBOs).

NGOs vary widely in terms of mandate, size, and resources. Mercer (2002, p 6) offers the following distinction between NGOs and CBOS, although for the latter she uses the term grassroots organisations (GROs):

The term 'NGO' is understood here to refer to those organisations that are officially established, run by employed staff (often urban professionals or expatriates), well-supported (by domestic or, as is often the case, international funding), and that are often relatively large and well-resourced ... They are seen as different from Grassroots Organisations (GRO) that are usually understood to be smaller, often membership based organisations, operating without a paid staff but often reliant upon donor or NGO support, which tend to be issue-based and therefore ephemeral.

The main distinctions within the NGO family are between advocacy NGOs, which are concerned with influencing public policy, and service NGOs, which are concerned with social service delivery. The latter tend to be more permanent. Van Tuijl (1999, p 499) refers to service delivery NGOs as 'operational' NGOs. Clark (1991, pp 40-41) delineates five types of social services-delivery NGOs: relief and welfare agencies such as Catholic Relief Agencies (CARITAS); technical innovations organisations such as the International Aga Khan Foundation; organisations concerned with public service contracts, such as CARE International, which is funded by the developed world but works in the developing world; popular development agencies such as OXFAM; and grassroots-based organisations registered as NGOs and working for particular local communities. There are other ways of classifying NGOs, but, for the purposes of this paper, the above will suffice.

A strong and active civil society is the foundation on which rest the four pillars of governance: transparency, accountability, participation and the rule of law (Asian Development Bank – ADB 2000, p 555). Mwaikusa (1996, p 79) notes that CSOs are necessary to the control of governments. It has also been noted that the root cause of most state-civil-society confrontations is the feeling that

stakeholders are alienated from the decision-making processes that affect their livelihood. It would therefore seem that many civil society organisations help address social exclusion and democratic deficit.¹

PARTICIPATION

The concept

Participation, in our context, is the way power and responsibility are shared among the state and the different social groups and classes in the process we call 'development'. Development, in this context, is qualitative and quantitative social transformation, in directions participants consider favourable, brought about by internal and external forces. For this transformation to happen there must be predefined social, economic, and political goals.

In many societies a minority of the people shares most of the power and wealth, while the majority remains powerless and wretched. The result is that many view the concept of participation as involving some type of confrontation between the powerful and the powerless, the wealthy and the poor. This is more so because, in many cases, the word participation is used in conjunction with another term, 'popular', suggesting that those who are powerless will be given a greater say in and greater control over decisions, resources, and so on and those who have been excluded must now be included in some key processes.

The conception of popular participation as essentially the struggle by the disadvantaged to gain greater control over the resources and institutions they depend upon for their living is very close to the reality. Participation by all in making the decisions that most affect their lives, along with holding leaders accountable, and the enjoyment by all groups and individuals of basic human and civic rights, is the essence of democracy.

Genuine popular participation in development requires democratic organisation; in our case, these organisations are, in most cases, either local governments or those civil society organisations that concentrate their activities at the local level. Thus, popular participation is best seen as the changing relationship between the relatively powerless and the powerful in an encounter in which the powerless become more powerful. To ascertain how much participation there is, one must assess the degree to which the formerly all-powerful take into consideration, on a day-to-day basis, the aspirations and rights of those who have previously been powerless to influence decisions about the process of development.

1 The ADB defines democratic deficit as 'the lack of voice to the people beyond electoral franchise and periodic elections'.

It is now recognised that the success of development programmes and projects depends on participation by the stakeholders (in our case the poor, who are normally sidelined) in all stages of development. One method used in rural areas in pursuit of this key element is participatory rural appraisal (PRA), a process of assessing poverty, identifying needs, and charting ways to address those needs.

PRA has been described as 'a growing family of approaches and methods which enable local people to express, enhance, share and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and act' (URT/UNDP 1998, p 4). PRA involves a variety of tools, used to gather and share information and to instil in all the participants values such as the need to listen rather than to impose their views on others, to facilitate rather than dominate, to elicit opinion from all members of a group, and to allow a process to take its own path rather than to follow a prescribed sequence.

Participation: The continuum between top-down and bottom-up approaches

	Traditional participation	Consultative participation	Partnership participation	Transformational participation
Political dimensions	Does not challenge the existing power structure	May result in reform of the existing power structure	Balance of power should be equal	Challenges the existing power structure
Methods	Training and visitation	Diagnosis and designing	PRA, PPA,* etc.	Political activism (kind of revolution?)
Agenda setters	Agenda set by outsiders	Agenda set by outsiders	Agenda set jointly	Agenda set by challengers

*PRA = Participatory rural appraisal

*PPA = Participatory poverty assessment

Why popular participation?

Popular participation should be encouraged because in order to have rapid and sustainable development the creativity and energies of all groups and classes in society must be liberated and the exclusion of some important groups from the development process results in social tensions and conflicts. The result is that the state gradually loses legitimacy, which may result in chaos and, in turn, arrest development. In such a case only new political and institutional reforms will allow the process to resume.

'Popular participation' implies that some groups will lose power to others – in this case it is the few with the greatest power who must surrender some to the many. That is why the word 'popular' is used in conjunction with participation. Popular participation may bring into the open latent conflicts that have long been suppressed and may thus be seen as being counterproductive. What needs to be done in such a situation is to make the kinds of compromises that will reassure those who were, until recently, excluded from the decision-making processes that their interests will be taken care of in the long term.

POPULAR PARTICIPATION AND CITIZEN COMPETENCE

Politically competent citizens may participate in the politics of their country at all levels. Competent citizens are those who are aware of what is going on in their country and who try to be part of the political processes taking place, actively participating in elections, policy discussions, political debates, and so on. This competence must be nurtured and, in most cases, the nurturing depends on the dominant political culture of a country or a section of a country.

Civic education has been recognised as an essential strategy for the development of civic competence among the citizens in a democracy. Prior to the adoption of the multiparty political system in Tanzania, for example, civic education was delivered in the form of political education for the youth in schools and colleges, and for adults through adult education, popular campaigns for economic and social development, and through radio broadcasts. It was also available in print in books and in government- and party-owned newspapers.

The approach tended to give a one-sided representation of the story, devoid of critical analysis, with differing or contradictory perspectives censored. The purpose of the political education programmes was to mould the behaviour of citizens so they accepted unquestioningly the then one-party ideology of socialism and self-reliance. Tanzania's current acquiescent political culture and the low level of civic competence are the result of such programmes.

The 1991 Presidential Commission (Nyalali) Report on whether Tanzania should adopt a multiparty political system recommended, among other things, that a constitutional conference be convened and a programme of national civic education be established in order to instil in the public a democratic political culture. One of the results of the commission's proposals was the emergence of civil society organisations dealing with civic education. The argument for civic education programmes and activities in Tanzania arises from three decades of experience of single-party rule. It is clear from research done by such CSOs as Research and Education for Democracy in Tanzania (REDET) that the level of civic competence among the Tanzanian electorate is still very low.

A situation analysis conducted by REDET (Mushi, Baregu & Mukandala 2001) confirms the absence of a democratic political culture. This means that much of the electorate is unaware of its rights and obligations. Its participation in local government affairs and membership of civic organisations is low, as is its participation in such civic activities as elections (Gasarasi 2001, pp 148-68). Similarly, a large proportion of citizens were found to be politically incompetent, in that they could not intervene in bad local governance by taking such actions as opposing the government or by complaining through collective action.

Other findings of the survey suggest a predominance of conservative voting patterns and that many people vote for reasons that have nothing to do with the desire to influence policies. It was further established that participation in civic organisations was still in its infancy, with the motivation to join driven by the wish for survival. Baregu (2001, pp 129-47), for example, observes that, although political competence among citizens at local level is higher than that at national level, it is low at both levels in a political culture in which citizens rarely demand but request and cajole the government to carry out its rightful duties. He recommends the development of programmes to address the problems, with a view to enhancing popular capacity to control public power.

WHAT SHOULD THE ROLE OF CSOs BE?

It is fashionable for people from different walks of life to talk of the cooperation between governments and CSOs and, especially, NGOs. Whereas some see this as good for society, others do not – and they may have a point. One such sceptic about the close relationship between governments and CSOs is Shivji (2003, pp 2-3), who launches a scathing attack on NGOs that have come to ‘lose their sight’ of what they should be, what they should be doing, and what they should not be doing.

He terms this blurring of roles ‘participation by substitution’, implying that NGOs, contrary to their belief that they are helping the ‘people’ participate in the policy-making process, are, in fact, alienating core stakeholders. A dilemma arises, however, in a situation where the people are incompetent and CSOs fill the gap, maintaining some interaction between civil society and the government. Shivji, on his part, accuses CSOs (and more specifically NGOs) of a number of actions he believes are contrary to what should be happening in the policy process. He maintains that:

- NGOs have participated in donor-driven policy, which is one manifestation of loss of self-determination by the recipient/developing countries. In so doing NGOs are legitimising this type of domination,

which goes by the brand name of 'globalisation';

- by pretending to be partners in the policy process NGOs have let governments off the hook, allowing a government to 'abdicate its primary obligation' – to make policy;
- NGOs cannot claim to represent the 'people' – many of those able to negotiate with the government are elite bodies who claim to speak on behalf of the population? NGOs are not elected representatives, nor are they mandated to represent the people.

In the following part of the paper we look at state-CSO relations over time and return to Shivji's criticisms, assessing the chances of citizens participating fully in the policy processes in which the CSOs seem to 'fill' a gap.

THE RISE OF CSO ACTIVITY IN TANZANIA

Civil society organisations in Tanzania predate the arrival of the colonialists (Chazan, Mortimer, Ravenhill & Rothchild 1988, p 73), with Welch Jr (2003), for example, dating the creation of human rights NGOs in Africa back to 1839, when they fought slavery on the continent. With the arrival of missionaries and their proselytising activities, other NGOs emerged, in most cases working with the colonial administrations.

Then came the self-help CSOs, which catered for the economic and social adjustments of their members, who were variously affected by, among other things, urbanisation, the monetary economy, and labour migration. The later CSOs were to be the forerunners of the 'professional' and trade associations that would be formed at a later stage, mostly in urban settings, but also on plantations. Some of these associations later took on a political agenda, leading to some becoming nationalist movements. Kiondo (2001) notes that 'associational life in pre-colonial Africa was based on traditional values of sharing and helping each other within the context of extended family, neighbourhood, clan and even beyond'. The coming of the colonial powers and the institution of the state structures we know today marked a new arrangement as far as the civil organisations were concerned.

The type of regime in most pre-colonial societies was governed by different rules and relationships with civil society organisations than was the colonial state, which evolved structures – political, economic, and even social – which 'interfered' with the way life in general was conducted. Most of the 'disturbance' came from the imposition of new economic relations, starting with the monetarisation of the economy and its corollary – taxation.

Social life changed with urbanisation and with the creation of economic zones (plantation and mining), labour reserves, and so on. With the coming of

the colonial state there was a general shake up of both the nature of civil society organisations and the way they worked.

From the above it is clear that there has always been and always will be some interaction between the state and civil society organisations. The state has always had to relate to society – its very emergency has to do with society. However, the state sets the rules, oversees their application, and takes ‘corrective’ (or destructive) measures when it feels that the ‘correct’ path is not being taken. The key difference between political organisations before the coming of the colonialists and after is the fusion of what would have been the state and the ‘governor’ (chief, king or any other ruler of a given society). Louis XIV’s proclamation ‘*l’état c’est moi*’ sums up this situation. But with developments there was the separation between the person (the sovereign) and the state, with the state creating institutions to act on its behalf.

The increased CSO activity in Africa in the 1980s and 1990s can be linked to two main factors. The first is the degeneration of the capacity of the state, which has left the people to ‘cater for themselves’; the second the disaffection of the population with economic development models which failed to work in their favour. Let us briefly discuss these two factors. On the African continent the degeneration of state institutions in the 1970s and 1980s led to the erosion of a state’s capacity to deliver its classical outputs of social services and infrastructure conducive to socio-economic development, law and order, and so on. According to Olowu (2003, p 299) this capacity includes the ‘delegative capacity’, which is concerned with ‘the state’s involvement of its citizens from outside the state in the management of the public sector through devolution of responsibilities to local self-governing and non-governmental entities’.

In some countries the situation was so bad that citizens saw no reason to interact with the state, avoiding it as it became irrelevant (see, eg, Gordon 1992, p 77). Tanzania was no exception and this phenomenon of reduced state capacity accounted to a large extent for the resurgence of civil society organisations from the mid-1980s onwards.

Having said that, we need to mention the fact that the process of liberalisation – of politics and economy – led to the weakening of some civil society organisations, including cooperative societies and trade unions, which once mediated between society and the state.

In many African countries these two institutions were ‘captured’ by the state on the pretext of creating stability and nationalist consolidation of power in the post-colonial governments. As such, they were not as independent as they should have been, but they nevertheless acted on behalf of their members in difficult circumstances and there was some coherence, as well as state support from time to time, which made them look solid and united.

Their orientation towards their members depended, in many cases, on the type of leadership and issues at stake. Liberalisation weakened them in various ways. Among these were: the new freedom, which led to some members of umbrella organisations withdrawing to create other umbrella organisations; the loss of membership contributions through retrenchment of members due to reforms in the public and parastatal sectors; loss of income from crop-marketing activities by cooperatives due to the intervention of the private crop buyers; and the withdrawal of government support and guarantor status.

This led to the creation of space for smaller, sometimes more informal civil society organisations working at grassroots level, which is significant because it is at the local level that civil society is most readily mobilised around local issues. Linked to the resurgence of CSOs is the alternative development (AD) movement.²

The approach of this movement emphasises:

- autonomy in decision-making for territorially organised communities;
- local self-reliance;
- direct (participatory) democracy;
- experiential social learning

Friedman 1998, p vii

AD sought and still seeks to change structures to allow the disempowered to be included in political and economic processes and have rights as citizens and human beings. This is where CSOs become the automatic and most likely alternative channel for voicing the demands of the voiceless. It would imply that AD aims to empower the disempowered, a point also made by Salamon, Solokowski & List (2003) when they observe that CSOs are 'empowerment-oriented'.

CSO-STATE RELATIONS: LIFELINE, SYMBIOSIS, OR KISS OF DEATH?

It is worth starting this section with a comment on the involvement or non-involvement of CSOs in politics. There is a general regulation in Tanzania that CSOs – and especially NGOs – should not engage in politics. Since this section, and the article in general, is concerned with the relationship between the state – which is an organ of power – and the CSOs it is appropriate to consider whether it is possible to interact with the state without being involved in power play.

² This movement came into being after militants became disaffected by the mainstream development specialists of the time, which (until the 1970s) emphasised rapid cumulative growth, urban bias, and single-minded pursuit of industrialisation.

Politics is all about power and when we define power it becomes obvious that CSOs cannot avoid politics. Whether one defines power as 'the capacity to change the probability of outcomes' (Dahl 1961), 'politics as who gets what, when, and how' or 'the participation in decisions about severe sanctions, that is about major rewards and deprivations' (Lasswell 1958), or 'the ability to make things happen that would not have happened otherwise' (Deutsch 1970), we can see that civil society is right – there is politics!

In terms of David Easton's input-output model civil society is the source of the inputs – including demands and support – which are part and parcel of the political system. Whichever way one may want to look at it, there is no way CSOs can absent themselves from politics and it would seem that the NGO Act of 2002 acknowledges that fact in the absence of explicit provisions barring NGOs from engaging in political activity, although the Act does state that they should remain non-partisan when it comes to political affiliation.

Thus, when a CSO/NGO campaigns for a political party it is seen to be breaking a key principle of the CSO law. The problem, however, is one of interpretation. The agendas of a CSO and those of a given political party may be the same or similar, or may overlap. It would be easy for those opposing CSOs to interpret that as being deliberate support for the party's agenda.

Despite the issue of politics CSOs have the potential to help the government to perform its duties, or be seen to perform its duties, better. This is more so when we consider that the explosion of CSO numbers in the aftermath of the economic crises of the 1970s and 1980s was due to the virtual breakdown of the social services networks as supported by incapacitated governments.

CSOs can help government deliver services more efficiently and effectively by identifying target groups, facilitating their access to the services on offer, and even coordinating the delivery of services from various sources. NGOs are known to have reached people where governments have failed, especially in developing countries where infrastructure is poor, or for some political reason. And, most importantly, CSOs can provide checks and balances on abuse of power at different levels of the 'implementation structure'.

The relationship between CSOs and the state has undergone a number of twists and shifts, of course, depending on the state(s) in question. Traditionally, and as some CSOs (and particularly NGOs) see themselves even now, there should not be too close a relationship between them and the state if they are to do a good job. As Jjuuko (1996, p 194) observes, some independent NGOs regard themselves as diametrically opposed to the state, or at least as sometimes being incompatible with it. As is evident below, this does not necessarily need to be the case. On the other hand, Kirsten (2004, p 16) remarks that civil society and NGOs, in trying to influence governmental action and policy, have had to

engage the state in different ways. Some have entered into formal partnerships with governments to develop policy jointly, some have acted as consultants to governments, and some have remained outside of any contractual arrangement with government and have chosen to act in a more traditional way, influencing policy through advocacy strategies.

Kiondo (2001) envisages three scenarios for state-CSO relationships. The first is the situation where the state sees the CSOs as partners in development and other state activities, and therefore regards them as supportive of the state. In most cases, these activities relate to social welfare and advocacy.

In Tanzania many CSOs fall into this category, with faith-based CSOs and NGOs in particular having played an important role in health and education since the pre-independence era. A clear example is the conversion of hospitals belonging to religious organisations into district-designated hospitals.

Despite such co-operation there have been times when faith-based NGOs and CSOs have had problems with the state. During the socialist era in Tanzania and, more specifically, during the nationalisation exercise after the promulgation of the Arusha Declaration in 1967, many religious organisations 'lost' their properties – including schools, hospitals, and even land – to the state. However, the problems the government faced in running these facilities resulted in their being returned to their original owners when the economy was liberalised. However, some church schools-turned-government schools could not be returned because the student community had become religiously mixed and because of the investment by the government in these facilities since their nationalisation.

Another example of CSOs cooperating with the state is the many advocacy CSOs, which are in the government's good books. Among these are those that deal with HIV / AIDS campaigns in communities, performing a role government cannot play alone given the resources that are needed and the scope of the exercise countrywide. Other examples are organisations working in the areas of environmental protection, civic education, and good governance. In these cases the 'symbiotic' relationship has often been a 'lifeline' to the CSOs, with government facilitating the availability of funds.

The second scenario is where the state feels its interests are threatened by the activities of CSOs in situations, for instance, where the CSOs are providing a political platform – whether real or imagined – for opponents of the government. Unfortunately, in Tanzania, as elsewhere in Africa, most NGOs/CSOs that deal with human rights and gender sensitisation are viewed by the state as opponents. This has been explained by the fact that while the state is supposed to be the guardian of human rights it is frequently the greatest violator of these rights.

In Tanzania, for example, civil society organisations have made their members and other beneficiaries aware of their rights and urged them to

demand these rights from state organs, actions that are, in many cases, regarded as confrontational. In post-independence Tanzania there has been a 'political honeymoon' in that the political culture of the country did not mould a population that was critical of its leaders.

It was, in the words of Almond & Verba (1963), a parochial-subject culture, in which the majority were on the 'parochial' side of the continuum. Now that people are demanding their rights government feels threatened and has put in place mechanisms to enable it to remain in power and to keep such groups in check. These mechanisms include licensing and registration conditions, cooption, and even the banning of some NGOs.

A classic case in Tanzania is the Baraza la Wanawake Tanzania (Bawata), the aim of which was to unite all Tanzanian women in the aftermath of plural politics, whereby each political party had a women's wing – which was seen as dividing women. In 1995 Bawata was involved in electoral campaigns, for example, advocating the support of candidates who cared for the rights of women.

The organisation did not last long. After its mobilising activities during the 1995 elections the government accused it, among other things, of being run like a political party and of not submitting its annual accounts to the relevant authority. The latter accusation was rebutted by the Norwegian Embassy in Dar es Salaam, which partially funded Bawata's activities and maintained that the organisation regularly submitted its audited accounts.

However, the government deregistered Bawata on 30 June 1997, claiming that it failed to comply with the provisions of the Societies Ordinance Cap 337 of 1954. It was 'advised' that it could start a fresh registration process after making changes to its constitution and holding elections for new office bearers.³ From statements made by senior politicians, among them the country's president, it is clear that the government did not welcome the creation of Bawata as an autonomous national women's organisation.⁴ In such a situation, a close relationship between a human rights CSO and the state will prove to be the 'kiss of death', as the state will ensure that the organisation's agenda is derailed, or, if the organisation is particularly stubborn, it might be put out of business entirely.

The third scenario is the one in which the state feels that the activities of a CSO/NGO place national security at risk, frequently because of the sources and levels of funding of the organisation. When funding comes from outside the country and the amounts involved are viewed by the state as too large questions are raised, the activities of the organisation are monitored, and problems arise when there is contact between the organisation and the state. Again, the

3 See 'Mwambulukutu Afafanua Hatua ya Serikali: BAWATA Iliendesha Shughuli Kisiasa', *Uhuru* 7 December 1996, p 1.

4 See 'BAWATA Waonywa: Acheni Kujihusisha na Siasa – Mwinyi', *Uhuru* 19 September 1995, p 3.

organisations most likely to fall into this category are quasi-political NGOs including human rights organisations and those created for specifically political purposes such as election observation and monitoring.

The interaction between CSOs and the state includes the recent move on the part of some donors and aid agencies to use CSOs as channels of development aid, viewing such a move as a way of rebuking dictatorships and reducing corruption. This would usually lead to the government attempting to exercise control by introducing regulations, using as a pretext 'national security' interests. One way of doing this is to formulate a NGO policy and enact a NGO law to address some of these issues in a way that restricts the free operation of CSOs and NGOs. CSOs need to be 'vigilant' about this type of relationship, too, as working closely with the government can cost them their very existence.

There is not always a clear cut division between the three categories of state-CSO relationship. There are instances where a particular issue will determine the response of the state. For instance, when the Tanzania Media Workers Association (TAMWA) campaigned for children's and women's rights the state was supportive because the campaign was in line with its own policy. TAMWA has, for example, worked very cordially with the Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children when it comes to implementing its mission, which is 'to use the media to sensitize society on gender issues and advocate and lobby for policy and legal changes which favour the promotion of the rights of women and children'.

Given that Tanzania is a signatory to the International Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on the Rights of Children, and the SADC Platform of Action, there was little chance that the state would be at loggerheads with TAMWA's aims. It is not certain that the cordial relationship with the state would be maintained if the same NGO campaigned for and raised women's awareness of their rights and obligations in the political system.

There are instances when the state has consulted with CSOs about policy issues. Such was the case when the government was preparing the NGOs, Sexual Offences and Land Bills. Such NGOs as the umbrella Tanzania Association of Non-Governmental Organisations, HakiElimu,⁵ the Tanzania Gender Networking programme, the Legal and Human Rights Centre, and the Tanzania Media Women Association spearheaded the campaign for public hearings by the parliamentary committees involved in drafting these Bills.

However, there are also instances where the same CSO that was once the darling of the state becomes an adversary of some sort and, therefore, unwanted. An example in Tanzania is the case of the cooperatives, institutions which emerged

5 Haki in Swahili means 'right to' while Elimu means 'education'.

during the colonial era, largely to protect peasant farmers from middlemen and other crop purchasers. Different types of cooperatives also emerged in urban areas. After independence the government tried to support cooperatives – especially through unions which unified peasant cooperative societies – but it ended up interfering too much in their affairs. In the end they were, for some reason, seen by the state as a threat and, in 1975, they were abolished.

One of these cooperatives was the Kilimanjaro Native Cooperative Union, which had accumulated wealth and was advancing the interests of the peasants in such a way that the independence government thought it needed more control in order to create, among other goals, ‘even development’ all over the country. In place of the unions the government introduced pan-territorial parastatals called crop authorities, which, for a number of reasons, failed dismally (see, eg, Ellis 1988; Lofchie 1989; Ponte 2002).

In 1982 the government decided to reintroduce cooperatives both as a way of increasing production and as a way of controlling the peasants, especially when it came to taxation. Contrary to cooperative principles – such as economic viability – the government established cooperative societies in all villages in the country on the pretext of helping peasant production. The cooperatives were generally used as vehicles for government agricultural policy, as well as an effective means of taxing peasant production.

The other civil society organisations that were used by the state were the trade unions, through their umbrella organisation. Immediately after independence the government instituted control over these organisations as a means of consolidating power and advancing the developmentalist philosophy that guided its socioeconomic policy.

The name of the umbrella organisation changed several times⁶ and, by 1998, when a new trade union law was passed, it bore the name of Tanzania Federation of Trade Unions (TFTU). The TFTU was consulted by the government before the enactment of the Trade Unions Act of 1998, a piece of legislation which is praised by some as being in line with the political and economic developments since reform began (see, eg, Mukandala 2001, p 49).

The legislation is important because of the sectors it covers vis-à-vis the economy. The TFTU has also had some programmes which are developmental and which the government would want to run on its own, such as gender sensitisation, human and workers’ rights, women/worker participation, anti-child labour

6 Before independence it was the Tanganyika Federation of Labour; in 1964 it turned into the National Union of Tanganyika Workers (NUTA); in 1977, when CCM was born, NUTA was renamed Jumuiya ya Wafanyakazi Tanzania and was one of the party’s mass organisations; in 1991 it became the Organisation of Tanzanian Trade Unions – OTTU; in 1995 it was renamed the Tanzania Federation of Trade Unions – TFTU; and today we have TUCTA.

campaigns and programmes, youth development, and so on (Mukandala 2001, pp 45-46).

Perhaps it is important to point out that CSOs, and specifically CBOs, being what they are, tend to deal more with local government authorities than with the central government. They interact with the latter only when they participate in projects or programmes that it funds but they are right in the picture when it comes to local government activities and concerns because it is at that level that they are competent and that their ingenuity makes a difference.

In examining CSO-state relationships one should take into consideration the point of view of the party seeking the relationship and whether the other party is ready to participate. In some cases there may be mutual benefits, in others one party may reap greater benefits than the other.

It is also important to look at the nature of the state. As we have noted, the possible continuum along which NGOs may move in their relationship with the state can run from a lifeline, through a symbiotic rapport, to a kiss of death. If the regime in place is dictatorial, undemocratic, and violates human rights, close cooperation could well prove to be the 'kiss of death' for the NGO in question. The state will find ways either to emasculate it by donating 'gifts' which will muzzle it or will merely legislate it out of business. If the regime is democratic, observes the rule of law, and requires the cooperation of civil society organisations for the implementation of programmes that are beneficial to the community, the relationship can be a source of life to the NGO. There are other relationship patterns that may, in one way or another, be of mutual benefit.

There are also issues of accountability when NGOs/CBOs engage in service provision – whether funded by donors or by the state. There are two sides to this accountability. The first is the question of whether the NGOs/CBOs will still be accountable to their members and pursue their original goals. How much will they be able to do in order to balance the need to perform the core activities for which they were formed, and the need to have the state on their side in order to draw resources? Secondly, there is the question of the government's accountability to the population and the donor as far as the use of resources is concerned. NGOs/CBOs are not traditionally vehicles for the delivery of services paid for by taxpayers or donor funds that need to be repaid. When something goes wrong government may have a problem accounting for its decisions.

The co-option of NGOs into the provision of services to the state has other repercussions. As noted above, if an NGO helps the state deliver services through activities that are sponsored by donor institutions the state may end up being the net gainer. Donors may feel that they are rebuking corrupt, undemocratic, and inefficient regimes by channelling aid money through CBOs/NGOs but such tactics may backfire, enabling the state to appear to be a benefactor and,

as a result, keeping it in power longer. As Whitfield (2003, p 383) observes, 'The powerful influence of donor agencies on local organisations, combined with the application of civil society as an area to achieve their objectives of economic and political liberalization, may work towards stabilizing the existing social and political order.'

The issue of identity of CSOs involved in governmental activities must also be put in perspective. Schwartz (2004, p 36) observes that an NGO only remains an NGO if certain conditions are met with regard to its relationship with the government. If this is not the case an NGO may become what he terms a government non-governmental organisation (GONGO), which he defines as a NGO formed by government institutions or agencies. He notes that Knup (1998) provides two criteria for determining when a NGO turns into a GONGO. These are the level of government financing of the activities of the NGO and the number of government employees serving among the workers or as board members of the NGO.

THE DARK SIDE OF CSOs

CSOs are mostly regarded as good organisations but unfortunately this is not always the case. There is also an underworld of civil society organisations – associations with agendas that are politically subversive, economically crippling, and socially disruptive. We know of worldwide crime rings in money laundering, drugs, human trafficking, and so on. At the national level there are always associations with agendas that are contrary to the law and which are a menace to civil society and to the state itself. In some cases CSOs have two faces – the good and the bad – depending on the response to their demands on the state, or even on society itself.

In Tanzania police are known to 'break' rings of criminals operating in various underworld spheres of activity. These 'rings' are, in fact, associations, with peers, leaders and chains of command. The relationship between them and the state will definitely be confrontational – except on the rare occasions that the state is an accomplice in such activities.

The other dark side of CSOs relates to a lack of accountability, transparency, and representivity, the three areas of 'good CSO governance'. NGOs all over the world have been accused of policy and operational problems including bureaucratic tendencies, uneconomical duplication, excessively narrow issue advocacy, non-participatory decision-making processes, top-down management, paternalistic attitudes, and so on.

While one can question whether these deficiencies are intentional or not, one cannot rule out the presence of people who join the CSOs with personal

agendas as their top priority, rather than the agendas of the CSOs themselves. We have heard of 'brief case NGOs' – registered but non-existent. We have heard of target populations complaining of the fact that resources intended for them do not reach them.

In Tanzania the 2002 NGO Act deals with these aspects. While there has been debate about whether private NGOs should be subject to government regulation the fact that there are so many and that considerable resources are channelled through them makes it necessary that provision be made for some kind of accountability and that controls be put in place.

This calls to mind the third scenario put forward by Kiondo (2001) in which, in some instances, the government may feel that national security is at risk. Given that some CSOs are funded from outside the country there must be a way of accounting for such funds to the countries or communities that have donated them – in some donor countries the accounting must be to Parliament. In such situations, unimpeachable financial statements are not only good for the recipient CSOs but for the good name of Tanzania.

NGOs themselves are trying to be more explicit about what they are doing by issuing clearer statements of goals and putting in place stricter financial management, equal opportunities for men and women, and better self-monitoring evaluation processes, opening up to government when necessary and networking with other NGOs.

While states in the developing world do not often give financial support to CSOs it is nevertheless the duty of the government to play a role in distinguishing between genuine CSOs and those which have personalised or fraudulent agendas. By so doing it will help supporters of the CSOs to channel their assistance through those with the right credentials. At the same time, the government has to make sure that CSOs are not used by corrupt state officials for personal gain.

CONCLUSION

Shivji (2003), in issuing a warning about the close relationship between CSOs and the state, raises a genuine concern. On the one hand CSOs, particularly the intermediary ones, have always faced a dilemma when it comes to deciding how close to the government they should be. On the other activist CSOs have frequently been reluctant to accept government funding, to act as agents of ministries, departments and agencies of government, or even to accept grants to meet staff and overhead costs.

The obvious reason for this reluctance is that they see such involvement as compromising their ability to exert pressure on the government from the outside and perform their legitimate role *on behalf of civil society*.

These concerns are legitimate, although CSOs should not automatically assume that the state and its apparatuses are a threat to them and their independence. Given that the citizens' interests are paramount any coalitions, partnerships or cooperation that will better the situation of the people should be taken seriously. However, when agreements are reached the limits must be negotiated in order to achieve a balance between the goals of the CSO and the possible repercussions of the relationship on the interests of the members or intended beneficiaries. On the one hand, the CSO must not lose its identity or change its goal(s), on the other, it must ensure that it is both accountable and transparent.

There is much potential for productivity when government and CSOs join hands and work together, especially in the developing world, where many citizens are not competent enough to participate fully in the broader political processes.

In many instances CSO-government and CSO-donor cooperation makes considerable sense and one way of handling it would be to have a situation in which the government or the donor gives the CSO an unconditional grant, thus enabling the CSO to maintain its independence. Unfortunately, the maxim 'there is no free lunch' looms large in such situations.

One fact that must be acknowledged by both governments and their development partners is that statistics show that in some countries in Africa 3,5 per cent of the economically active population is engaged in the CSO sector. In East Africa the average percentage is 2,5 (Salamon, Solokowski & List 2003, p 45). In countries where volunteers and donated labour make a considerable contribution to the development effort there is an even greater incentive for the government to cooperate with the CSOs as they can take advantage of the fact that, as records show, more than half of the workers in the CSO sector are volunteers and will therefore not have to be paid by the state (Salamon, Solokowski & List 2003, p 45). Given the problem of unemployment in most countries, 2,5 per cent of the economically active population cannot be taken for granted. The state must take notice and create a favourable environment for the CSO to do its work.

Another area in which the government may need to intervene is the relationship between the private sector and the CSOs. NGOs with similar resources to those available to the private sector are likely to deliver more, giving them an edge. In an era of public sector reform, where the private sector has been identified as the government's most important partner, and with a variety of cooperation arrangements in place, the private sector has come to see the CSOs as a threat. Both have come to realise that at times they vie for the same resources. CSOs, however, frequently have an advantage over the private sector in that they do not work for profit, even when their efficiency levels are the same. It is likely, therefore, that CSOs will offer better delivery. The challenge for the government, which is the

regulator, is to see how the two partners in development can be harmonised in order to improve the lives of the citizens.

We would therefore say that the government/state-CSO relationship should be open for negotiation and for renegotiation once an arrangement to work together has been agreed. It is a matter of leaving the window open for mutual adjustments. The government must find ways to allow a CSO to remain a CSO while benefiting from it and CSOs (in their different forms, sizes and activities) need to maintain the distance that is stipulated in the rules within which they operate.

One way of improving the situation for CSOs is for them to campaign for better rules. As Henderson (1997, p 356) notes, the unfortunate irony is that NGOs must come to terms with existing host governmental authorities, often by acceding to repressive policies and accommodating national and local bureaucrats. However, it seems that critics will have to allow some time for the CSOs to fill the gap created in our systems by politically incompetent citizens until such time as the people can control both the CSOs and their government.

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REVIEW

The African Peer Review Mechanism: Lessons from the Pioneers

Ross Herbert & Steven Gruzd

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The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) has often been referred to as ‘one of the most innovative African initiatives of the 21st Century’. Basing my opinion, in part, on reading this 406-page volume I would argue that there is no longer a need for equivocation, the APRM represents a quantum leap forward in the thinking about how to address the many governance challenges that exist in Africa today. The mechanism is so innovative, and so ambitious in its scope, that the fact that Herbert & Gruzd have been able to draw for their book on the in-depth experiences of five African states which have undertaken the process is remarkable.

One of the many intriguing innovations of the APRM is the platform it provides for non-governmental stakeholders within its processes and institutions. Both corporate and civil society stakeholder input are required, and this tripartite arrangement, involving government, the corporate sector, and civil society, has paved the way for an intriguing examination by the authors of some of the dynamics which play out when the three parties participate in pursuit of a common objective – to contribute to a country report which reviews governance practices and institutions; acknowledging strengths and highlighting weaknesses.

Already these reports have proved to be accurate gauges of the realities of the situation in African states, as evidenced by concerns noted in the Kenyan report about the dangers of ethnic politics (later proved accurate during election-related ethnic clashes in that country after the contested 2007 elections), and the concerns raised in South Africa about xenophobic tendencies in the townships, which were proved, in May 2008, to be valid, despite the South African government’s earlier objections to the inclusion of the concerns in the report.

This volume is worth reading even if only because of the importance of the APRM process and its increasing relevance to people on the continent (more than two-thirds of the people of Africa live in countries which have formally acceded to the APRM). However, Herbert & Gruzd have also produced a resource which balances the need for academic rigour and technical proficiency with the accessible style that is characteristic of so many of SAIIA’s publications.

Interspersing the narrative of the evolving APRM process with precise analysis, the authors reflect a clear understanding of the issues involved – no small task in view of the sometimes chronic shortage of existing sources reflecting the start of the process. To present a coherent and informed picture of the APRM, both as process and institution, in countries which were quite literally making up the rules as they went along, and at local, national, and continental levels simultaneously, is an achievement in itself.

As the title of the book suggests the countries the authors examined were entering uncharted territory, attempting to bridge the gap between the theoretical model outlined in broad strokes in the founding documents of the mechanism and the often messy reality of a national programme implemented under constraints. Herbert & Gruzd offer a glimpse into some of the confusion, controversy, and contradiction which emerged as Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, Mauritius, and South Africa grappled with a complex, multifaceted process with little precedent to guide them.

Key issues, such as the composition of the national governing councils or the use of technical institutions as intermediaries in the process, were neither easily nor obviously resolved, particularly in light of the fact that the APRM not only permits but encourages diversity at the national level, which adds to the complexity of the task.

These issues are neatly summarised in the case study chapters, prefaced with a section introducing the APRM in broad strokes, a commentary on key issues in the establishment of national institutions and methodologies, and a section which draws out some of the lessons learnt from the early country experiences.

A fifth section, titled 'Appendices', includes an abridged summary of the official APRM documents and a rich cross-section of potential resources and suggestions for those with an interest in undertaking a peer review exercise based on the APRM model.

Of particular interest to me was a collection of video interviews conducted by the authors with some of the key players in the pioneer countries – including a lengthy interview with a member of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons, Ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat.

At times I disagreed with Herbert & Gruzd's arguments for 'best practices', which they based on their experience and analysis of the pioneer states. The issue of national leadership is a case in point – the authors seem to favour a model which resembles the compact Ghanaian version, a seven-member, completely independent council, unattached to any government ministry or body. This is a particularly sensitive and complex issue for governments and non-state actors alike, and one on which there appears to be little clear consensus.

In Ghana, non-interference by the state was prioritised over almost all else, while in Kenya more importance was attached to the process of selection to the national commission which oversees the process. In South Africa, the government argued that it would play a key role in the implementation of the National Programme of Action and thus needed to maintain a central oversight role in the self-assessment process. In each case, the model adopted had both merits and shortcomings, highlighting the complexity of the task facing the APRM in the country context. However, the importance of debating these issues from an informed perspective has been greatly advanced by the publication of this volume, making it an important reference for anyone with a stake or interest in the APRM.

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