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GAMBIA'S 'BILLION YEAR' PRESIDENT

The End of an Era and the Ensuing Political Impasse

Essa Njie and Abdoulaye Saine

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ABSTRACT

The Gambia's presidential election in December 2016 marked the end of an era for Yahya Jammeh, the man who had vowed to rule the country for 'one billion years if Allah says so'. The resulting political impasse following Jammeh's rejection of the results 'in its entirety' and his refusal to step down plunged the country into political uncertainty. This paper explores the end of Jammeh's 22-year rule in Africa's smallest mainland country, focussing on the 2016 polls which he lost to former realtor, Adama Barrow. The election offers relevant lessons to students of political transitions and contemporary election discourse in Africa and provides an analysis of some of the factors that accounted for his defeat.

Keywords: dictatorship, Gambia's 2016 presidential election, opposition coalition, Yahya Jammeh

INTRODUCTION

The third-wave of democratisation is manifestly undergoing a contrary undercurrent as transitional democracies experience a degree of backsliding. While many countries have transitioned to democracy through elections, a good number of non-democratic regimes continue to exist around the world (Snyder 2006). Countries experiencing democratic transition always have multi-party elections which are considered competitive, at least at the outset. This results in ousting incumbents, as was seen in the 1993 elections in the Republic of Congo that led to the removal of Denis Sassou Nguesso (Abbink 2017).

The Gambia under Yahya Jammeh was characterised by gross violations of human rights directed against journalists, opposition figures and Gambian dissidents living in the diaspora. For over a decade Jammeh's party, the Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC), dominated a political landscape characterised equally by political intimidation, repression and the politicisation of the security forces clamping down on the opposition (Sanyang & Camara 2017). Jammeh won four presidential elections: in 1996, 2001, 2006 and 2011, and by heading the 2016 polls he was one of the most long-standing rulers in post-Cold War Africa. Any attempt to prevent Jammeh from running for a fifth term would be met with stiff resistance; not even the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) could do so, with their attempt to convince West African leaders to introduce a term limit in their national constitutions.

On 1 December 2016, 525 867 out of the 886 578 registered Gambian voters headed to the polls with two options: change or continuity of leadership. Ceesay (2016) notes that The Gambia's 2016 election and its political consequences resemble the fall of the Berlin Wall, the eventual disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 and collapse of apartheid in South Africa. Defeat of 'strong man' Jammeh by an opposition coalition took many by surprise, as it was generally believed that dictators of his calibre do not organise elections if they know are likely to lose (*ibid.*).

Cognisant of the advantages of incumbency in Africa and Jammeh's own success record in previous elections, many political analysts expected him to secure another five-year mandate. Yet the combined effects of a historic merger of seven opposition political parties, unprecedented selection of an independent candidate, the jailing of key opposition figures, outrageous statements against ethnic Mandingos, and finally Jammeh's continued ruthlessness, indicated that his presidency was close to being over.

Jammeh, however, remained confident ahead of the polls when he told BBC's Umaru Fofana that he was not even campaigning. 'By the grace of the Almighty Allah, this (December 1 election) will be my biggest landslide victory in the history of my elections in this country' (BBC 2016). Instead, this turned out to be his only defeat in the history of his 22 years of dictatorial rule in a country of little more than 800 000 voters.

While Jammeh's defeat was a surprise to many, a bigger surprise was yet to come: he magnanimously conceded defeat just a few hours after the official results were announced. This was truly remarkable, especially for an incumbent African dictator who had vowed never to vacate the presidency, not through the gun, ballot-box or western interference, and who maintained that he owned the country. The biggest surprise was a week later, when Jammeh reversed this position to unilaterally reject and unconstitutionally annul the 2016 presidential election results, which was to have drastic political consequences for The Gambia and its newly won democracy.

This paper provides an account of both the pre-and post-electoral events in the country's 2016 elections, including the buildup to the polls, election day, Jammeh's concession and subsequent rejection of the results, and his exile to Equatorial Guinea. Finally, it provides an analysis of the factors that accounted for his electoral defeat.

REGIONAL FRAMEWORK

The Gambia's 2016 elections offer a lesson for African countries with long-standing rulers and where elections have lacked transparency and credibility. After defying all odds, Gambians showed the world the power of democracy. Jammeh's ruthlessness and other reasons that accounted for his defeat were not unique in the country's December 2016 elections. The Gambia's 2016 elections support the theoretical and empirical argument that a unified opposition can defeat incumbents in Africa. Although, in the Gambian case, one opposition party did not join the coalition, the accord among the other major opposition parties contributed to Jammeh's defeat.

Division among opposition parties in the wake of dominant party systems in Africa allows incumbents to register electoral success and maintain their hegemonic control of political power (Asingo 2002). Opposition fragmentation in Kenya's 1992 and 1997 elections, Gabon's 1993 and 1998 elections and Tanzania's 1995 and 2000 elections were responsible for incumbents maintaining power in these countries (Tordoff 2002). In Zimbabwe, opposition disintegration and incredibility has been cited as a factor in Robert Mugabe's continued electoral success during his presidency (Thomson 2010).

Just as Kenya removed the government of Daniel Arap Moi in 2002 through the National Rainbow Coalition, and Senegal through the United in Hope Coalition, The Gambia's Coalition 2016 renewed hope that a united opposition can defeat an incumbent. The Gambian experience corroborates the theoretical argument that a unified opposition may bring about the alternation of political power. However, it is important to note that a unified opposition alone may not be enough to defeat incumbents; a more transparent method of counting votes is essential in ensuring credible and fair elections that have the potential to remove long-standing incumbents. The introduction of on-the-spot counting by the country's IEC was one of the most decisive factors in Jammeh's defeat, and is a new way to organise transparent elections and remove long-standing rulers in Africa. Lesson can be learnt from The Gambia's 2016 elections with the adoption of on-the-spot counting by electoral commissions in Africa and a unified opposition.

While popular uprisings have recently become the means to unseat long-standing dictators on the African continent, with military interludes resurfacing

in African politics, Gambians used the polls to remove Jammeh. The Gambian case defies the logic that elections cannot remove incumbents when they have succeeded in entrenching themselves in power.

BUILDUP TO THE POLLS

Yahya Jammeh's rise to power in 1994 marked a regression in Gambia's democratic endeavour. Although elections were organised in 1996 which Jammeh himself contested and won, the free, fair and transparent nature of these polls was highly questionable. The United Democratic Party (UDP), the main opposition party at the time, claimed many irregularities before and during the elections (Hughes 2000). There was no unity among the opposition parties in the run-up to the polls. Five years later in 2001, the same disunity existed in the opposition camp, paving the way for Jammeh to secure another victory. The incidents of April 10 and 11 that led to the killing of 14 student demonstrators, coupled with many other irregularities in the country's governance structure, should have been determining factors in the election, but Jammeh had his way out in the polls. While international observers declared the election 'free and fair', there were subsequent allegations that between 40 000 and 75 000 non-Gambians, mainly from Casamance, voted in this election. These cross-border voters, allegedly supporters of Jammeh, were believed to have voted for him. Jammeh's strategy to create disunity within the ranks of the opposition helped him to secure victory (Saine 2009). Political co-optation later became his strategy to disunite the opposition.

In a bid to oust Jammeh in the 2006 presidential elections, the six opposition parties formed the National Alliance for Democracy and Development (NADD). To the disappointment of many Gambians, NADD would splinter into two weaker alliances due, in part, to irreconcilable political and personality differences, and contest against Jammeh. The first camp was constituted by the UDP, National Reconciliation Party (NRP), and The Gambia Party for Democracy and Progress, headed by Ousainou Darboe. The second camp, a much-weakened NADD, consisted of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), People's Democratic Organisation for Independence and Socialism (PDOIS), and the National Democratic Action Movement (NDAM), headed by Halifa Sallah (Saine 2008).

Yet, despite their best efforts, these two camps were no match for Jammeh's war chest and apparent popularity. This time, he took 67.33% of the vote, an increase of 14.37% from the 2001 presidential polls. UDP/NRP/GPDP secured 26.69%, while NADD trailed behind with a 5.29% of the votes (IEC 2006). The 2006 presidential polls did not move The Gambia closer to a more democratic culture, but only led to the consolidation of authoritarian rule under Jammeh.

The disunity within the opposition camp clearly led to its unpopularity, resulting in Jammeh's success at the polls (Saine 2008).

The 2011 polls saw the formation of yet another alliance; this time, Hamat Bah of the NRP separated from Darboe to join Sallah as a United Front. With 83% voter turnout, Jammeh's APRC secured 72%, Darboe's UDP alliance with the Gambia Moral Congress received 17%, and Bah's United Front obtained only 11% (IEC 2011).

Growing domestic discontent and concerns among Gambia's diaspora over failed efforts to build a strong opposition alliance coupled with poor performance at the 2006 and 2011 polls were enough to drive the message home: the only way out in 2016 was to form a united coalition against Jammeh.

Consequently, seven opposition political parties (UDP, PPP, PDOIS, NRP, GMC, GPDP, and NCP) and an Independent aspirant (Dr Isatou Touray) set aside their political differences to form the Coalition 2016. It proved to be the most formidable opposition coalition Jammeh would face in his entire political career. With Adama Barrow as realtor-turned-presidential candidate (which technically led to his resignation from the UDP), the coalition members agreed on a three-year transitional government followed by fresh presidential elections among coalition partners. Jammeh's poor human rights record, the deteriorating economy, and endemic poverty were ammunition enough to deliver a shocking defeat against the incumbent, thus breaking 22 years of iron-fist rule in the tiny West African nation.

ELECTION DAY AND JAMMEH CONCEDES DEFEAT

Jammeh cast his ballot on election day, Thursday 1 December, at the former McCarthy Square, a few metres from his residence in State House, Banjul, remaining confident that victory was his. Former London security guard, Barrow, his closest contender, was equally confident and remarked: 'I am very confident and the spirit is very high and I know I am winning. We hope that everything continues like this and we wait for the results' (*Jollof news* 2016).

After human rights groups expressed concerns that poll results were doctored, Jammeh responded that the country's elections could not be rigged. Nonetheless, Al-Jazeera was refused access to cover the election and was forced to report it from Karang, a border town in nearby Senegal. The European Union (EU) and ECOWAS were also refused entry to observe the polls. Only one African Union observer was granted observer status for 1 400 polling stations. Borders were closed and internet service turned off 'to thwart political unrest' and in the unlikely event that poll results did not favour the incumbent, they could be manipulated to do so (Al-Jazeera 2016).

Addressing public fears about stealing the presidential elections, Jammeh introduced a more transparent, on-the-spot counting system. This meant that votes were counted and confirmed at each polling station before being relayed for official announcement by the chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) on national television. By 20:00, it was apparent that Jammeh was trailing Barrow in the polls. Civil society organisation (CSO) analysts and observers also captured this trend in reports sent from around the country. With only half the results announced, it was evident that Jammeh trailed Barrow, with Mamma Kandeh in third position. Concerned Jammeh cabinet ministers gathered in the cabinet-room to monitor election results as Jammeh prayed fervently for a reversal of his looming defeat; it was the biggest challenge to his 22-year autocratic rule.

However, hopes of Barrow's victory were temporarily dashed when results from Foni, an area predominantly inhabited by Jammeh's co-ethnic Jola, came in the early hours of Friday. Jammeh won in all five constituencies, sending shockwaves among coalition supporters who feared that Jammeh would once more succeed at the polls. With Kiang, Jarra, Badibu and the Kombos safely in a coalition, Jammeh and his supporters were left dumbfounded. Both his party heavyweights and the rank and file sympathisers lost confidence in achieving victory.

There was a tense and disquieting moment as results were announced to the nation: announcements were abruptly halted for an hour or so, and instead of the IEC Conference Room there was a young boy reciting verses from the Muslim holy Quran. This cliff-hanger appeared interminable as Gambians keenly awaited the final verdict and feared the worst. To many, it was Jammeh's last ditch-effort to steal the election. These fears were not groundless, as evidence would later surface that Jammeh had both pleaded with and threatened IEC Chairman Njie to stop the announcements and change the results in his favour. In Njie's words 'It was after that intense pressure on me to change the results that I heard that I would have been a target of lethal injection if I did not do their bidding' (*Standard Newspaper* 2018).

Once all the results were in and announced, Chairman Njie finally declared Barrow the duly-elected president of The Gambia, which meant a change of government. As many prepared for the Jumma (Friday prayers), Jammeh went on state television to publicly concede defeat. He congratulated Barrow and assured him of his co-operation in handing over power while he would 'prepare to go back to Kanilai (his birth village) as a farmer'. In publicly conceding defeat, Jammeh said:

Our system is unique, and we have decided to go to the polls for you the Gambian people to decide who you want to lead you. Today, 2 of

December, 2016, you, Gambians have decided that I should take the backseat. You have voted for somebody to lead our country and I wish you all the best.

(Jollof news 2016)

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS: ETHNO-REGIONAL DYNAMICS

Coalition team campaigns to the Kombos from provincial Gambia had sent a message of hope to many voters that change was inevitable. However, as results streamed in, ethnic factions became evident. Although ethnicity could be used as a major tool of analysis, regionalism could also be identified in the election results to extend the basis of our analysis.

Incumbents rely on election results to identify the regions in which their support base lies and where the opposition has a stronghold (Gandhi & Lust-Okar 2009). This information is sometimes used to punish regions by ignoring the provision of development projects such as education, healthcare and road infrastructure. In The Gambia, one such area is Kiang where the incumbent lost heavily to the coalition. The area remained underdeveloped compared to other regions, especially in terms of road infrastructure; but through intimidation and by withholding development, Jammeh was able to win in this area in the 2011 elections. However, his unfulfilled election promise, coupled with the unwarranted statement against ethnic Mandingo (the dominant tribe in the area), resulted in Jammeh failing to secure victory in both Kiang as a district and the entire Lower River Region.

Foni, Jammeh's birthplace and a Jola-dominated area, comprised five constituencies. In the district, Jammeh secured 19 691 votes to Barrow's 2 874, while Kandeh could garner only 1 485 votes. By constituency, Jammeh easily secured 69% in Foni Jarrol, 74% in Brefet, 84% in Bintang, 81%, Bondali and 92% in Foni Kansala. Barrow, in contrast, secured 16% in Jarrol, 19% in Brefet, 12% in Bintang, 7% in Bondali and 6% in Kansala, while Kandeh secured 15% in Jarrol, 7% in Brefet, 4% in Bintang, 12% in Bondali, and 2% in Kansala (IEC 2016). This indicates the trend of ethno-regional dynamic in the distribution of votes among the three candidates.

In Badibu (a Mandingo-dominated settlement) and elsewhere, Barrow, though a Mandingo, used a strategy of shifting identity/ethnic-card politics. Fluent in Mandingo, Fula, Wolof and Sarehule (Soninke), Barrow tailored his speeches to the majority language spoken in each area; a highly successful ploy which succeeded in wooing ethnic-conscious votes and winning with huge margins. In all three constituencies (Lower Badibu, Central Badibu and Illiassa), Barrow secured 12 657, compared to Jammeh's 5 829, and Kandeh's 5 569 (IEC 2016). In

Lower Badibu with more Mandingo villages, Barrow secured a comfortable victory of 66%, compared to Jammeh's 15% and Kandeh's 19%. In Central Badibu, also with more Mandingo settlements, Barrow again secured victory with 50%, Jammeh 25% and Kandeh 25% (ibid.).

However, in Illiassa, Badibu's third constituency and with a mixture of Mandingo and Wolof settlements, Barrow scored his lowest in the Badibu region with 47%, Jammeh 29% (his highest), while Kandeh scored 24%, his second highest. In Jokadu Constituency, a multi-ethnic-Wolof, Fula and Mandingo area, Mamma Kandeh (a Fula) won with 50%, Jammeh had 29% with Barrow trailing at only 21% (IEC 2016). In Kiang, another Mandingo dominated area, Barrow won comfortably in all the three constituencies with 73% in Kiang West (the highest across the country), 54% in Kiang East, and 50% in Kiang Central (IEC 2016).

The final region in this analysis of vote distribution among the candidates is the Upper River Region, birthplace of both Barrow and Kandeh. This region had been one of Jammeh's strongholds in previous elections, but not when he contested Barrow and Kandeh in a three-way race. The region had better road infrastructure than Kiang; however, the fact that Barrow and other key members of the coalition (Seedia Jatta of the PDOIS and Mai Ahmad Fatty of the GMC) all hailed from the region, together with a strong campaign strategy, guaranteed Barrow and the coalition a victory. Barrow secured 44%, Jammeh 38% while Kandeh trailed behind with 18% (IEC 2016).

JAMMEH REJECTS THE RESULTS

On Friday 9 December, a week after the elections, Jammeh reversed his position and illegally annulled the election results. In a recorded television statement, he accused the IEC of bias. Jammeh had initially claimed, while conceding defeat, that he would never question the 'will of Almighty Allah' and that of the Gambian people because he trusted the country's electoral system. However, aware of the potential risk of arrest and prosecution, the defeated presidential candidate seized a counting error issued by the IEC on Monday 5 December to claim he had been cheated. The commission chair admitted that while an error had indeed occurred, it had no effect on the final outcome. The error reportedly occurred in the Basse Administrative Area where the total number of votes acquired by all three candidates were added to their votes nationally, swelling their total votes as revealed in the first results. Jammeh claimed his party representative at the rectification meeting did not sign the rectified results, and further alluded that some 25 000 of 'his voters' were not allowed to vote because the opposition had already won. In addition, Jammeh claimed that his party agents were not allowed access to some polling stations, and he thus rejected the outcome of the 2016 presidential election results:

I hereby announce to you Gambians my total rejection of the election results and thereby annulling the election in its entirety until we go back to the polls; we will go back to the polls because I want to make sure that every Gambian has voted.

(GRIS 2016)

A visibly shaken Jammeh warned citizens against engaging in any form of political protest. To add insult to injury, he claimed that elections would only be organised if there was money, implying that he was ready to stay in power.

THE POLITICAL IMPASSE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

An important reason for Jammeh's reversal was the correction of the vote count error in which president-elect Barrow's margin of victory over President Jammeh fell from 9% to 4%. While this did not alter the presidential election outcome, it did not sit well with Jammeh who subsequently used it as a pretext to discredit the election results. More important perhaps were threats of prosecution issued by NRP leader Hamat Bah and Fatoumata Jallow-Tambajang, both of whom said Jammeh would face prosecution if he were guilty of human rights violations (*Jollof news* 2016). Jallow-Tambajang, who was instrumental in the coalition's formation and would later serve as Barrow's vice-president, issued a strong statement on Monday 5 December 2016:

He can't leave. If he leaves, he's going to escape us. We are stopping him from leaving. We are negotiating. He said he wants to go to Kanilai. Any day he tells us he wants to go abroad, then we say no. It's the presidential prerogative. He will be prosecuted. I'm saying a year but it could be less than that. This is my personal opinion – it might have taken three months because we really want to really work fast.

(Maclean 2016)

These statements clearly upset Jammeh and jeopardised his plans to retire to his farm. In another sense, his unorthodox and surprising reversal became a political ploy, a bargaining and exit strategy with which to shelter himself from a prolonged jail term, or prosecution, perhaps both. For the first time in his 22-year (mis) rule, Jammeh felt vulnerable and powerless. Jammeh used fresh elections as his last political card to extract concessions, possibly clemency from Barrow's government in exchange for stepping down.

The international community did not take the matter lightly. International media outlets covered the news, and at the request of Senegal and ECOWAS an

emergency United Nations Security Council (UNSC) meeting was summoned to discuss the matter and find a solution. The 15 members of the UNSC called on Jammeh to 'respect the choice of the sovereign people of The Gambia' (BBC 2016). Other international bodies such as the African Union (AU), the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and some Western powers (in particular the US and France) agreed to the UNSC position (Onuoha & Ngwu 2017). Senegal's Macky Sall finally had the opportunity to punish Jammeh for meddling in the Casamance conflict and insisted that Jammeh must go.

Petition and Injunction

Realising that the power to annul the election results resided in the Supreme Court, Jammeh decided to go through legal process, an irony lost to no one. His APRC party filed a petition to the country's apex court demanding that Jammeh be declared winner of the December 1 election. But Jammeh had already sacked some judges from this court and therefore needed a quorum to decide the matter. Nigerian-born Chief Justice Emmanuel Fagbenle asked the party to resolve the matter through other means as the required number of judges was not available and would probably not be until May or November 2017. No other Gambian judge was willing to take up an appointment to the Supreme Court at this time.

As Adama Barrow's inauguration on January 19 drew closer, Jammeh filed a Supreme Court injunction to block it. Unfortunately for Jammeh the court was scheduled to sit in May, November or when judges were available, and Fagbenle had recused himself from hearing the case (*Foroyaa Newspaper* 2017). Time was running out for Jammeh and with looming threats of an ECOMIG force stationed at the border, the pressure for him to step down intensified.

Meeting with Mediators

In response to the crisis, ECOWAS sent a mediation team comprising Nigeria's President Muhammadou Buhari (Mediator for The Gambia), former Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (ECOWAS Chairperson), former Ghanaian President John Mahama (co-mediator) and former Sierra Leonean President Ernest Bai Koroma. The first meeting apparently failed, as the embattled Jammeh stood his ground.

As the crisis deepened, the ECOWAS team flew into Banjul for a second time. Talks were held with all parties: Jammeh, Barrow and the IEC. The peaceful transfer of power was the priority. Jammeh considered ECOWAS to be partial, and accused them and the international community of meddling in the internal affairs of The Gambia. He went on to appoint his own mediator, the newly appointed

Secretary-General and Head of Civil Service of his sinking government as 'mediator general', a strange diplomatic term used by Jammeh whose role was to 'promote a peaceful resolution of the crisis'. However, Jammeh's efforts to resolve the crisis through the mediator-general did not stop the sub-regional body from pursuing its own means of finding a lasting solution to what could have resulted in a bloodbath in one of Africa's poorest countries. Although Jammeh and his government failed to authorise ECOWAS to monitor these elections, ECOWAS pronounced on the scenario in The Gambia, cognisant of the fact that the Gambian situation was a threat not only to national security but also to the sub-region.

The most significant role played by ECOWAS in the Gambian election was the restoration of democracy, using the threat of force rather than any actual physical force (Hartmann 2017). Such a restoration was unique in the Gambian case since it was not a post-conflict situation where regional arrangements could have been used for international administration, or a coup d'état that would have required suspending the regime or forcefully removing it from power (*ibid.*).

The 2010/11 constitutional crisis in Cote d'Ivoire was similar to the Gambian case in that ECOWAS threatened to intervene against Laurent Gbagbo for his 'attempt to go against the will of the Ivorian people' (Hartmann 2017, p. 92). However, the ensuing military action was carried out by French and UN forces. What distinguished the Gambian from the Ivorian case is that despite the Supreme Court declaring Gbagbo as the winner of the elections, ECOWAS recognised Alasana Quattara as the legitimate president of Cote d'Ivoire, making the issue more contested and subject to a more complex dispute.

The Gambian constitution, however, recognises the Independent Electoral Commission as the only body entitled to declare results in an election. Jammeh's decision to 'annul the result in its entirety' was considered a violation of the constitution. Even the country's Supreme Court may not declare him the winner in line with the constitutional provision that empowers the apex court to hear cases on disputed election results. His claims that the elections were rigged by the opposition were considered weak, without any legitimate or legal basis to restore his power (Hartmann 2017). This gave more impetus to ECOWAS to intervene and forced Jammeh out without any UN intervention, as had happened in Cote d'Ivoire. The Gambian case could provide lessons for regional bodies in their quest to restore democracy in member countries with authoritarian regimes.

Jammeh also met leaders of both the Muslim and Christian faiths and called on them to preach peace. A master manipulator of Islamic symbols for 22 years, he failed to garner the support he needed from Muslims. Already upset by his Islamic State declaration, Christian clergy at the meeting did not mince their words, forcefully blaming him for the ongoing crisis and demanding that he step down.

A Nigerian-based group entitled the Africa Bar Association offered a lifeline to Jammeh; their platitudinous speeches describing him as a 'peace-loving person' gave him some comfort that a 'continental legal association' was on his side. The team also met with Barrow. However, the meeting with Jammeh did not go down well with many Gambians, including the Gambia Bar Association which felt it exhibited solidarity with Jammeh.

Appeal to ECOWAS through Madam Sirleaf

Jammeh's frequent anti-western rhetoric included the phrase 'I will never bow down before any human being'. This time he did, not to a westerner but in a direct appeal to former Liberian president and chairperson of ECOWAS, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, in a telephone conversation aired on national television. Jammeh's appeal was for ECOWAS, through Madam Sirleaf, to facilitate judges from Nigeria and Sierra Leone to deliberate on the petition, which he believed was the only way to resolve the crisis. He greeted Madam Sirleaf with the Islamic 'Asalamu Alaikum' and 'Walaikum Salam', literally pleading for help. Madam Sirleaf expressed anger and disappointment over Jammeh's decision to televise the conversation (SMBC 2017), maintaining that the position of ECOWAS remained unchanged, and that Jammeh had to leave power (GNN Liberia 2017).

ECOWAS remained resolute that Jammeh must respect the constitution and the will of the Gambian people by handing over power when his term ended. The trend of ECOWAS interventions in political crises in members states (Guinea, Mali and particularly Cote d'Ivoire), was to take a firm stance on removing Jammeh through military intervention. The Gambian army was small (approximately 1 200 personnel) compared to Nigerian and Senegalese forces on standby to pursue the ECOWAS mandate (Hartmann 2017). However, the restoration of democracy was achieved through the threat of force rather than physical force.

Barrow was already in neighbouring Senegal where preparations were being made for his inauguration at the Gambia Embassy in Dakar. He had earlier attended the France-Africa Summit in Mali where discussion was being held on the crisis in the country, and was rushed to Dakar when Jammeh's fall from grace was imminent. Barrow's inauguration in Dakar was most unusual for a president who had won an election. This may have been the first presidential inauguration both in Africa and beyond, where an elected president was sworn in on foreign soil, albeit in the national, in this case Gambian, embassy.

Declaration of a State of Emergency

After exhausting all measures to stay in power, Jammeh's rubber-stamped National Assembly offered him a last-minute lifeline. Side meetings were reportedly held

before taking the matter to chambers. A motion for a State of Emergency was swiftly passed in parliament by his party members and Jammeh himself made the declaration on state television.

The ‘unwarranted external meddling’ in The Gambia’s domestic affairs was cited as the reason for the state of emergency. This was a desperate effort to extend his grip on power until May when judges from Nigeria and Sierra Leone were due to rule on his petition at the Supreme Court. Paradoxically, before the presidential vote Jammeh had willfully delayed filling Supreme Court vacancies in a calculated bid to block likely coalition appeals contesting the election outcome. This plan backfired, and in the end Jammeh was responsible for his own political demise.

The ‘Billion-Year’ Leader Finally says Goodbye

Public statements issued by civil society organisations and public institutions uniformly condemned Jammeh’s attempts to thwart the will of the people, urging him to peacefully hand over power. The culture of fear and silence that had characterised Jammeh’s 22-year rule had ended and people could now speak openly without fear of retribution.

Cabinet ministers added their voices to further deepen his isolation. First to abandon the camp was his Information minister and government spokesperson, Sheriff Bojang, who resigned and fled to neighbouring Senegal in ‘protest against Jammeh’s refusal to accept defeat’ (BBC 2017). But state television announced that Bojang had ‘absconded’, and as a result he was relieved of his cabinet appointment and replaced by Seedy Njie, a nine-day-minister.

Other ministers – those for Youth and Sports, Finance and Economic Affairs, Tourism and Culture, Health and Social Welfare, Trade, Environment as well as Foreign Affairs – all resigned within a period of two weeks (*The Point* 2017). Last to leave were the Higher Education minister and vice president whose resignations came only hours before Jammeh’s mandate ended (Akwei 2017). Fatou Lamin Faye, a Jammeh loyalist and minister of Basic and Secondary Education remained to the end, earning her the title of ‘enabler’. Jammeh’s isolation was again boosted when Gambian ambassadors added their support to the growing demand for him to step aside. First to urge him to step down was then ambassador to the United States, Sheikh Omar Faye, whose call had a snowball effect as Jammeh recalled these diplomats (SMBC 2017).

Jammeh had initially promoted several military officers. Of these, Chief of Defence Staff Ousman Badjie first expressed support for Barrow when Jammeh conceded defeat but later shifted allegiance when he rejected the results. From the capital Banjul to Serrekunda, the streets were barricaded with military hardware designed to intimidate civilians, which it did. Jammeh was ready to fight but his

ill-equipped, poorly trained and numerically inferior troops were no match for ECOMIG forces already on standby for such an eventuality. Thousands of civilians had already left the country for neighbouring Senegal and Guinea for fear of a deadly intervention with uncertain consequences.

Alpha Conde and Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz of Guinea and Mauritania respectively, intervened in a last bid to persuade Jammeh to step down by Friday 20 January 2017, 12:00 GMT, or face a regional military intervention to flush him out. As the deadline approached, Jammeh reportedly requested a four-hour extension which was granted (16:00 GMT). An exile destination was finally secured for him in Equatorial Guinea, home of another despot, Teodore Obiang Nguema Mbasogo. In the end, Jammeh made his final address to the nation and agreed to step down in the 'interest of peace and love for country'. This was precisely the outcome Jammeh had anticipated and the reason for a manufactured or induced political crisis. Jammeh precipitated the crisis to save his skin and momentarily elude prosecution.

On Saturday 21 January ex-President Jammeh together with his wife, son and probably his daughter, his mother (since deceased), and military cronies, left in a heavily guarded motorcade for the Banjul International Airport where they boarded a plane into exile. The airport was already crowded with two camps: his sympathisers and opponents. His emotional supporters could not contain their tears when a ceremonial parade was observed and Jammeh boarded the plane, clutching a copy of the *Quran* which he kissed, waving to the crowd. Finally, the 'billion year' despot headed to Equatorial Guinea – but not before fleeing with a fleet of luxurious cars and fleecing the state and Gambians of millions of dollars.

WHY DID JAMMEH LOSE THE ELECTIONS?

The Gambia's unprecedented 2016 elections prove that a determined voter population can unseat incumbents on the continent. It reveals that polls instead of popular uprisings and military coups can be used to replace long-standing dictators who intend to rule 'for a billion years'. Several important factors contribute to the sudden and surprising presidential election result which abruptly ended Jammeh's political career.

Persistent Human Rights Violations

A blood-tainted human rights record that included killings, torture, enforced disappearances of dissidents and those suspected of opposition to his rule ranked highest among factors that led to Jammeh's political unpopularity and ultimate demise. This is probably an influential factor in the unification of the opposition,

given what was at stake should Jammeh secure another term. He systematically made The Gambia hell for journalists, human rights defenders and intellectuals who might expose the brutal nature of his rule. In contrast to Jawara, whose regime has been praised for its good human rights record, Jammeh has been accused of substantial human rights abuses which were directed not only against media critics and other professionals, but even dissidents within the security forces (Perfect 2010). Similarly, civil and political rights were routinely breached, with hundreds jailed, disappeared, or killed. Political detainees and critics of the president and the regime were often subjected to murder, torture and other inhumane and degrading treatments carried out by a death-squad known as the Junglers (Human Rights Watch 2015).

Jammeh's brazen misuse and abuse of the constitution further signalled that the country was heading in the wrong direction. His greatest mistake was when he threatened to kill anyone who opposed his rule by voting for him in 2016. As his rule continued, Jammeh became complacent, claiming that he was loved by Gambians. Undoubtedly, the grave human rights violations that took place during his 22-year rule significantly contributed to his political undoing.

Attack on the Mandingos

Leading theoretical viewpoints on African politics suggest ethnic allegiance as an underpinning factor for political behaviour, with elections as forums for ethnic censuses (Batty 2010). Ethnicity has been widely considered a hinderance to political and economic development in post-colonial African states, a view advanced by nationalist arguments (Thomson 2010) as political leaders have used ethnicity as a tool to garner political support, by playing one group against another. Accordingly, ethnic politics has been considered a threat to democratic consolidation in Africa with victory for one group seen as a defeat for another (ibid.).

Although Jammeh had played the ethnic card in previous elections, it was widely manifested in the 2016 presidential elections, especially before and during the campaign period. In a political rally in Tallinding on 3 June 2016, Jammeh threatened to kill the Mandingos one-by-one and place them 'where even a fly cannot see them', referring to them as 'enemies' and 'foreigners' (Hultin, Jallow, Lawrence & Sarr, 2017 p. 4). Jammeh singled out Mandingos for ridicule and insults out of fear that they were his biggest enemy bent on 'opposing his rule and destabilizing the country'. In a country where the Mandingos constitute close to 35% of the populace, he may have committed his biggest political blunder. An elderly Mandingo man in his 70s said he had been voting for Jammeh since 1996, but could not wait to deny him his vote in December (personal conversation 2017).

Certainly, many other Mandingos were inspired to vote against Jammeh for fear of persecution if he were to win another term. Jammeh swore there would never be a Mandingo-led government in The Gambia, a statement which equally angered many Mandingo voters. Some jubilant supporters in Tallinding after the coalition victory were heard singing, '*Yahya Jammeh Mandinkolu mankeh ifulango ti*' (Yahya Jammeh Mandingos are not your age-mates), implying that he could not insult them and get away with it. This time Jammeh had played the ethnic card unsuccessfully. The Gambia is no exception to the fact that ethnicity can determine election outcomes in Africa.

Migration

The mass movement of Gambian youth to Europe through the Mediterranean Sea also had an effect on the election. Many mothers felt that the lack of economic opportunity in the country was a push factor for the often perilous 'back way', as it was known locally.

Economic hardship was not the only factor in this movement of young people; so too was the unfavourable political climate. Embiricos (2016, p. 1) argues that it is difficult to maintain the difference between a refugee and other irregular migrants who come from The Gambia 'where a lack of democracy is accompanied by governance failures impacting the entire country on a political as well as economic level'. The large number of young Gambians leaving the country is illustrated by these facts: Gambian asylum applications reportedly rose by 198% between 2013 and 2014. Equally, Gambian nationals made up 5% of the total 153, 850 migrants who arrived in Italy by sea and 10% of Italy's asylum applications in 2015 alone (ibid.).

Mass youth movement was a motivating factor for the candidature of Dr Isatou Touray. Aside from the brutal treatment of the opposition and the authoritarian nature of Jammeh's rule, 'the massive rise in migration by desperate citizens' concerned Touray (Hultin et al. 2017, p. 5), observing:

Horrorifying personal testimonies by asylum-seekers fleeing politically motivated prosecutions, ethnic persecution, gender-based violence, and state-sanctioned homophobia, became a source of national embarrassment. While migrant success stories were once a source of pride, many voters recognized that only Jammeh's departure could stem the exodus.

Touray called for opposition parties to support her in order to end dictatorship in The Gambia (Foroyaa 2016). The mass movement of young Gambians across

the Mediterranean was motivated by both economic and political factors. This supports the theory that unstable political environments can be a push factor in migration and a decisive factor in African elections, which could dislodge incumbents from power.

Jailing the UDP Leadership

Throughout Jammeh's rule the opposition was a target. On 16 April 2016, Ousainou Darboe and other executive members of the UDP were arrested following the killing of the party's youth leader, Solo Sandeng, allegedly by state security agents. The armed/paramilitary wing of the police, the Police Intervention Unit (PIU), arrested him, together with the party leadership, on the streets of Kairaba Avenue as they left his compound. In September 2013, three years prior to Darboe's arrest and incarceration, Amadou Sanneh, Alhaje Sambou Fatty and Malang Fatty of the UDP, together with Bakary Baldeh, a commissioner of oaths, were arrested and detained incommunicado for a month at the NIA Headquarters in Banjul. Sanneh was the party's treasurer at the time and would later become finance minister in the Barrow government. The four were accused of sedition because of their involvement in writing a letter supporting the political asylum application of Malang Fatty, which had the letterhead of the UDP (Human Rights Watch 2015).

Darboe was sentenced to a three-year prison term with 19 others. Jammeh had hoped this would finally silence him and reduce the party's chances of victory in the forthcoming presidential election. Instead, it triggered a mounting wave of discontent both within the opposition camp and among voters, especially the youth. It was arguably a catalyst in the formation of the seven-party coalition and a blessing, in that Darboe was excluded from the inter-party talks. This legal manoeuvre made the inter-party talks and unification less acrimonious, unlike NADD's disintegration in 2006 for which Darboe was arguably responsible.

By 2016, Darboe could not reject the formation of the coalition on legalistic grounds. As leader of the UDP, Darboe was often dictatorial and would countenance no one other than himself, and certainly not his arch-opponents Omar Amadou Jallow (OJ) or Halifa Sallah to lead the 2016 coalition. With Darboe in prison, the opposition found it less of a burden to strike a deal for a united front (BBC 2016).

Declaration of an Islamic State

African leaders started to use Islam as a political tool as far back as the medieval period. After the decolonisation of the continent, the new version of manipulating

Islam and Islamic symbols became widely known; in the case of The Gambia, it began with the formation of a political party, the Gambia Muslim Congress (Nyang 1984). President Dawda Jawara was a Muslim who converted to Christianity and reconverted to Islam, mainly to appeal to the majority Muslim voters (Darboe 2004). Yahya Jammeh has been described as the 'master monopoliser of Islamic symbols' throughout his rule. He started by building a mosque in the grounds of State House and developed cordial relations with Saudi-trained scholars who preached the Wahabbi version of Islam. Always appearing in a white Muslim dress with a long prayer beads in his hands, Jammeh branded himself a pious Muslim (ibid.).

In a December 2015 meeting in the coastal town of Brufut, Jammeh declared The Gambia an Islamic State, a decision he said was in line with the country's religious and cultural values. This was political suicide. In a multi-religious society such as The Gambia, declaring it an Islamic State a year into the polls was both unpopular and imprudent. Though Christians constitute only about 10% of The Gambia's population and are less dominant politically and socially than they were immediately before and after independence, they nonetheless continue to wield considerable influence. Jammeh's decision was all the more bizarre because he had enjoyed considerable support among voters. The political backlash from within the country and abroad was immediate and this move was unequivocally condemned. Whether the country would practice the strict version of *Sh'aria* or a moderate one remained unclear at the time of his declaration. He back-pedalled on his rhetoric when he urged people of other religions, specifically Christians, to practice their faith.

Jammeh later issued an executive directive that all female civil servants must cover their heads while at work, a directive that was unpopular with many Christians in the country. It became clear that he might have been serious in his attempt to transform The Gambia into a fully-fledged Islamic State. Such pronouncements only deepened the rift between Jammeh and members of the Christian community who were furious about this declaration (*Evangelical Focus* 2016). The only way to secure their faith and presence in the country was, they felt, to deny Jammeh their votes and support.

Attack on Women

Jammeh's use of vulgar statements was directed not only to Mandingos, but also to women. In one meeting in the capital Banjul, Jammeh apparently advised them to desist from skin bleaching. He claimed women could bleach their entire body 'except one part' which both he and the women knew, meant their genitals (GRTS 2016). Clearly, this statement did not go down well with many women who showed their displeasure by voting against him.

Opposition Unification

In their article on 'Elections under Authoritarianism', Ghandi and Lust-Okar (2009) argue that opposition parties cannot compete with the incumbent in offering material incentives to voters. The fundamental question they ask, is if material inducement cannot sway voters to vote for the incumbent, what factor(s) must compel them to vote for the opposition without expecting material incentives? They argue that ideological underpinnings could be a factor. However, a shift from the status quo and the expectation that a united opposition could bring about the much-needed change by putting an end to a dominant-authoritarian system could be factor for opposition victory in authoritarian regimes. Perhaps the biggest factor in Jammeh's electoral defeat was the makeshift unity of opposition parties. Having experienced numerous failures in the past, the leadership finally grasped the urgency to put aside party and personality differences and work toward unseating Jammeh through the ballot box. At a seven-party convention on 16 October 2016, an agreement was reached and a standard-bearer elected to face what became arguably the most highly contested post-coup elections in the country's election cycle. Undoubtedly this sign of unity was a landmark achievement in the struggle to unseat Jammeh and his APRC government.

However, behind opposition unification there were reports that Jammeh's personal body guards had turned against him. Barely four months before the elections, they entered his party's headquarters and burnt 300 000 or more fake voter's cards said to be illegally acquired for his supporters from Casamance, southern Senegal. Jammeh's APRC party national mobiliser at the time and former mayor of the Kanifing Municipality, Yankuba Colley, was said to have been involved in acquiring these cards and had a secret meeting with Jammeh to report to him (BBC Documentary 2019). Little did Jammeh and his political cabal know that a trap had been set for them. There was no way that Jammeh could replace these cards as the IEC had already concluded the replacement of voters' cards. Any attempt to do so would raise the alarm about his plan. Indeed, he was complacent enough to show the world that he could not be removed from power through elections.

Social Media and the Diaspora

The massive and intense social media campaign launched by diasporan Gambians significantly contributed to the outcome of the December 1 election. In Facebook pages, WhatsApp groups, online radios and newspapers, they launched a relentless campaign to expose the ever-increasing human rights violations in the country. The use of these platforms also challenged and disrupted APRC

campaign narratives that saturated state-controlled media outlets. Fadera (2016, p. 45) observes:

While the ruling APRC enjoyed limitless unfettered access to public media, the nation's only television broadcaster (*Gambia Radio and Television Services*) and the biggest daily newspaper (*Daily Observer*), essentially a propaganda tool for the regime, other parties didn't have any option but to make the most out of digital platforms.

The role of conventional media, including online radio stations and newspapers run by Gambian dissidents in the diaspora, was momentous. They set up an online crowd-funding project, *GoFundMe*, and within 24 days raised over \$50 000 in support of the opposition campaign to unseat Jammeh. The need to raise funds was emphasised by an ECOWAS pre-election assessment mission as a means to equal the 'vast resource imbalance' between the incumbent President Jammeh and the opposition. This proved decisive in the 2016 presidential election outcome (Sanyang & Camara 2017).

On the Spot Counting

This was probably the most crucial factor in avoiding a rigged election on voting day. It could have been an attempt by Jammeh to demonstrate to the world that, contrary to numerous allegations of fraud, elections throughout his presidency were free and fair; but instead turned out to be another political error on his part. Ceesay (2016, p. 2) sums it up thus:

Jammeh's defeat in the polls is not only due to a unified and emboldened opposition, a massive social media campaign by Gambian dissidents in the Diaspora as well as a disgruntled and youthful population. It is also the result of Jammeh's attempts, partly because of complacency, to minimally reform the electoral system by introducing 'on the spot counting'. The transparent and efficient nature of this system inhibited any attempts of electoral malpractice that would have led to a different outcome.

CONCLUSION

Yahya Jammeh's departure from power was a milestone achievement in the struggle to end dictatorship in Africa. It is a shining example as well as a textbook case study of how a brutal dictator was shown the door without a drop of blood being spilled. Despite death threats against IEC officials, the chairman Alieu Momar Njie ensured that the December 2016 presidential poll was executed with

utmost professionalism. The conduct of the elections speaks to the bravery and tenacity of Gambians in ending 22 years of a military-turned-civilian dictatorship in this tiny West African nation, confirming that Jammeh's blatant disregard for human rights and constitutional order was untenable. Opposition unification and especially diaspora involvement at the most crucial junctures were indispensable factors for Jammeh's exit from The Gambia's political scene. A determined ECOWAS and Senegal's resolve were also crucial factors in Jammeh's ousting, endorsing the significance of international, regional and state cooperation in averting chaos. The December 2016 polls and preceding political organisation offer valuable lessons to other countries in a continent still mired in dictatorship and political transitions.

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ELECTORAL GOVERNANCE AND
DEMOCRATISATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN
POST-CONFLICT STATES
*Electoral Management Bodies in Angola, Mozambique and
South Africa*

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ABSTRACT

Democratisation is a complex process that includes crafting political institutions. These institutions reflect existing power relations at the critical juncture of their genesis, thus influencing the development of subsequent political processes. The study uses this perspective to examine the impact of electoral governance on democratisation with a focus on three southern African post-conflict states. Specifically, the paper investigates the role of electoral management bodies (EMBs) in accounting for the distinctive regime trajectories in Angola, South Africa and Mozambique. The analysis suggests that successful attempts by incumbents to redesign EMBs after the founding elections have led to the establishment of self-serving institutions of electoral governance. This has had a negative impact on the credibility of subsequent electoral processes and the nature of the emerging regimes in the countries under scrutiny.

Keywords: electoral governance, electoral management bodies, democratisation, southern Africa, post-conflict states

INTRODUCTION

Although some southern African countries have held multiparty elections since the 1960s, the vast majority of states in the region have a more recent history with multiparty elections. This history, which can be traced back to the arrival of the 'third wave' of democratisation in the region in the early 1990s, has seen many African countries holding their first multiparty elections after decades of

white minority rule, one-party states and civil wars.¹ At present, the political landscape of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region includes a variety of regimes: closed authoritarian regimes (Swaziland); electoral authoritarian regimes (Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Zimbabwe), electoral democratic regimes (Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania), and liberal democratic regimes (Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa) (Matlosa 2017, p. 13).²

In Namibia, Angola, Mozambique and South Africa, democratisation emerged in the context of political negotiations to settle protracted armed conflicts. The resulting peace settlements and transition pacts provided for inclusive multiparty elections as a tool to conclude the move to a new democratic order. A quarter of a century later, these countries occupy distinctive positions in various regime indexes, ranging from electoral authoritarian regimes (Angola), electoral democratic regimes (Mozambique) and liberal democratic regimes (Namibia and South Africa). What explains the variation in the democratic trajectories of these states?

This article sets out to answer the aforementioned question with a focus on electoral governance. More specifically, the study investigates the impact of electoral management bodies (EMBs) on the nature of democratisation processes observed in Angola, Mozambique and South Africa. In addition to a common geographical location and a history of protracted conflict, these three countries held their founding elections at around the same time, they use variations of the same electoral system (closed-list proportional representation), have adopted regulative frameworks that provide for independent EMBs, and their first elections confirmed the strength of national liberation movements that have been in power ever since.³

The article is based on textual analysis of secondary qualitative data sources such as books, peer-reviewed articles, legislation and reports. It is informed by the view that although democracy is not limited to elections, its minimum requirement is free and fair elections, as 'the idea of democratic self-government is incompatible with electoral farces' (Schedler 2002, p. 37). From this perspective, the success of democratic transition and consolidation processes presupposes the

1 The exception is Swaziland which has banned political parties and remains an absolute monarchy.

2 This classification is in agreement with the Freedom House Index 2018 ratings for the countries in question. The Freedom House Index is an annual freedom barometer that measures the levels of civil and political freedom in the world placing in three different categories: Free, Partly and Not Free, which are proxies for democratic, hybrid and authoritarian regimes, respectively.

3 Namibia has been excluded from the analysis because the country's transition is considered to be a case of decolonisation from a foreign occupying force. The withdrawal of the South African military in the months leading up to the founding elections removed the issue of power and cohabitation between the main belligerents in the post-conflict era.

organisation and administration of free and fair electoral processes. Electoral governance plays a crucial role in the accomplishment of this goal, thus placing EMBs at the centre of democratisation processes.

The discussion opens with an exploration of the concept of electoral governance and the major assumptions of historical institutionalism, which provide the theoretical foundations of the work. This is followed by an in-depth analysis of the pattern of electoral governance in Angola, South Africa and Mozambique. The final section summarises the central argument advanced in the study, noting that institutions of electoral governance matter in accounting for democratisation.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK: ELECTORAL GOVERNANCE AND HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONALISM

Identified as the 'omitted variable' in explaining both the success and failure of democratic transitions, there are no doubts today that electoral governance plays a central role in ensuring the credibility of electoral processes in emerging democracies (Pastor 1999, p.15). Electoral governance is defined as 'the wider set of activities that creates and maintains the broad institutional framework in which voting and electoral competition take place' (Mozaffar & Schedler 2002, p. 7). It operates on the three levels of 'rule making, rule application, and rule adjudication' (ibid.). Put differently, electoral governance involves the design and implementation of electoral rules as well as the resolution of disputes that emerge in the course of the electoral game. These tasks are often carried out by EMBs as these entities represent the institutional embodiment of electoral governance.

Broadly speaking, an EMB is an institution responsible for organising and administering elections.⁴ The primary categorisation of EMBs focuses on the place of these institutions within the structure of the state. In this regard, three broad models of electoral management have been identified, namely: independent, governmental and mixed models. Under the independent model, elections are managed by an autonomous entity that is independent from the executive. Under the government model, elections are conducted entirely by governmental authorities through a ministry or other state-controlled entity. Under mixed models, the government manages the elections with the oversight of an independent supervisory body. However, irrespective of the model, EMBs are expected to discharge their duties with independence, impartiality, integrity,

4 A variety of labels have been used to refer to these institutions including Election Commission, Department of Elections, Electoral Council, Election Unit or Electoral Board. The term EMB is commonly used to reflect this terminological diversity.

transparency, efficiency, professionalism and service mindedness so as to ensure democratic credibility (Catt, Ellis, Malley, Wall & Wolf 2014, p. 21).

In the old and established democracies of north America and western Europe the administration of elections follows the governmental model; however, the general trend in third wave democracies has been the establishment of independent EMBs (Lopez-Pintor 2000, p. 20). In this regard, Pastor (1999) reports that 'the progress toward democratization in the developing world has coincided with a tendency toward placing increasing responsibility for conducting the elections in independent commissions' (p. 14). The removal of electoral management from executive control in new democracies has been devised to prevent incumbents from manipulating elections. It is believed that the establishment of an autonomous EMB helps to insulate electoral governance from the incumbent in particular and politics in general.

Several studies have confirmed these assumptions. For instance, Hartlyn, McCoy & Mustillo (2008) found that 'professional and independent EMBs free from partisan influence and government control provide a much greater chance of successful elections, particularly relative to those dominated by a single party' (p. 92). Similarly, Gazibo (2006) writes that 'a correlation exists between the process of forging EMCs [EMBs], their level of autonomy and the course of democratization' (p. 690). These claims are in line with a broader argument in Africanist literature highlighting the fact that 'variations in the quality of democracy are shaped by the strength and independence of political institutions' (Cheeseman, Collord & Reyntjens 2018, p. 38).

In this study, the status of the EMB is determined by examining both formal rules and actual practices. In other words, the assessment of the independent or non-independent character of an EMB and its impacts on political outcomes in the countries under scrutiny focusses not only on the institutional configuration outlined in legal documents, such as a constitution and specific legislation, but also on how electoral governance is effected through these institutions. The analysis also incorporates insights from the historical institutionalist school of thought regarding how institutions emerge and are transformed.

From a political science perspective, historical institutionalists believe that 'political analysis is best conducted through a focus on institutions or, more specifically, when starting off with institutions' (Lecours 2005, p.6). Historical institutionalists tend to work with a broad definition of political institutions described as 'not just formal rules, procedures or norms, but the symbol systems, cognitive scripts, and moral templates that provide the "frames of meaning" guiding human action' (Taylor 1996, cited in Lowndes & Roberts 2013, p. 38). Political institutions are assumed to be instruments that frame the actions of political actors and arenas where decisive struggles over values are fought as

they distribute power amongst contending groups in society (Lowndes & Roberts 2013, p. 77).

In this context, the prevailing power relationship between political actors is a crucial variable in the genesis of institutions, as strategic political actors seek to make their values last through institutional design (Mozaffar & Schedler 2002, p. 14). This means that the correlation of power between the incumbent and opposition parties tends to shape the character and actions of EMBs. Consequently, historical institutionalists take history seriously. This is mainly because political events take place within a historical context, which influences subsequent decisions or events.

Historical institutionalists adopt a perspective on historical development that emphasises path dependence. The concept of path dependence 'involves the idea that once a country or a region has started down a track, the costs of reversal are very high. There will be other choice points, but the entrenchments of certain institutional arrangements obstruct an easy reversal of the initial choice' (Lecours 2005, p. 9). It is grounded on a conception of positive feedback, which creates a powerful cycle of self-reinforcing rules and practices. This has led to criticisms about historical institutionalism, like its rational choice and sociological counterparts, having a bias towards order and stability. However, in general, historical institutionalists explain institutional development with reference to the notions of punctuated equilibrium and critical junctures. These are crucial founding moments at which new institutions are born and new patterns of path dependence begins.

Lastly, historical institutionalism does not claim that institutions are the only variable in politics. As highlighted by Hall & Taylor (1996), 'historical institutionalists seek to locate institutions in a causal chain that accommodates a role for other factors, notably socioeconomic development and the diffusion of ideas' (p. 942). In this respect, the authors conclude, 'they [historical institutionalists] posit a world that is more complex than the world of tastes and institutions'. This is to acknowledge the fact that EMBs are one of the many contextual variables affecting the course of democratisation in the countries under examination and constitute the analytical focus of this inquiry.

A PARTISAN EMB IN POST-WAR ANGOLA

Angola attained independent statehood during a raging war. The armed conflict started in 1961 as a war of national liberation against Portuguese colonial rule, and developed through different stages of intensity and character until it ended in 2002. Between 1975 and 1991 the conflict became entangled in the dynamics of the Cold War in southern Africa, opposing the MPLA and UNITA and their

respective external backers. The New York Agreements in December 1988 provided for the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola and South Africa's commitment to grant independence to Namibia; though this settled the regional dimension of the conflict, it left the domestic dimension unresolved. The civil war raged on until it was eventually settled at the negotiation table when the ruling MPLA and UNITA forces signed a peace agreement in Lisbon on 31 May 1991.

The peace agreement, commonly referred to as the Bicesse Accords, focussed on military and political aspects. On the military front, the agreements called for a ceasefire, the disbandment of the existing armed forces and the creation of a new unified army. On the political front, it called for democratisation, providing for presidential and legislative elections to be held between September and November 1992. Monitoring the implementation of the agreements was assigned to a Joint Political-Military Commission and international observers represented by Portugal, the Soviet Union, the United States (US) and the United Nations (UN). Subsequently, a series of legislative and administrative reforms was set in motion in preparation for the first multiparty elections, since at the time Angola had experience with only a single-party system. There was an understanding that the final institutional framework of a representative democratic state, including a constitution, would be the prerogative of an elected parliament.

The Electoral Act, which was approved on 16 April 1992 (Law 5/92), defined the *Conselho Nacional Eleitoral* (National Electoral Council or CNE) as an entity with the broad mandate to coordinate and execute all activities related to the electoral process (arts.12-13). The CNE was to include an executive body (comprising the commissioners) and an administrative structure comprising the General Direction of Elections, Provincial Electoral Councils and Municipal Electoral Offices. These structures were to be led by National, Provincial and Municipal Electoral Directors respectively (art.15-18). The composition of the CNE included a wide range of actors appointed according to different criteria: a judge of the Supreme Court (elected by the plenary of the court); a judicial magistrate (appointed by the president of the Supreme Court); five individuals (appointed by the head of state); the Minister of Territorial Administration (Home Affairs); a National Director of Elections (appointed by the head of state after consulting with the leadership of competing political parties); a representative from the Media Regulatory Body; and a representative from each of the parties running in the elections. Presidential candidates were also entitled to appoint members to the commission (art.14). The same logic of appointment was followed at the provincial and local structures of the EMB.

The CNE began its operations in early May 1992. Although neither the existing constitutional law nor the electoral act made explicit reference to the independent character of the CNE, the credibility of the commission remained

high throughout the electoral process. This was mainly due to UN support, a strong international monitoring presence and the balanced composition of the CNE. Consequently, when elections were held on 5 and 6 September 1992, they 'were unmarred by serious incident, and proceeded in a manner that all international observers declared free and fair' (Tvedten 1993, p.108). Nonetheless, Angola's founding elections proved unsuccessful as UNITA rejected the electoral verdict, plunging the country back into civil war.

The armed conflict raged on for another decade until it was brought to an end with the military defeat of UNITA in 2002. The victor status of the MPLA government and the absence of meaningful internal opponents (civil or military) imbued the ruling party with enough latitude to deploy strategies to ensure the preservation of the party's status as 'Angola's hegemonic political force' (Soares de Oliveira 2015, p. 91).

The approval of the legal framework, including the establishment of the new EMB for the first post-war elections in September 2008, illustrates one such strategy. The new Electoral Law (Law 06/05) changed the name of the EMB from National Electoral Council to *Comissão Nacional Eleitoral* (National Election Commission, or CNE). It defined the CNE as 'an independent, participatory body that shall coordinate the execution, conduct and realization of all the activities and operations regarding the elections, as well as to oversee the voter registration process' (art.154). Like the previous EMB, the administrative structure of the new CNE encompassed Provincial Electoral Commissions (CPE), Municipal Electoral Offices (GME) and District Electoral Offices (GCE) (art. 157). The CNE was to be composed of eleven members selected as follows: two commissioners appointed by the president of the Republic; six commissioners appointed by the National Assembly (three nominated by the majority party, two by the largest opposition party, and one by the second-largest opposition party); a judge appointed by the Supreme Council of the judiciary, one commissioner appointed by the *Conselho Nacional da Comunicação Social* (National Council for the Media - CNCS) and one by the Ministry of Home Affairs or MAT (art. 156). The same logic of selection was replicated at the sub-national structures of the CNE.

Despite being defined as an independent body, the autonomy of the CNE was limited to legal provisions regarding its institutional configuration. In other words, the CNE was independent in the sense that it was not administratively under the jurisdiction of a ministry or a government department. In practice, however, the selection procedure for commissioners as well as the mandate and modus operandi of the commission undermined the impartiality expected from an EMB. For instance, the procedure for selecting commissioners gave the MPLA direct influence on the appointment of two-thirds of commissioners. This was in consideration of the fact that President dos Santos, who was both head of state

and president of the ruling MPLA, had the constitutional mandate to appoint Supreme Court judges, while the CNSC and the MAT were in essence MPLA-dominated institutions.

The MPLA emerged as the winner of the 2008 electoral process with an overwhelming majority of 81.6% of the votes. This outstanding electoral result meant that the party now controlled 191 seats in the 220-seat National Assembly (parliament), a supermajority that imbued the MPLA with enough power to govern and to go ahead with the implementation of any structural political reform unchallenged. Subsequently, President Dos Santos and the MPLA went on to consolidate their hegemonic control over the Angolan political system through the constitution-making process: the MPLA by pre-empting the possibility of losing power through elections and the president by cementing his personal power and position as the dominant figure in Angolan politics (see Troco 2019, pp. 32-36).

The approval of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola (CRA) in February 2010 occasioned the revision of most sub-constitutional legislation to conform to the new constitutional order. In this context, the new constitution reaffirmed the status of the CNE as 'an independent administrative body' (art. 107, CRA 2010). However, the actual independence of the commission remained questionable because the legal provisions for the appointment of its members turned the EMB into a partisan entity dominated by the ruling party. The number of commissioners expanded from 11 to 17. These include the president (a judge appointed by the Supreme Council of the judiciary) and 16 commissioners nominated by political parties and party coalitions according to their seats in parliament. After being nominated by their parties, commissioners are officially appointed in the National Assembly by an absolute majority of votes (art.143, Law 36/2011). According to the law, the outcome of the elections determines the number of commissioners a party is entitled to nominate. Thus, the outcome of the 2008 elections resulted in the following allocation for the 2012 elections: nine commissioners for the MPLA, three for UNITA, two for the PRS, and one each for the FNLA and ND-UE respectively (art.209, Law 36/2011).⁵ The fact that the same logic is followed in the appointment of commissioners at the provincial, municipal and local structures of the CNE ensures the MPLA's hegemonic control over the commission.

The partisan character of the CNE has turned the commission into a miniature replica of the National Assembly in which the ruling party dominates with the required majority to approve or block any decision it deems fit for its political agenda. This is particularly challenging since the Angolan electoral commission doubles as an electoral tribunal, working as a court of first instance in

5 The outcome of the 2012 electoral process ensured that the MPLA was entitled to appoint the same number of commissioners in the 2017 electoral process.

the settlement of electoral disputes. The decisions of the CNE can only be appealed at the Constitutional Court. However, the court is perceived to be biased, partly because the head of state and the MPLA dominate the process of appointing judges. Accordingly, the Constitutional Court is composed of 11 judges appointed as follows: four judges appointed by the president of the Republic, including the president of the court; four judges appointed by the National Assembly by an absolute majority of votes, including the deputy-president of the court; two judges appointed by the Supreme Council of the judiciary; and one judge selected by a process of public competition among legal professionals (art.1, Law 24/10).

As a result, the electoral commission has been at the centre of major election-related controversies in the country. For instance, in the months leading up to the 2012 elections, the head of the CNE, a high-ranking MPLA official, was forced to resign after the Supreme Court found her re-appointment to the position to be unlawful. However, successive attempts by opposition parties to invalidate the decisions made by the official during her contentious tenure (roughly three months before polling day) were unsuccessful. The MPLA won those elections with 71.8%, which correspond to 175 out of 220 seats in parliament. More recently, during the 2017 electoral process, opposition parties accused the CNE of hiring INDRA and SINFIC without following proper procedure. The process leading to the selection of these two companies was shrouded in mystery, suggesting previous agreement between the commission and the companies. The events took place in a context whereby the two companies did not enjoy any trust from opposition parties as they stood accused of helping to rig previous elections. Nonetheless, the CNE's controversial decision prevailed and the two companies continued to supply the electoral logistics and computer programs for the elections. In this instance, the MPLA gained 61.1% of the votes giving the party 150 out of 220 seats in the National Assembly (Troco 2019, pp. 29-30).

The point here is to show that an institutionally weak democratic framework enables weak electoral governance with deleterious effects on the overall political system, as argued by the author in a previous study (Troco 2019, p. 32). In this regard, the case of Angola and Mozambique (to be examined later) illustrates how, in emerging democracies, the ruling party can use its dominant position to entrench a biased election management system based on a principle of parliamentary representation. This defies the basic principles of equality and fairness,⁶ as, ideally, multiparty EMBs should reflect the breadth of political contestants on an equal basis, not the electoral strength of the contesting parties.

6 An election is free when voters can choose candidates, political parties and policies without any form of undue influence, coercion or intimidation; and fair when contenders are treated equally, and the electoral contest takes place on a level playing field, that is when everyone has the same chance of succeeding (Troco 2019, p. 26).

AN INDEPENDENT EMB IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa, the impossibility of either the National Party (NP) or the African National Congress (ANC) prevailing over the other encouraged the two parties to seek an end to the apartheid system through a negotiated settlement. Formal negotiations to move the country to an inclusive, multiracial democratic order started in earnest with the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) in December 1991. These initial negotiations collapsed in mid-1992 as the parties could not reach a consensus on the shape and form of the interim government and the constitution.

Subsequently, the NP and the ANC proceeded with bilateral negotiations, reaching an agreement on a joint negotiating position by the end 1992. The two parties agreed to convene a new multi-party forum to draft an interim constitution and a bill of rights stipulating non-negotiable constitutional principles to be enshrined in the final constitution; to hold non-racial elections to choose delegates for the Assembly that would write the final constitution, and political parties to serve in the transitional government of national unity; and to set up a transitional government for a five-year period during which the final constitution would be drafted (Gilliomme 1995, p. 97). This was, in essence, a power-sharing agreement designed to serve as a blueprint for future negotiations on South Africa's transition to an inclusive democratic order.

Another round of formal negotiations opened under the framework of the Multiparty Negotiating Process (MPNP). The gathering started on 1 April 1993 with delegates from 26 organisations, including political parties, national and homeland government representatives and traditional leaders. By July 1993, the MPNP Negotiating Council had endorsed the roadmap laid out by the NP and the ANC announcing the date of the inaugural non-racial elections as 27 April 1994. These developments galvanised discussions towards drafting legislation to set up the various institutions that would oversee the period of transition prior to polling day. The aim was 'to create an "even playing field", which negotiators thought would be impossible if the transitional process was left to the National Party-controlled government to steer' (Ndletyana 2015a, p. 26).

Consequently, a comprehensive package of transitional legislation – including the Interim Constitution (Act No. 200 of 1993), the Electoral Act (Act No. 202 of 1993) and the Independent Electoral Commission Act (No. 150 of 1993) – was approved, providing the legal foundation for the establishment of critical transitional governing institutions. Several institutions were set up, including a Transitional Executive Council (TEC) – mandated to share executive authority with the NP-led government; an Independent Media Commission (IMC) – created to ensure

fair and even coverage of the electoral process; and an Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) – tasked to manage and administer free and fair elections.

The IEC, which was inaugurated in December mid-1993, followed the independent model. The autonomy of the IEC was expressed primarily in terms of its institutional configuration, as it was structurally separated from the executive. This institutional arrangement contrasted with the practices of the apartheid era where the Department of Home Affairs administered elections, resulting in almost absolute executive control over the conduct of elections and electoral outcomes. The IEC's independence was reaffirmed in the procedure for selecting commissioners. In this regard, the IEC Act empowered the president of the Republic, upon consulting the TEC, to appoint not more than eleven South African commissioners and five international commissioners. The IEC also enjoyed financial autonomy, as the Commission was entitled to draw up its own budget (to be paid by Parliament) and expected to account for its expenditures to the Auditor-General.

Furthermore, there were systems of checks and balances guiding both the structure and workings of the IEC. The Commission was structured as a three-bodied institution – the Election Administration Directorate, the Election Monitoring Directorate and the Adjudication Secretariat – headed by commissioners who were the executive authority of the IEC. The Administration Directorate was responsible for logistics and administrative tasks like the registration of parties and education of voters. The Monitoring Directorate was mandated to monitor the different steps of the electoral process both within and outside the Commission so as to ensure a fair process. The Adjudication Secretariat was responsible for settling electoral disputes and included a Special Electoral Tribunal, Election Appeals Tribunal and Special Electoral Courts.

Despite some administrative irregularities, South Africa's founding elections were deemed to be a success as all contending parties accepted the electoral outcome. The event signalled the beginning of a new democratic order, which came to fruition with the inauguration of the Government of National Unity. Part of this success story can be attributed to the structure and non-partisan character of the IEC. As reported by Mawson (2010b, p. 2): 'although the ultimate success of the elections can largely be attributed to the political will of the participants to see the elections through successfully, the electoral commission nurtured and sustained this political will'.

The IEC was an interim body mandated to run the first non-racial elections and was consequently disbanded in late 1994. Deliberations for the creation of a permanent EMB began with the newly elected parliament. Appropriate legislation, including the final Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) and the Electoral Commission Act (Act 51 of 1996), was approved in October 1996.

The new legislative framework incorporated most of the provisions of the interim IEC, while introducing changes in relation to the functions, size, composition and structure of the commission.

Chapter 9 of the Constitution defines the new EMB as the Electoral Commission, placing it in the list of state institutions designed to strengthen constitutional democracy in the Republic of South Africa. Its functions, defined in section 190, include managing the elections of national, provincial and municipal legislative bodies; ensuring that elections are free and fair; and announcing electoral results. Like its interim predecessor, this body follows the independent model of electoral management being subject only to the Constitution and the Law (Chapter 2, sections 3). The IEC also enjoys budgetary autonomy, accounting to the Auditor General for the expenditure of public funds.

As a permanent body, however, the powers, duties and functions of the IEC increased, ranging from the management of elections, the compilation and maintenance of voters' roll and voter education, to the adjudication of electoral disputes (Chapter 2, section 5). The size of the Commission decreased from 16 to five commissioners (with the provision that one of them be a judge). Commissioners were to be appointed by the president of the Republic on the recommendation of the National Assembly from a list of candidates submitted by an independent panel consisting of the president of the Constitutional Court, a representative of the Human Rights Commission, a representative of the Commission on Gender Equality, and the Public Protector (Chapter 2, sections 6-7). Candidates are expected to have left high party/political positions by the time of their appointment and commissioners are barred from appointment to any political office for a period of 18 months after the end of their term in office. These conditions were introduced to reinforce the independence of the Commission.

Change was also observed in the structure of the Commission, comprising an executive authority, an administrative office and the Electoral Court. The commissioners had executive powers, which included appointing the chief electoral officer (CEO). The chief electoral officer heads the administration of the Commission, which has offices and staff at the national, provincial and municipal levels. The Electoral Court (sections 18-20) has the status of a Supreme Court and is empowered to review any decision of the Commission relating to an electoral matter. Furthermore, the court has the prerogative to investigate any allegation of misconduct, incapacity or incompetence of a member of the Commission and to make recommendations to the National Assembly on the removal of commissioners found guilty. Since its foundation, the IEC has presided over five general elections (1999, 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2019) and four municipal elections (2000, 2006, 2011, and 2016). The Commission's performance has improved significantly from election to election. For instance, a 2013/14 survey conducted by

the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) found that the IEC was the third most trusted public institution. During the May 2014 elections, more than 90% of the voters were satisfied with the services of the IEC and held the view that the elections had been free and fair (Maaba 2015, p.115). Furthermore, the presence of international observers has decreased and domestic assessments of electoral process do not refer to indications of deliberate manipulation or rigging.

These developments may be seen as an acknowledgement of the maturity of South Africa's electoral democracy and the role that the IEC has played in this process. In particular, the IEC has fought to assert its independence in the face of the ANC's wavering commitment towards the independence of that entity. The following two examples illustrate this assertion: in August 1997 there was an impasse between government and the IEC. Government, especially the Department of Home Affairs (DoHA) and the Department of Finance (DoF), held the view that responsibility for administering elections lay with DoHA, and the IEC had only a supervisory role. From this perspective, the Commission was understood to be politically, administratively and financially subordinate to DoHA. DoHA went on to draft an amendment bill to the Electoral Commission Act, as the Commission asked for clarification on the reasons behind the government's interpretation of the legal framework. DoHA's amendment bill was approved by Cabinet and submitted to Parliament for discussion and approval. However, government retreated from the amendment bill amid protests from IEC. The Commission stressed that the moves by government were an attempt to undermine the independence of the Commission, and amounted to a return to the practices of the apartheid era, when government ran elections through the DoHa.

Relations between the IEC and DoHa reached a low point when government decided to cut down on the IEC's budget for the 1998/1999 financial year. The government proceeded to appoint 72 500 public officials to assist with electoral matters in order to make up the shortfall (Ndletyana 2015a, p. 52). The chairperson of the Commission resigned in protest, citing, amongst others, the fact that the Commission had no control over civil servants – a situation that cast suspicions on their impartiality. Eventually, the Constitutional Court (ConCourt) resolved the deadlock. This was done indirectly in the course of a judgement for an appeal brought to the ConCourt by the NP. The judgement included comments that 'cast a dim light on the conduct of government suggesting that, were the Commission to take government to court on those matters, the court would find in the Commission's favour' (Ndletyana 2015a, p.52). The court's implicit warning to government re-affirmed the independence of the IEC, leading government to change its attitude towards the Commission.

In recent years, questions have been raised regarding the ability of the IEC to run elections impartially. These emerged in the wake of a controversy surrounding the misconduct of a former commissioner which raised issues relating to the jurisdiction of the Electoral Court. Former Commissioner Pansy Tlakula had been found guilty of unethical behaviour by influencing the awarding of a contract to a business partner during her tenure as the Commission's CEO (Ndletyana 2015b, p.172). Opposition parties called for Tlakula's resignation, arguing that if the CEO could influence the award of a contract nothing could prevent her from benefitting the ruling party. Using their majority in parliament, ANC parliamentarians were reluctant to hold Tlakula to account, questioning the jurisdiction of the Electoral Court over the matter since Tlakula was not a commissioner when the incident occurred.

Opposition parties took the matter to the Electoral Court, which ruled for the removal of Tlakula from office. The court set a precedent by finding that commissioners are not only expected to act ethically during their time in office but are also held accountable for their behaviour prior to their appointment to the Commission. In this regard, an analyst remarked that: 'the Electoral Court has raised the moral standards to which commissioners are held. This will go a long way towards ensuring that the commission is staffed with individuals of unquestionable moral standing and will thus enhance the integrity of the IEC' (Ndletyana 2015a, p.186).

In the end, the IEC was able to prevail over the ANC's encroachments on its independence with the help of the courts, which are perceived to operate independently. These examples speak to the mutually reinforcing character of institutions, as an independent judiciary was able to re-affirm the independence of the EMB, its impact on the quality of electoral governance, and the overall quality of the political system.

A HIGHLY POLITICISED EMB IN MOZAMBIQUE

Following decades of fighting against Portuguese colonial rule, the *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (Frelimo) took up political power as the government at independence in 1975. Once in power, Frelimo set out to govern Mozambique as a one-party state based on Marxist-Leninist principles. Opposition to Frelimo found its most radical expression in an armed rebellion led by the *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (Renamo). This was an anti-communist insurgent group supported by Ian Smith's Rhodesia and later by apartheid South Africa within the context of the Cold War in southern Africa. Shifting regional and international political dynamics in the late 1980s opened the doors for the inception of diplomatic negotiations between the belligerents aimed at ending the armed conflict. These

efforts culminated in the signing of a general peace agreement in Rome in October 1992.

Parallels have been drawn between the Angolan and Mozambican peace processes. Like the Bicesse Peace Accords in Angola, the Rome Peace Accords centered on military and political issues. On the military front, the agreements called on Frelimo and Renamo to observe a ceasefire, demobilise their armies and form a new unified national army. On the political front the settlement called for national multiparty elections as a channel to conclude Mozambique's transition from a one-party state to a multiparty democratic dispensation. However, there was massive international support and involvement in the implementation of the terms of the peace accord in order to prevent a repetition of the 'Angolan debacle' (Tvedten 1993, p. 108). This included the deployment of a large civilian and military contingent from the UN which had been charged with overseeing the transition process.

In preparation for the first multiparty elections, a new electoral law (Law 4/1993) was approved on 12 January 1994. This legislation made provisions for the establishment of institutions responsible for running Mozambique's elections. These were the *Comissão Nacional das Eleições* (National Commission for Elections or CNE) and the *Secretariado Técnico de Administração Eleitoral* (Technical Secretariat for Elections Administration or STAE), which was a subordinate agency answerable to the CNE. The former was designed to deal with political issues while the latter was expected to focus solely on the technical and administrative operations of the electoral process. The CNE had 20 members: ten members from the government, which was led by Frelimo; seven from Renamo and three from existing civilian parties created in the aftermath of the war. The STAE comprised 50 technicians: 25 technicians from the government led by Frelimo, 13 from Renamo and 12 from other political parties and the UN. The president of the CNE was to be appointed by the president of the Republic after a selection by the members of the Commission.

It should be noted that although the composition of the CNE and STAE was politically charged, in practice no party exercised dominance over the electoral agencies. This was for at least two reasons: firstly, selection to both entities was based on the principle of parity between Frelimo, Renamo and other political organisations; and secondly, the electoral law mandated all parties to observe consensus in decision-making.

In this context the elections were held on 27 October 1994. Haines and Wood (1995) report that 'despite allegations of irregularities, most notably of Zimbabwean nationals voting in the frontier regions and a large number of spoilt papers, the elections were generally accepted as free and fair' (p. 263). The electoral results confirmed a victory for Frelimo (44.33%) and its presidential candidate

Joaquim Chissano (53.3%), against Renamo (37.78%) and its leader, the late Afonso Dhlakama (33.7%). A third party, the Democratic Union (DU) received 5.44% of the votes. These results translated into 129 seats for Frelimo, 112 for Renamo and 9 for UD in the 250-seat *Assembleia da República* (parliament). Unlike the Angolan experience two years earlier, the international community and domestic political actors hailed Mozambique's founding elections as a success since all parties accepted the results. This success can be partly attributed to the role played by the electoral agencies as they ensured the credibility of the electoral process.

However, parity in the composition of Mozambique's electoral agencies and mandatory consensus in decision-making were subsequently abandoned. For instance, in preparation for the country's first local elections held in 1998, the Frelimo-dominated legislature approved a new electoral law linking political representation in the CNE to a party's share of seats in parliament. Furthermore, the new electoral legislation provided for decision-making by a simple majority. In this regard, an analyst explains that 'as the dominant party, FRELIMO was therefore able to pass a law that gave it more representatives on the election commission while establishing a decision-making procedure that ensured the party's dominance in electoral management' (Mawson 2010a, p. 11). Accordingly, the new electoral management body comprised nine members: the president of the commission, appointed by the president of the Republic; one member appointed by the Council of Ministers; and seven members appointed by Frelimo and Renamo in accordance with their strength in parliament.⁷

These developments inaugurated a pattern that was to play out in all subsequent electoral processes: reformulation of electoral rules, reorganisation of electoral management, and Frelimo's victory followed by Renamo's contestation of the results. For instance, following the disputes around the administration of the 1998 local elections, parliament approved new legislation to set up a new electoral commission to run the country's second presidential and legislative elections, which were scheduled for 1999. The new electoral law addressed Renamo's demands for increased political representation at both the CNE and STAE. Consequently, the new CNE was set up in March 1999. It comprised seventeen members appointed as follows: eight members appointed by Frelimo, six by Renamo, one by the Democratic Union and two members by government. Frelimo and its presidential candidate, Joaquim Chissano, emerged as the winners with 48.54% and 52.29% of the votes respectively. Renamo, which formed a coalition to run in the elections, accused the CNE of bias, demanding a recount of the votes. Although the Supreme Court ruled against Renamo, accusations regarding the poor performance of the electoral agencies seem to find support

⁷ Renamo refused to take part in the elections as a sign of protest.

in the Carter Center's assessment that the 1999 elections had not been free and fair (The Carter Center, 2000).

Reformulations of electoral legislation, including provisions for the composition of the electoral commission, were carried out in preparation for the 2004, 2009 and 2014 elections. In relation to the 2014 electoral process, Renamo and a group of 12 small opposition parties accused the STAE of 'deliberately disorganizing the voter registration and the counting process' (Rosário 2016, p. 199). There was also a controversy around article 85 of the electoral law. The article stated that:

in the case of a discrepancy between the number of ballot papers in the ballot boxes and the number of voters, if the number of ballot papers in the ballot box is not greater than the number of registered voters the vote will be considered valid ... in case of the number of ballot papers in the ballot box being higher than the number of registered voters, the vote will be considered null'.

(Rosário 2016, p. 199)

Opposition parties called for a review of the content of the article because it jeopardised the 'transparency of the electoral process'. However, the Frelimo-dominated legislature refused to change the formulation of the aforementioned article.

These grievances led opposition parties to withdraw from the electoral process. Renamo went as far as conducting armed attacks in the central parts of the country. The confrontations ended with an agreement providing for consensual electoral reform between Renamo and Frelimo. Subsequently, 'Frelimo agreed to a set of electoral reforms presented by Renamo and enforced by Law 9/2014' (Rosário 2016, p.200). Like the 1999 legislation, the new law provides for a CNE comprising 17 members. However, there are notable differences in the criteria for the selection of commissioners, with five being nominated by the Frelimo, four by Renamo, one by the Democratic Movement of Mozambique (MDM) and the remaining seven members being drawn from civil society organisations. In this regard, Mawson (2010b) notes that 'this decision represented little risk to FRELIMO, because most civic organizations had originated with the party and were only slowly gaining an independent foothold' (p. 11).⁸ Frelimo and its presidential candidate won the country's fifth multiparty presidential and

⁸ These events speak to the highly bipartisan character of the Mozambican political system where Renamo often achieves through the bullet what it fails to achieve through the ballot. In this context, the non-armed opposition parties play a peripheral role. However, in recent years, the *Movimento Democrático de Moçambique* (MDM), a Renamo breakaway party, is emerging as Mozambique's third strongest political force.

legislative elections. The aftermath of the elections witnessed another peaceful transfer of power from Armando Gebuza, who had succeeded Joaquim Chissano, to his defence minister Filipe Nyuse.

CONCLUSION

Although there are many contextual variables affecting the course of democratisation, institutions play a crucial role in these processes as democratisation involves crafting institutions (Di Palma, 1990). In emerging democracies, the fate of transition and consolidation processes is often dependent on the character of electoral institutions, which tend to reflect the correlation of forces between the incumbent and opposition groups at the crucial moment of their genesis. Building on these insights, this study examined democratisation with a focus on electoral governance. More specifically, the study investigated the role of EMBs in accounting for the distinctive regime trajectories of the southern African states of Angola, South Africa and Mozambique.

The inception of democratisation processes in these countries was the result of political negotiations to end protracted armed conflicts in the early 1990s. Negotiations took place as a result of a military stalemate between the incumbent regime and opposition forces. The institutions of electoral governance that emerged from this correlation of forces between the belligerents were consensual and balanced, with neither the incumbent nor the opposition having effective control over the EMBs. As outlined in the analysis, the independent character of these electoral institutions was enshrined in the legal-institutional framework, the provisions for their composition, and the actual management of the electoral process. As a result, the founding elections in Angola, South Africa and Mozambique were declared to be free and fair, confirming the formal transition to multiparty democratic politics.

However, changes in the balance of power in the aftermath of the founding elections encouraged the winners to redesign the institutions of electoral governance. In cases where these attempts were successful, incumbents established self-serving EMBs affecting both the credibility of subsequent elections and the trajectory of the democratisation process. This helps to explain why post-war Angola has become an electoral authoritarian regime. As noted in the discussion, after their military subjugation of UNITA in 2002, the governing MPLA restructured the EMB, bringing it under the party's control. Since then the MPLA has won all subsequent elections with a two-thirds majority, cementing the party's status as the dominant force in Angolan politics.

In line with the analytical parameters adopted in this study, post-apartheid South Africa's position in the category of liberal democratic states can be

understood in terms of the independent character of electoral management in the country. As outlined above, attempts by the ANC to subvert the independence of the EMB have failed mainly because the guiding principles for the establishment of the country's democratic institutions were negotiated during the transitional period, thus preventing any one party from redesigning institutions unilaterally. Consequently, the country has a set of independent institutions with effective systems of checks and balance in place.

Like the MPLA in Angola, Frelimo has also succeeded in redesigning the rules of the game in Mozambique. However, an armed Renamo often threatens a return to war in order to get political concessions from the ruling party.⁹ As a result, legislation for the establishment of new electoral institutions is negotiated in preparation for every electoral process since the country's founding elections. Despite these developments, Mozambique has held elections in a relatively better political environment than Angola (as noted by Freedom House 2018). In addition, the country experienced two successful presidential successions in 2005 and 2015 respectively, since the transition to formal democratic rule. Angola has experienced its first presidential succession in 2017 after 38 years of President dos Santos's rule. This, I believe, takes the similarities between Angola and Mozambique beyond mere semantics, justifying the latter's ambivalent position between electoral authoritarian and a liberal democratic regime.

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⁹ As recently as 6 August 2019, roughly three months before Mozambique's next elections scheduled for 15 October 2019, President Filipe Nyusi and Renamo's leader Ossufo Momade signed a new Peace and National Reconciliation Agreement.

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USING ON-LINE PLATFORMS TO OBSERVE AND MONITOR ELECTIONS

A Netnography of Mozambique

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to understand the political impact of social networking platforms on the general elections in Mozambique held on 15 October 2014. It focusses on how electoral observation and monitoring were carried out in Mozambique using online tools, and is based on an ongoing research project exploring young people in politics in Mozambique through the internet. It uses a qualitative approach of both interviews and digital ethnography to sketch the landscape of online electoral observation in Mozambique. The positions here are the result of abstraction and generalisation – the particular positions of individuals or groups will only ever approximate these generalised positions, which are reconstructed from the complexity of everyday situated experience. As a preliminary conclusion, we have noted that the internet allows the emergence of new perspectives in political participation in Mozambique, despite its limited access to the internet.

Keywords: political participation, electoral observation, social networks, Mozambique

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the internet in recent years has been an important electoral tool for both voters and candidates. Websites have been relaunched, YouTube channels filled with videos, and Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram accounts created (or revived) in the hope that internet users will read, like, and share the election message of the day. More often than campaign strategists would like, however, the websphere has then produced an alternative selection of online campaign hits with unofficial videos, jokes, and memes going viral across social media timelines and walls. By the end of the campaign, a fair proportion of voters will have engaged with both official and unofficial information about the election on the internet.

The internet has fast become a more popular means of communication than the traditional print and electronic media were until recently (Lee & Verba 2012). The internet has also generated enormous interest about whether and how digital platforms, including social media, have any impact on politics. As a result, there is an increasing body of research evidence on the multiple relations between social media and politics from different perspectives (Calderaro 2018, p. 781). Similarly, Dahlberg (2011, p. 1) has noted that for well over a decade there has been widespread enthusiasm about the possibility of digital media advancing and enhancing democratic communication. This comes from a surprisingly diverse array of political interests, ranging from government officials to anti-government libertarians.

In addition, the growing use of digital technologies has intensified the production and circulation of digital data in Africa. A wide range of data are collected openly, often through digital surveys and, increasingly, discreetly via technologies such as mobile apps, text messages, satellite data, and smart captors. Far from simply following trends established in the West, the Global South – and Africa in particular – has become a place for experimenting with game-changing projects, from mobile money to the implementation of national biometric identification systems. Several scholars have already suggested that those practices constitute new forms of quantification, control and surveillance over people's lives.

Despite the premise that the internet opens 'political conversation' (Stromer-Galley 2003), we observe that the expansion of this debate is far from mechanical and unambiguous. It often appears rather limited, unequal and dependent on traditional media. For example, Farrell and Drezner (2004, p. 3) found that American political blogs generally draw only a fraction of the online audience that traditional media enjoys. According to Bimber and Flanagin (2005, p. 365), an array of actions in which technologies of information and communication are central has proven theoretically and empirically intriguing from the standpoint of collective action. Self-organising online groups, rapidly assembled networks of protesters, 'meet ups', new structures for interest groups, and 'viral' e-mail lists are all examples of collective behaviours employing advanced communication and information technologies.

Moreover, the internet has been used not only to disseminate information and debate public affairs, but has also been invested by civil society to renew forms of civic engagement. This is the current context in which Mozambique can be framed. A notable example is the emergence of online citizens' platforms such as *Txeke*, which started as a simple tool for social networking to express popular views on the country's political or social context. Its use was specifically reinforced during the general elections in October 2014 as one of the main tools

for electoral mobilisation. According to Kemp (2019), internet access reaches only 18% of the population in Mozambique, mostly those living in urban areas. Despite this lack of access, there is a growing tendency to use information and communication technologies as a tool for political participation and engagement, especially by young people as the 'creators of a new popular culture' (De Boeck & Honwana 2005).

However, during several demonstrations in which social networks were used as tools of social and political mobilisation in Africa (Honwana 2014), political actors attempted to control these spaces by shutting the internet and introducing taxes for mobile communication, as was the case in Tanzania and Uganda in 2018 and 2016 respectively. In 2018, for example, Algeria's government shut down the internet intermittently to prevent students from cheating in high school exams. Since May 2018 Chad's internet has been blocked by its government. According to these examples, Devermont (2019) argues that mobile phones and the internet cannot create a democracy out of an autocracy¹. They can however facilitate the necessary first steps; much as the internet can be used to fuel democracy, it can also be used to disrupt it. Analysing internet shutdowns at election times in sub-Saharan Africa, Freyburg and Garbe (2018) have shown that understanding ownership of the internet infrastructure, in particular internet service providers (ISPs), is critical to understanding state internet control. This is because most direct forms of control require ISPs to comply with government requests. Using qualitative comparative analysis, the results of this study support a positive relationship between a temporary halt of internet provision and ISP majority ownership by authoritarian states when facing election-related violence.

TXEKA

This article aims to analyse the electoral observation process in Mozambique's 2014 general elections through the use of the digital platform called *TxeKa* ('Watch it', in English). It started as a simple tool for social networking to express popular views on the country's political or social conditions and its use was specifically reinforced during the general elections in October 2014 as one of the main tools for electoral mobilisation. This platform was created by young activists in the run-up to the 2014 general elections and has operated by sharing localised information (maps and social network tools) on the elections.

The study will thus consider how digital platforms such as *TxeKa* influenced electoral observation in Mozambique during the 2014 general elections. This is

1 Typically viewed as brutally repressive regimes where power lies in the hand of a single individual – it has been assumed that totalitarianism emerges in places where the rigours of extreme levels of individualism in capitalist societies draw people to a totalitarian ideology (Frantz, 2016).

preceded by a theoretical discussion on the role of digital media in elections, followed by a review of prior research, including that of Mudhai (2013) and Dwyer (2019) on the impact of digital media.

Firstly, the study surveys political participation in the digital era in Africa. Secondly, the study considers theoretical perspectives on electoral observation and the internet in Africa. Thirdly, the study analyses the results regarding the *Txeka* experience as an on-line platform of electoral observation. Finally, the conclusion includes questions for future research.

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on the author's own practical experience, information collected on social media from *Txeka's* publications on its Facebook page, as well as in-depth interviews made between July and September in 2017 with the core team of *Txeka*. The *Txeka* team consisted of ten members of whom we spoke to five, including the platform's lead manager Tomás Queface. The remaining four were auxiliary members responsible for receiving, analysing and disseminating information received through the platform. These interviews were conducted using both face-to-face interviews, and via virtual communication (Skype video call) because some of these members were outside the country when the interviews took place. The selection of these correspondents was the result of a previous survey based on information obtained from *Txeka's* Facebook page and website, as well as through contacts shared on the online election platform that were publicly accessible.

The interview focussed on three essential questions: first, the motivations for creating *Txeka*; second, how the *Txeka* platform enabled political participation during the elections; and third, how *Txeka* measured the quality of the debate on internet social networks during the 2014 election period. The resulting answers were also obtained through 'netnography' or 'digital ethnography' (Hine 2000; Kaur-Gill & Dutta 2017). Hine (2000) was one of the first to apply the ethnographic paradigm of the constructed nature of the field in anthropology reflexively within internet studies (Marcus 1998), systematising her 'principles for virtual ethnography' from a multisited and connective notion of ethnography. Hine approaches virtual ethnography through the participant observation of different web pages as well as their links with mass media. Markham (2006) argues that the internet has been understood methodically as both a field site and a research tool. The first concept highlights the way in which the internet and its different platforms and technologies have become the context of participant observation, that is the field site or the locus of the social interaction between the ethnographer and his or her respondents. The second puts the emphasis on the internet as a means for data collection.

As initially noted, we hypothesise that the *Tseka* platform in Mozambique has served as a permanent mechanism to generate significant information on the electoral process. However, the increase in awareness does not necessarily imply any more civic engagement in the political debates at large in this specific case. Our analysis of *Tseka's* Facebook page was based on three assumptions:

- As a communicative medium, that is to communicate with the participants across time and distance;
- As a data source, including the participants' status updates, message contact and photos;
- As a context, with a shared, observable space that fed into and framed data collection.

For this purpose, we tracked keywords with the hashtags #Txeka #EleicoesMoz #Mocambique2014 #Mozambique2014. This led to five publications that were the subject of this article in the section in which we cover the *Tseka's* Facebook page as an electoral observation platform. The retrieval of the keywords was done through the research engine based on the 'filter per page' contained on Facebook itself. Then we chose the publications made known during the September and October 2014 electoral campaign and elections respectively. For this it was necessary to be a follower of the *Tseka* (like) page in order to follow each publication by activating the 'follow first' function. In addition, it was necessary to add each member of the *Tseka* team as a friend, which made our work easier.

DEFINING DIGITAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL NETWORKS AND THEIR SITES

There is no consensus in the literature about the concepts of digital media and social network(s) site(s). According to Schroeder (2018, p. 1), digital media have been responsible for some of the most wide-ranging changes in society over the past quarter century. At the same time, there is little agreement in the social sciences about how these changes should be understood. One reason is increasing disciplinary specialisation. For instance, media and communication studies concentrate on specific areas such as the news or influencers on social media, without a broader analysis of what people do online. Political science has tended to concentrate on specific questions, such as the role of media in election campaigns or for social movements.

According to Castells (2001, p. 9), 'a network is a set of interconnected links – modes of organization with extraordinary benefits, because they are naturally flexible and adaptable, essential qualities for surviving and thriving in a changing environment'. More broadly, a social network can be a social structure of the

internet, where elements are constituted by organisations or individuals, and whose links represent established interactions such as political, corporate, service, family, and friends. The main function of each network is mass communication and the transmission of knowledge, which will be examined in more detail. Authors such as Matos (2009) show that social networks can consist of a set of both physical and non-material spaces in which social agents can effectively participate in the process of public communication. Pereira (2011, p. 16) explains that the potential of the internet is:

reaching individuals who, at first, without any political ties to the classical institutions of civil society, are willing, as long as they are 'properly' convinced, to participate in specific protest actions, cybernetic or not, that have some identity with their interests and perceptions of the world.

Boyd & Ellison (2008, p. 210) define social network sites 'as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system'. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site. For example, while we use the term 'social network site' to describe this phenomenon, the term 'social networking sites' also appears in public discourse, and the two terms are often used interchangeably. 'Networking' emphasises relationship initiation, often between strangers. While networking is possible on these sites, it is not their primary objective, nor is it what differentiates them from other forms of computer-mediated communication (CMC). For the purposes of this article, we will consider Facebook as a site which helps strangers to connect with each other on the basis of mutual interests, political views, or activities. Boyd (2008, p. 211) further claims that 'what makes social network sites unique is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers, but rather that they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks'.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA IN AFRICA

According to Dimitrova (2011, p. 100), the impact of digital media on voters may differ depending on the type of digital media under examination; that is different forms of digital media, which carry different primary functions, may lead to different effects on voters. Indeed, consulting political news websites may be qualitatively different from blogging, connecting with a politician or like-minded others on a social networking site. As digital media evolved, the sites of political

candidates and political parties have become more interactive and have begun to incorporate more multimedia and interactive features (Foot & Schneider, 2006). Newer digital media forms, including blogs, online video sites such as YouTube, and social networks such as Facebook, provide even more opportunities for connecting politicians and voters.

Brossier (2013) asserts that the implementation of participative practices in democracy has taken place in Africa since the 1990s. Donors (international financial institutions and NGOs) have provided aid programmes with political conditions to ensure that states engage in prescribed reforms, particularly in decentralisation processes that aim to liberalise African economies. Because political participation goes beyond the vote as the only modality to allow this type of participation, young people find new mechanisms of interpellation in social networks with the increased use of the internet, especially in cities. Africa's urban environment is characterised by demonstrations, mainly by politically active but economically marginalised young people.

This vision of political participation echoes what Muxel (2016, p. 38) calls 'new uses of politics' – the rise and spread of political abstention reflects a profound change in the civic norm and the citizenship model. However, even though the most recent municipal elections in Mozambique in 2018 had a turnout of more than 60%, participation has gradually given way to institutional mistrust, civic fatigue, democratic disenchantment or even negative politicisation (*ibid.*).

Regarding digital media in Africa, Huet (2017) shows that the continent is breaking new ground with new uses and is completely revolutionising everyday solutions. Huet further identifies five elements that have allowed Africa to skip development stages *vis-à-vis* other continents: telecommunications, mobile financial services, e-commerce, e-government and the economy of collaborative platforms. From Egypt to South Africa, Nigeria to Ethiopia, popular protest is emerging as a new force for political change across Africa. Widespread urban uprisings by youth, the unemployed, trade unions, activists, writers, artists, and religious groups are challenging injustice and inequality.

Nyabuga & Mudhai (2009) cited by Mare (2015), investigated the use of new media technologies by mainstream political parties in Kenya during the disputed 2007 election. They argue that new media has the potential to strengthen the process of monitoring elections as well as to mobilise political activities and possibly encourage political engagement. However, it can also reinforce the positions of those in power and as such is susceptible to manipulation by human agents.

According to Devermont (2019), mobile phones have played a powerful role in this regard. He notes that in 2008 sub-Saharan Africa had about 800 protests – in 2018 there were just under 4 000 protests – and part of that escalation can be

chalked up to more phones and internet users 'lowering the barriers to organizing'. Drawing on interviews and in-depth analysis, Branch and Mampilly (2015) offer an insightful assessment of contemporary African protests, situating the current popular activism within its historical and regional contexts. For example, Bruijn (2019) notes that the changes brought by the internet are met with huge optimism for Africa and source of glory and revolution. But in practice there is another aspect, and academic publications increasingly indicate that Africa is facing a new form of digital divide in which the continent is (again) on the margins.

THE INTERNET, ELECTION MONITORING AND OBSERVATION IN AFRICA

The terms observation and monitoring are frequently used interchangeably as synonyms during elections, but they differ. According to the Guidelines for African Union Electoral Observations and Monitoring Missions (AUEOM 2002), observation involves gathering information and making an informed judgement, whereas monitoring involves the authority to observe an election process and to intervene in that process if relevant laws or standard procedures are being violated or ignored. However, electoral observation is not limited to election day only and has three moments of observation: before, during and after election day (Adebisi et al. 2013).

Electoral observation and monitoring have become an integral part of democratic and electoral processes in Africa. International, regional and national observers play important roles in enhancing the transparency and credibility of elections and democratic governance in Africa and the acceptance of election results throughout the continent. Referring to Zambia, Gwagwa (2016, p. 5) remarks that

... Zambians are using platforms such as WhatsApp for activism. They set up private groups where they can discuss issues with some measure of anonymity as there is no name against a post. There are a number of online projects taking shape or emerging, such as, the OSISA Situation Room, iFace situation room at provincial level and Zambia Election Information Centre, launched on 19 May 2016 to facilitate citizens' engagement in real-time using smartphones.

In the last three decades, the presence of both domestic and international election observers has become a point of continuity in elections in many African countries. As a result, researchers have been investigating the efficacy and impact of electoral observation in Africa since the 1990s. Several key themes include:

- how effective observers are at detecting electoral fraud
- whether they are biased
- which standards they use to judge elections
- how they are perceived in host countries
- whether their presence leads to unintended consequences.

In evaluating the role of international observation of Kenya's 2017 elections, Molony and Macdonald (2019) have shown that specific allegations of incompetence and bias fail to acknowledge how international observers' preliminary statements refrained from offering final verdicts or commenting on the tallying process from which the problems emerged. Rather, due to a combination of media environment and popular expectations about observers' work, the complexity of their statements was lost as their findings were disseminated. This suggests that a fairer critique of international observers would focus on how they communicate, including when they decide to make their statements.

In Mozambique legislation allows local organisations such as political parties, associations, NGOs and citizens to observe elections. The 2018 legislation defines electoral observation as 'the conscious, genuine, responsible, appropriate and impartial verification of the various stages that the acts comprise'. This process covers all phases of the electoral process, from its inception to the validation and proclamation of election results by the Constitutional Council. Prior to the emergence and massification of new tools and platforms of communication and information provided by the internet, the observation process had been in place since Mozambique's inaugural elections in 1994. This included both local organisations and international observation missions, among them the SADC Electoral Observation Mission, European Union Election Observation Mission and African Union Election Observation Mission.

The first multiparty elections in Mozambique, held in 1994 in the aftermath of its civil war, show how essential national validation is to convince citizens that domestic institutions are reliable. At that time there was substantial international support to avoid a conflict like that in Angola in 1992 (Leeffers 2017, p. 4). The incumbent party won the elections which were generally regarded as free and fair; the main opposition (rebel) group did not reject the results although it had threatened a boycott in the case of an unfavourable outcome. However, without observers there would probably have been a different outcome (Lyons 2004).

Electoral observation is open to foreign observers and journalists, but there is no mention of the use of the information and communication technologies as electoral monitoring tools. However, in the 2018 municipal elections the National Electoral Commission (CNE) introduced new tools to consult electoral lists and results through internet platforms. Specifically, the CNE provided a website where

voters could use their voter numbers to identify their polling stations, as well as the name on each polling station list. By October 15, another website was made available in which the results of each municipality's election were published. This website was however problematic as within hours of the release of the first results some failures were recorded, access was slow and in some municipalities the results were missing².

The relation between electoral observation and monitoring and the internet in Africa has been studied by many scholars in recent years (Dzisah 2008; Ifukor 2010; Mudhai 2013; Ndavula et al. 2014; Salgado 2016). Nyabola's (2018) ground-breaking work reframes democracy from an African perspective and opens up new ways of understanding our current global online era. This author explores the drastic efforts being made by elites to contain online activism, as well as how 'fake news', a failed digital vote-counting system and the incumbent US president's recruitment of *Cambridge Analytica* contributed to tensions around Donald Trump's election. From the upheavals of recent national elections to the success of the #MyDressMyChoice feminist movement, digital platforms have already had a dramatic impact on political life in Kenya, one of the most electronically advanced countries in Africa. While the impact of the Digital Age on Western politics has been extensively debated, there is still little appreciation of how it has been felt in developing countries such as Kenya, where Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp and other online platforms are increasingly a part of everyday life.

According to Dodsworth and Cheeseman (2019), the elections increasingly involve technology at various stages of the electoral cycle. This ranges from biometric voter registration in advance of the election, to biometric identification on election day, e-voting, digital vote tallying and the electronic transmission of results. These new technologies create a number of challenges, both for the election and monitoring observation missions deployed by international organisations, as well as for the civil society groups that operate as domestic observers or 'election watchdogs'. The uptake of new electoral technologies varies between countries and between different parts of the election process. Many African countries have been early adopters of biometric voter registration and some have taken steps towards introducing electronic voting machines. According to ABC News, in 2014 Namibia became the first African nation to use electronic voting machines (EVMs) which were provided by Bharat Electronics Limited, an Indian state-owned company. Recently, Kenya (2017), RDC (2018), and Nigeria (2019) have experienced challenges in using technology for elections, both for registration and voting.

2 O website deixou de estar disponível para acesso público dias após a divulgação dos resultados de quase todos os municípios.

In a 2019 study entitled *Social media and politics in Africa: democracy, censorship and security*, Dwyer drew on over a dozen new empirical case studies, from Kenya to Somalia, South Africa to Tanzania. She explored how rapidly growing social media use is reshaping political engagement in Africa. But while social media has often been hailed as a liberating tool, the book demonstrates how it has also served to reinforce existing power dynamics, rather than challenge them. For the author, the smartphone and social media have transformed Africa, allowing people across the continent to share ideas, organise and participate in the realm of politics like never before. While both activists and governments have turned to social media as a new form of political mobilisation, some African states have sought to clamp down on this technology by introducing restrictive laws or shutting down networks altogether.

Presidents Kagame of Rwanda and Kenyatta of Kenya are among a growing group of African politicians using social media to leverage their communications with citizens³. From Egypt to Zimbabwe, Zambia, Nigeria, Ghana, The Gambia and South Africa, as well in many other African countries, election candidates are increasingly taking to Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp and other platforms to generate viral messages whose influence and scope are yet to be examined. It is important to consider the results and impact of spreadable or viral messages from traditional and social media on elections in Africa in relation to changing political, economic and social contexts.

The many issues involved include the cost of access for users, politics of ownership of the networks and the impact of viral media cultures on power relations in the democratisation process⁴ – what some scholars call ‘the digital divide’ (Dahlberg 2015; van Dijk, 2012). According to the Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI 2019), the biggest barrier for online access today is the cost of data. While people in high-income countries typically pay less than 1% of their average monthly income for 1GB data, the figure in Africa is 9%. However, in the interests of connectivity and of overcoming the digital divide, Facebook has encouraged a number of ways for mobile phone users to use Facebook at little or no cost, including via cheap SIM cards and Facebook’s ‘0’ service, both of which enable users with basic mobile devices to connect to a text-based Facebook interface (Leistert 2013).

3 Paul Kagame (President of Rwanda) has more than 1 400 000 followers on Twitter. Uhuru Kenyatta (President of Kenya), is the most followed African leader on Twitter with 3.62 million followers. Media blackout in Kenya sparked speculation that his handle, @UKenyatta, may have been debarred by the microblogging site. The verified Twitter account was the first to be suspended. Search for UKenyatta returned a ‘Sorry, that page doesn’t exist!’ response, and the President’s Facebook account was suspended shortly thereafter.

4 Symposium organized by the Africa Media Centre, Communication and Media Research Institute (CAMRI).

TXEKA: USING AN ONLINE PLATFORM TO OBSERVE ELECTIONS IN MOZAMBIQUE

TxeKa was funded in 2014 by the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI)⁵. The Canadian High Commission in Maputo partnered with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Mozambique and Kenya to develop a Portuguese-language web-based application that empowered ordinary citizens to use their smartphones to report on election irregularities in the lead-up to the election. One of the beneficiaries of the direct support of Canada's initiative was the *Olho do Cidadão* [Citizen's eye], a youth civic organisation that uses internet social networking as a platform for political participation based in Maputo. In the 2014 general elections, this organisation implemented the project *TxeKa*, a platform based on the technology used in Kenya's 2010 elections as a result of violence recorded there. This platform allowed citizens to report problems regarding Mozambique's real-time elections through social media (Facebook), SMS, and mobile applications. Through mobile use, the *TxeKa* platform encouraged participation and better accountability and transparency, enabling citizen engagement in the electoral process. On 15 October 2014, Mozambique's national election day, *TxeKa* was made available for Android phones via Google Play and for Apple phones via iTunes. Users across Mozambique were able to download the app for free. Through this app, citizens sent reports and shared photos and videos with the *TxeKa* team of ten analysts in Maputo who were trained by teams of Ushahidi⁶ specialists. Certified election observers also receiving training on how to use *TxeKa* and were deployed across Mozambique. Ushahidi's Kenyan representatives were on hand on election day to help process incoming data.

During the lead-up to the election, the *TxeKa* team in Maputo uploaded information they received on irregularities to a live online map of Mozambique on its *TxeKa* website [<https://txeka.co.mz/>]. Citizens without smartphones (hence without the *TxeKa* app) sent text messages directly to the *TxeKa* team⁷. On election night a situation room was set up in Maputo by private television (STV) with participants from the National Election Commission, civil society organisations (CSOs), the main political parties, and the media. The *TxeKa* map was a key

5 The CFLI is designed to support small-scale, high-impact projects in developing countries, which align with Global Affairs Canada's thematic priority areas for engagement. The programme is directed at projects conceived and designed predominantly by local partners. Projects are selected and approved by the relevant embassy or high commission of Canada.

6 The organisation uses the concept of crowdsourcing for social activism and public accountability, serving as an initial model for what has been coined as 'activist mapping' — the combination of social activism, citizen journalism and geospatial information.

7 According to Statista (the statistics portal) 67.92 people per 100 habitants subscribed to mobile cellular use in Mozambique in 2014. We consider these numbers as important to understand how the Mozambicans were connected using mobile phones.

feature in providing real-time data that allowed stakeholders to discuss citizen concerns on the fairness and transparency of the electoral process. However, the observation process had a legal obstacle (*Electoral Law No. 7, 22 February 2013, 22th February*, amended by laws no° 6 and 7, 3 August 2018). These indicate that the findings verified during the electoral process by observers must be submitted in Portuguese to the National Election Commission and to its support bodies, the Technical Secretariat of the Electoral Administration (STAE), District Electoral Commission (CDE), and Provincial Electoral Commission (CPE) according to each area of electoral observation. This is considered to be one of the main limitations to electoral observation problem-solving. These electoral problems must be resolved at the local level before being forwarded to the central bodies as CNE or STAE.

The *Txeke* team received more than 3 000 messages from Mozambicans across the country, and was followed by 14 000 Facebook users. Analysing two electoral moments (before and during elections), we noted that the Facebook page published many posts (see screenshots 1 to 8)⁸ using the hashtag #Txeke to promote online electoral observation and monitoring. However, access to the internet and therefore to social networks cannot be taken as universal, even with the availability of the 'free Facebook' service (known as free basic) which started in 2015. Mozambique has limited access to the internet (only 18% in 2019), making for limitations of equal access on platforms that seek to promote virtual political participation such as *Txeke*. With a population of around 30 million, internet access is thus for only a minority in Mozambique.

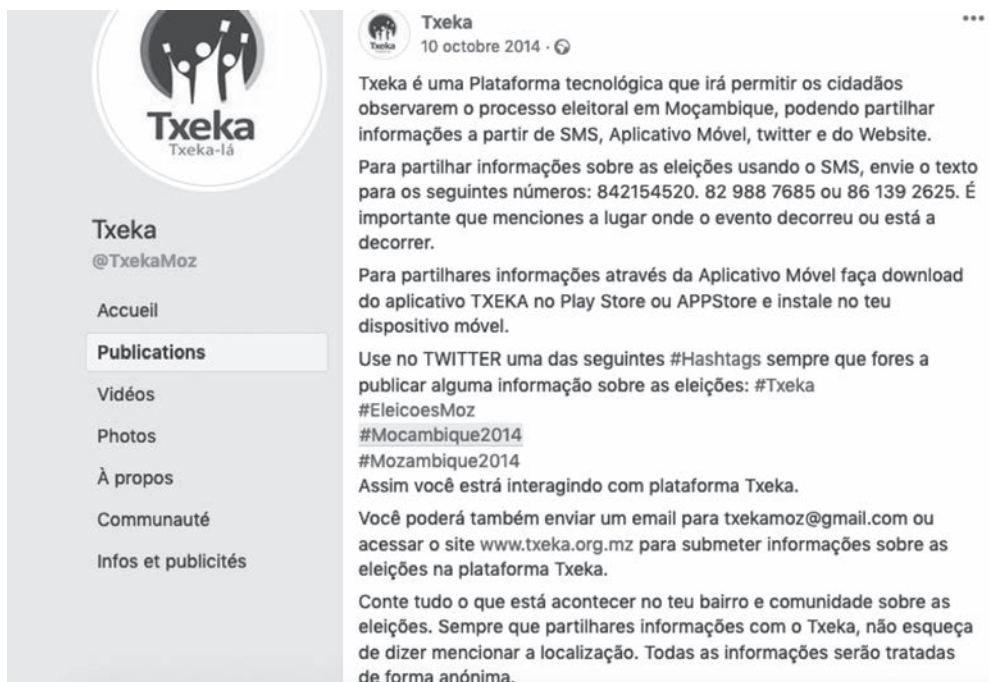
According to Queface⁹, *Txeke's* technical manager, outgoing messages were synchronised on a map allowing quick and easy identification of their senders. This exercise was made possible with the online map available on the platform. At each signal on the map, the members of the situation room – each equipped with a computer and mobile phone – were responsible for contacting the sender to verify the information before final sharing on social networks. This was especially for the preservation of information, the sender's security and the accuracy of the information. Strategically the team was divided between message receivers, verifiers and publishers. *Txeke* provided different mobile numbers to do the same work by the 'txekadores'¹⁰ who received the calls and answered each message. Also, *Txeke's* Facebook was categorised by two key messages which could be ranked in order of importance: electoral violence (during the campaign and on polling day) and dissemination of results on election night.

8 All screenshots were used with permission of the *Txeke* team with translations from Portuguese to English by the author.

9 Interview 20/07/2017, Maputo – Mozambique [by Skype]

10 Local expression to designate a member of *Txeke's* platform.

While it was not possible to ascertain technically which regions reported the most messages that election day, Monteiro¹¹ (a *txekadora*) established that the cities of Maputo and Nampula were more prominent. Our interviewee further stated that each message or call received that day came specifically from a focal point based at a voting station as an observer of CSOs such as the Youth Parliament of Mozambique. Regarding electoral observation and monitoring plan and strategy, *Txeka's* own Facebook page included a publication made on 10 October with appropriate guidelines, and an explanatory leaflet outlining steps to sending communication to *Txeka* headquarters (see screenshot 1 and image 1).



[Screenshot 1: *To interact with Txeka, use the Twitter #hashtags whenever you are posting information about the elections: #Txeka #EleicoesMoz, #Mocambique2014 #Mozambique2014. You can also email txekamoz@gmail.com or go to www.txeka.org.mz to submit information about the elections on the Txeka platform. Tell us everything that is happening in your neighborhood and community about the elections. Whenever you share information with Txeka, do not forget to mention the location. All information will be treated anonymously | October 10, 2014*]

Seja um cidadão Observador

Txeka
Txeka-la

Informações Úteis
para Observadores

Seja um cidadão observador.
Relate tudo sobre as Eleições no teu Bairro ou Comunidade!

A tua informação é segura e anónima.

Envie-nos um SMS
84 95 55 55 0
82 988 76 85
86 139 26 25

A informação pode
ser enviada em **imagens,**
vídeos e texto

Envie-nos
pelo Correio Eletrónico
TxekaMoz@gmail.com

Envie-nos pelo website
Txeka.org.mz

Não te esqueças de mencionar a **localização!**

Encontre-nos no facebook
www.facebook.com/TxekaMoz

Saiba mais em
www.txeka.org.mz

Txeka
Txeka-la

Txeka-la é uma plataforma web desenvolvida
com a finalidade de monitorar as Eleições Gerais
e das Assembleias de Voto de 2014. Participe
enviando-nos informações sobre o processo
eleitoral e estarás contribuir para eleições
transparentes.

Diga-nos o que você vê e a localização
do evento!

Encontre-nos no facebook
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Democracy Institute for
Multiparty Democracy **Canada**

[Image 1: Steps and instructions for observers to interact and send information – mobile numbers, voice, SMS, e-mail and website]

Our interview with Zandamela, a member of *Txeka*, explained in an interview in Maputo on 22 July 2017 that this was the first Mozambican platform for electoral monitoring created for young Mozambicans to show their views on politics:

I believe that every young person who uses a smartphone has at least Facebook and WhatsApp. There is a fringe of young people who don't use social network tools to share information about their own life, but they use some to manifest what they like or dislike about the Government in particular, and about politics in general. In 2014, there were few civil society organizations covering elections, but *Txeka* appeared as the first one. Today there are many online platforms that also want to do the same and we will have more online platforms doing the same process during next elections.

(Zandamela, Maputo 2017)

On the other hand, Nhampossa (also member of the *Txeke* situation room team), explained in a Skype interview on 18 July that the electoral discussion between members of different political parties on the internet during the general election was radical and ideological. In particular, the debate on polarisation sought to defend political parties without openly discussing their candidates' ideas for those elections. This accords with several studies (Fisher, 2013; Nelimarkka, 2018; Beaufort, 2018) which analysed the polarisation of opinion created by internet social networks in other countries. Nhampossa also recalled that *Txeke* uploaded the main electoral manifestos of Frelimo, Renamo and the MDM together with electoral legislation to promote online debate during general elections. Though some Facebook pages appeared to discredit *Txeke's* work, Nhampossa noted that this was to be expected, because of the tension:

Each citizen's comments were motivated by their ideologies. However, we can highlight three groups: the first group which was seen as neutral, the second that identified as partisan, and last but not least the third group that only commented to disrupt the process. We cannot say so much about the debate on electoral manifestos, there was only debate about the behavior of the political parties or even about the candidates. What happened was that those who raised questions about the manifestos were only the academics.

(Nhampossa, Maputo 2018)

These interviews suggest that *Txeke* was an important channel of communication through which political communities or individual members of the public community provided information about their activities, publicised their positions on specific topics, shared information from multiple sources, and reported on issues surrounding them at a specific time (Calderaro 2018, p. 783). However, we noted that this process was not uniform because the debate was polarised, fragmented and made by specific actors – those members of political parties who were already engaged in politics. In other words, *Txeke* was a space to practice 'politics as usual' (Margolis & Resnick, 2000), thus questioning the relevance of this platform.

The training of platform managers encountered several difficulties because they depended on external entities, mainly *Ushahidi*¹² to use *Txeke*, and this was considered a barrier and organisational limit to guaranteeing the sustainability of their activities. There was no long-term sustainability or consistency of the

12 *Ushahidi*, testimony in Swahili, was developed to map reports of violence in Kenya after the post-election violence in 2008. The organisation uses the concept of crowdsourcing for social activism and public accountability, serving as an initial model for what has been coined 'activist mapping' – the combination of social activism, citizen journalism and geospatial information.

initiative once the elections ended, as evidenced by the temporary closure of the *Txeka* website, the disintegration of the 2014 project team, and lack of continuity with the same criteria and strategy in the October 2018 elections. On the other hand, the availability of material and financial funds to initiate activities was conditioned by electoral observation and monitoring during the prior phases (registration and electoral campaign). Moreover, although the emergence of such platforms is associated with youth activism (Nuvunga 2018; Tsandzana 2018), we cannot categorically assert that *Txeka* was used only by young people, given the impossibility of obtaining disaggregated age or gender data from the platform itself. This finding is in line with Fazenda's comments as *txekador* during the 2014 elections, when interviewed in Maputo on 22 July 2017:

I consider the civil society initiatives as the best way to engage young people, because they are organizations that still have some confidence from young people, such as *Txeka*. However, these platforms must be increasingly accessible to citizens so that people can say something about electoral processes.



[Screenshot 2: *The use of social networks for political propaganda and citizen participation has had a major impact on the 2008 presidential elections in the United States and in 2013 in Kenya. In Mozambique, Txeka proposes to create an environment in which citizens can participate in elections by using the media to dialogue and share information about the electoral process. #Txeka | 22 September 2014*]



[Screenshot 3: *The Fifth General Elections in Mozambique that will take place in October 2014 differ absolutely from the First General Elections of 1994. Today we are all from Rovuma to Maputo, from Zumbo to the Indian Ocean connected instantly and electronically over the internet and cell phones. Information on the Internet is disseminated instantly, making election information available faster than traditional media* | 23 September 2014]



[Screenshot 4: *In addition to free, fair and transparent elections, all forms of violence must be avoided. If you check any situation of electoral violence, please let us know. #Txeka* | 24 September 2014]



[Screenshot 5: Mozambique has one of the lowest rates in terms of access to the Internet access in Africa (4.85%)¹³. How can technology platforms bring about impact on a country with low internet access? #Txeka will allow those who do not have internet access to share information via SMS. All information will be analysed and forwarded to institutions such as the CNE, Order of Lawyers, Police and others. Thus, the citizens will not be the informants, but will also be creating the conditions for the immediate intervention of the institutions related to the electoral process in the resolution of the reported situations | 3 October 2014]

13 There is divergent data on Internet access in Mozambique, which is 18% according to Kemp (2019) and 4.5% according to the International Telecommunication Union (2018).

Reacting to the publication, Alexandre said that *Txeka* was a new experience in Mozambique and it could contribute to transparency during the elections:



[Screenshot 6: *This is a new experience in Mozambique and the platform is welcome. The advantage in this platform is that the information sent by the citizens is not only received and reported but is also forwarded to the relevant authorities to intervene and ensure that we have free, fair and transparent elections* | 3 October 2014]



[Screenshot 7: *There is shooting in Nampula city, in the school of Tiacane. According to the citizen report, there is no electricity, which hampers the situation* | 15 October 2014]

In this regard two users/followers commented on the publication with different point of views:



[Screenshot 8: Cassimo Jaime – It’s the beginning of the enlightenment for the majority of population. The electricity of Mozambique is camarada¹⁴. |

Rogerio Andre – I don’t support any parties, but I live near the school, and I didn’t hear any shot. | 15 October 2014]

These publications indicate that *Txeka* can be considered as empowering people to become sources of information, which O’Reilly (2007, p. 24) summarised as ‘the power of social media to (1) create and (2) access self-generated contents’. At the same time, social media facilitate the proliferation of information through channels that are becoming both easier to use and more accessible. *Txeka* can also be viewed as ‘a platform for political discourse’ (Nguyen 2011), which reflects the increasingly interactive nature of the web where people can not only receive but also add information. The web has thus become scalable in the sense that people can personalise the type of information they wish to receive and they can also disseminate their own information amongst other people in their social network. The emergence of *Txeka* thus appears to signal a change in the practice of electoral observation and monitoring in Mozambique, which in previous elections was anchored in a model where television and radio were the main channels.

14 Comrade (camarada) is the popular name to refer to members of Frelimo ruling party in Mozambique.

The process of electoral observation and monitoring conducted by CSOs, among others, is a crucial step in giving credibility to the electoral process to the extent that it is mentioned in the final ruling of the Constitutional Council proclamation on the 2014 electoral results. However, as previously noted regarding the quality of debate, we think that *Txeke* cannot be generalised as an open space for all. This is mainly due to unequal access to the internet, as well as the fact that this platform failed to maintain any stability beyond the elections. Indeed, political participation as we have seen above is largely anchored in the elections. Thus, various initiatives appear at election times, but as with the election observation and monitoring processes, the focus should be on scrutinising not only the elections, but the electoral process as a whole from the voter registration phase.

Finally, our interviews reveal the need to build own capacity so that Mozambican organisations can create their initiatives. The *Txeke* platform was anchored on an initiative from Kenya, with limited access to information on how the database was organised, as well as the processing or provenance of the information received and disseminated during the 2014 general elections. Some platform features, particularly those indicating sending region and message quantity, were dominated by Kenyan technicians and after 2014 this platform did not have the same impact and continuity.

CONCLUSION

Electoral observation and monitoring platform *Txeke* is a digital communication initiative, and a counterpublic activism movement (Dahlberg 2007) made by young enthusiasts through information and communication technologies (ICT) to monitor public and government activities using on-line platforms.

It can be considered as an 'election watchdog'¹⁵ (Norris & Nai 2017, p. 3). *Txeke* was arguably the first empirical experience in challenging the long history of electoral observation made by traditional media (radio and television) in Mozambique. This result seems to be consistent with other research which has found that in recent years, electoral observation missions have been turning to ICT for the timely collection of data and easy processing. This in turn allows electoral management bodies to quickly identify problems and take actions to resolve them (Matsimbe 2019).

15 To supplement the conventional chain of electoral accountability in democratic states it is important to involve multiple channels; upwards towards the international community, horizontally among state agencies, and vertically downwards to civil society. These safeguards are designed to strengthen mechanisms of transparency, accountability, and compliance.

With regard to ethical implications underpinning the ‘big data’ phenomenon, this article concludes that there are four basic questions when undertaking research on social media tools. These are:

- how to guarantee the sustainability of these platforms
- what is the status of so-called ‘public’ data on social media sites
- can it simply be used, without requesting permission
- what constitutes best ethical practice for researchers.

Democracy has at its heart self-determination, participation, voice and autonomy. Through initiatives such as *Txeke*, democracy can mean much more than simply voting or providing better public information to the citizens.

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POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL OFFENCES IN NIGERIA

A Critical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the Nigerian Constitution and Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) on the role and complicity of political parties in electoral offences in Nigeria. It explores the extent to which political party activities or inactions constitute or contribute to electoral offences. The objective is to find out whether political parties are complicit in electoral offences, and whether the Electoral Act needs to be reformed to accommodate political party culpability, reduce the criminal complicity of political parties, and improve political party accountability. The paper adopts a mixed method of normative and critical analysis. Normative analysis arises from examination of doctrinal data which consist of the principles of law, provisions of the Electoral Act 2010 and the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN) 1999 and other relevant laws regarding jurisprudence in democracy and constitutionalism, in order to determine their coherence and validity. Critical analysis, on the other hand, is applied to electoral and democratic principles in extant literature and policy in order to justify the necessity of reforming electoral laws. The paper finds that the Electoral Act is silent in many instances of potential political party complicity in electoral offences. However, the law could be reformed to improve political party accountability and reduce the incidence of electoral offences in Nigeria. It recommends some policy reforms and amendments to improve the effectiveness of the Electoral Act 2010.

Keywords: constitutional democracy, Electoral Act 2010, electoral offences, party politics, political party accountability

INTRODUCTION

Free, fair and effective elections and a regime free of corruption are the bedrock of democracy and underpin the legitimacy, representativeness and constitutionality of government (Sisk 2017, p. 5). Conversely, disruption of the electoral process through a criminal breach of the electoral law in order to gain governmental power is counterproductive, illegitimate and unconstitutional. Political parties are the key organs that ensure the sustenance of democracy through party politics. As the only institutions empowered to sponsor candidates for elective offices in Nigeria, they must therefore do all within their legitimate power to promote and protect the rule of law through adherence to electoral laws. This is one of the key functions of political parties. In essence, when political parties do not adhere to the rule of law, especially during electoral campaigns and elections, the results will be tainted by illegality. It is the adherence to the rule of law as enunciated in the electoral laws that imbues the winning party with the legitimacy and constitutionality to govern and represent its constituency. In the same vein, if it is evident that the ruling political party acquired power by breaking the law, particularly electoral laws, this will lead to a crisis of legitimacy for the government which may in turn lead to a vicious circle of electoral violence, brigandage and lawlessness in the polity (Bader 2012, p. 53).

In Nigeria the role of political parties in electoral offences may be demonstrated by the number of electoral offences that may be or can only be committed by or in collusion with political parties and their prevalence or absence during elections. These include most of the electoral offences under Part VII of the Electoral Act 2010, where political parties are not considered to be culprits. This is a poor reflection of the Nigerian electoral system, because in a more advanced electoral system there is less possibility of such offences through the establishment of institutional frameworks that reduce their occurrences (Bader 2012, p. 53). In the same vein, and conversely, the more there are of such offences in the electoral law, without institutional frameworks to curb their occurrence, the less advanced is the electoral system. Constitutionalism thrives where both the assumption of power and the exercise of power are conducted in accordance with the constitution and the rule of law (Nwabueze 2004, p. 245). In relation to electoral systems, avoiding a criminal breach of the electoral law is the foundation of constitutionalism. Constitutionalism and the rule of law ensure that political actors subject themselves to accountability by upholding the law (rule of law); that there is a level playing field for all segments of society to participate in the governance process (representativity); and through the legal framework stipulate the criteria for the formation of government (constitutionalism) (Oyewo 2007, p. 1).

In Nigeria there is no clear legal framework outlining the responsibility of political parties in ensuring compliance with the electoral law, particularly in relation to electoral offences. This is because although the Electoral Act of 2010 creates several offences which by their nature may be or can only be committed by or in collusion with political parties, the Act fails to include political parties as potential culprits or to assign appropriate liability and sanction. This failure to properly highlight the potential role of political parties creates the impression either that political parties can do no wrong, or where they do so they cannot be held accountable. This can also be interpreted as a tacit approval of political party lawlessness insofar as they can gain power through such means – a tacit approval of civilian coup d'état. In describing this phenomenon, the research explores the extent to which political party actions or inactions constitute or contribute to electoral offences in Nigeria. The objective is to establish whether political parties are complicit in electoral offences; whether the Electoral Act needs to be reformed to assign liability to political parties; and whether institutional frameworks on electoral offences need to be expanded to eliminate or reduce the criminal complicity of political parties.

To explore these issues, the paper is structured as follows: the next section provides conceptual definitions for key concepts that are recurrent in the research. These concepts are constitutionalism, the rule of law, electoral offences and criminal breach. This is followed by a literature review mainly on the essence of criminal law and role of the political party in elections. The intent is to situate the study in extant research and highlight the need to explore the relationship between criminal law and the role of political parties in democratisation. Next is a presentation and analysis of electoral offences in the Electoral Act 2010, their limitations and implications for the effectiveness and efficiency of the electoral process. This is followed by an analysis of the role of political parties and their relationship to electoral offences in Nigeria. The paper concludes with recommendations for improving the electoral system and laws in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The paper adopts a mixed method of normative analysis and critical analysis. Normative analysis consists of analysing doctrinal data i.e. the principles of law, provisions of the Electoral Act 2010, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN) 1999 and other relevant legislation regarding jurisprudence in democracy and constitutionalism to determine their coherence and validity (Routio 2007; Hutchinson & Duncan 2012). One example is determining the normative coherence of criminalising conduct committed by an individual, but not applying the same principle when committed by a group such as a political party.

Critical analysis, on the other hand, analyses electoral and democratic principles in extant literature and policy in order to examine and apply these principles in justifying the reform of electoral laws (Rankin & Wolfe 2019).

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

This section defines and justifies the value of key concepts discussed in the paper. These concepts include constitutionalism, constitutional democracy, the rule of law, party politics, electoral offences and criminal breach.

Constitutionalism

In Nigeria, the constitution (CFRN 1999) is the source and foundation of all laws. All laws, legal actions, policies and government actions find validity in this constitution. Failure to find validity in the constitution or acting contrary to the constitution invalidates or voids conduct, action or inaction (Section 1 (2) and (3) of the CFRN 1999 as amended). With particular reference to the exercise of governmental power through democratic elections, section 1(2) of the CFRN 1999 provides that: 'The Federal Republic of Nigeria shall not be governed, nor shall any persons or group of persons take control of the Government of Nigeria or any part thereof, except in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution'. In this regard, constitutionalism means the establishment and conduct of government through constitutionally established institutions, impersonal bureaucratic procedures and processes and in accordance with any statutory law (Nwabueze 2004, p. 245). This is important because it is only through adherence to constitutionalism that good governance and accountability can be ensured in government (Oyewo 2007, p. 1).

Constitutional Democracy

Constitutional democracy is the practice of democratic governance in accordance with constitutionally established principles. Whereas democracy can exist without following a constitutional mandate, constitutional democracy exists only when the dictates of the constitution are duly recognised and strictly applied in the democratic process.

Rule of Law

The rule of law is the principle that all persons and institutions are subject to the dictates of the law and the determination of such right by an impartial justice system. The adherence to the rule of law thus means the supremacy of

the law, protection of fundamental human rights, equality before the law and an independent justice system to interpret the law (Nwabueze 1992, p. 19).

Party Politics

Democracy may exist with or without political party systems. Where political parties do not exist, candidates for electoral positions may contest on their own authority and identity. Political parties have several definitions which can be summarised to mean a group of men and women with a similar policy and target of capturing and controlling political power. However, in this paper we adopt the legal definition of a political party. According to this definition, a political party includes any association of persons whose activities includes canvassing for votes in support of candidates for election under the Act and registered by the Commission (Section 156 Electoral Act 2010). Persons who do not belong to a political party go through neither the rigour of party primaries nor sponsorship by political parties. Where political parties do exist, as is the case of Nigeria, candidates for elective positions can only be qualified to run for office when sponsored by a political party (Section 87 Electoral Act 2010). This involves campaigning within the party for nomination as a candidate and campaigning as a party candidate against other candidates from other parties for elective office. An electoral or political process where political parties are the focal points for political participation is regarded as party politics (Karp & Banducci 2007).

Electoral Offences

Electoral offences include conduct or omission aimed at illegitimately and illegally acquiring political power, the occurrence of which attracts the criminal sanction of imprisonment, fine or both. Electoral offences are therefore offences committed in pursuance of an elective position in Nigeria. In Nigeria the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) defines electoral offences. Accordingly, in this paper electoral offences are those acts, omissions and conduct prohibited under the Electoral Act and classified as electoral offences, particularly offences created in Part VII of the Electoral Act 2010. These include section 128 (disorderly conduct); section 129 (campaigning or soliciting votes within 300 metres of a polling booth); and section 130 (corruptly influencing any person to vote in a particular way).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The idea of corporate liability for criminal actions is fast becoming the norm in many jurisdictions (Iyidobi 2015, p. 106). Corporate criminal liability is, however,

yet to be properly linked with electoral offences committed by political parties during elections. In Nigeria, political parties are corporate entities with separate identities from their members or managers (Section 80 Electoral Act 2010) which means that, technically, a political party may also be found guilty of committing or colluding in the commission of an electoral offence. This may happen where there is a breach of electoral provision due to the actions or inactions of a political party. Thus, if breaching electoral law is an offence, political parties may be criminally liable for actions or omissions breaching electoral laws. In other words, the culpability of political parties in electoral offences should be properly examined and highlighted to help pave the way for its elimination or reduction. However, the question arises as to whether there is justification for making political parties liable for a breach of electoral laws.

The answers to this question appear to be in the affirmative, judging by the established functions of codification of criminal law:

- Definition of conducts or omissions that are prohibited or required by a criminal law;
- Outlining the minimum conditions for culpability for a criminal offence; and
- Setting out the liability for the offence relative to its seriousness or harm caused to individual or society and culpability of the culprit (Robinson 1994).

These three functions are regarded as rule articulation, liability assignment and grading of sanction. The importance of these functions is to meet the natural law requirement that an identifiable and distinct person must be held accountable for the breach of a criminal law. In addition, such criminal law must have been explicitly provided for within extant laws and the punishment clearly stated (Section 36 (12) CFRN 1999). Without these three elements clearly outlined in the law, a criminal provision would not have met its functions.

In addition to this jurisprudential justification for criminal law, there are also socio-political reasons for the enactment of criminal laws. These rationales include the protection of the offender, punishment of the offender, and protection of the community. The law is meant to protect both the offender and victim. For the offender, it ensures that the correct person is punished and correct sanction is imposed. By clearly stipulating the rule articulation, liability assignment and grading of sanction, criminal law ensures that victims of crime do not take the law into their own hands. It recognises that the commission of crime raises negative and vengeful emotions from the injured party or interested persons and that where the victims have the capacity to do so they may seek immediate and

mostly disproportionate revenge (Walker 1969, p. 17). The law abhors disorder, and criminal law works to maintain stability, orderliness and balance with regards to the determination and prosecution of offences. The courts, through criminal law, are able to adjudicate criminal cases and the convict is given proportionate sanctions as provided within the law (Gardner 1998, pp. 32–34).

The law also imposes punishment on the offender, the corollary to protecting the offender. The protection is limited to the extent that the offender is judicially identified, offence determined and a commensurate punishment imposed on the offender. The imposition of sanction has two different purposes. Firstly, to cause the offender to atone for the offence committed (Wood 2002) and secondly to deter and educate the offender against committing similar or any offence in the future (Husak 2004, pp. 217–218).

Aside from protecting and punishing the offender, criminal law protects the community. This position on the protection of the community is from the perspective that crime is an offence against society (community) as much as against an individual. The fact that an individual is directly harmed is immaterial. What makes it a communal affair is that members of society have relinquished the chaos of the will of the strongest, and have adopted the role and grief of an individual or community as a communal responsibility when harm is caused. Thus, by prosecuting and punishing crime, the community is protected from repeat occurrences. In this case, the community must view the actions that constitute the offence as (morally) wrong and not necessarily a political imposition by government (Robinson 2003, p. 1002). It also includes protecting the community from the harm of potential wrongdoing (Lanham et al. 2006). In other words, crime may not be committed before the law can come into action, but rather the likelihood of an offence can trigger the protection of the law.

The protection of the community and the general purpose of criminal law also overlap in various ways, particularly as instruments of deterrence, prevention or incapacitation, rehabilitation or reform, denunciation and restoration. These are all purposes of criminal law. Accordingly, flowing from the principle of corporate criminal liability, political parties as corporate bodies can and should be held accountable for electoral offences which they are proven to have tacitly encouraged, colluded in, sponsored and benefitted from. Corporate criminal liability occurs when a corporate entity commits a crime. Corporate crimes are defined as illegal acts, omissions or commissions by corporate organisations themselves as social or legal entities or by officials or employees of the corporations acting in accordance with the operative goals or standard, operating procedures and cultural norms of the organisation, intended to benefit the corporations themselves (Lederman 2001 cited in Erhaze & Momodu 2015, pp. 63–72).

Incidentally, in Nigeria common law provisions do not apply to crimes. An individual, organisation or body can only be held liable for a crime prescribed in a written law (Section 36(12) CFRN 1999 as amended). This means that for corporate criminal liability to apply in Nigeria, it must be statutorily provided in a law with elements of the offence and sanction clearly stated. The Nigerian legal system recognises this and has thus prescribed offences for which corporate entities and organisations may be held liable. Examples include the Terrorism Prevention Act 2013; Food and Drug Act Cap 150 LFN 1990; Standard Organization of Nigerian Act Cap S9 LFN 2004; Federal Environmental Protection Agency Act Cap 131 LFN 1990; and Oil in Navigable Waters Act Cap O6 LFN 2004. The task, however, is the feasibility of setting adequate sanction and sentencing guidelines, because it is necessary to make the sanctions and sentencing guidelines both effective and efficient. It must be effective in the sense that it has the capacity to deter, reform, and persuade corporate bodies to be law-abiding; efficient in that an optimum amount of resources, financial, material and time are deployed in achieving the desired level of effectiveness. This may mean developing a framework that leaves room for a case-by-case application of sanction to ensure that all offenders receive appropriate and effective sanctions.

Corporate criminal liability in the Nigerian legal system is yet to fully recognise the role of political parties, particularly with respect to actions and omissions that are apparently outside the constitutional and statutory purpose or duty of political parties. Examples are those offences created in Part VII of the Electoral Act 2010, such as the mutilation of the voters' register, buying of voters' cards, forgery of nomination papers and vote buying. The present language of the Electoral Act gives the impression that political parties are incapable of committing electoral offences as prescribed under the Part VII of Act, particularly in relation to offences aimed at influencing or manipulating votes. The only exceptions are offences related to political party finances, campaigns, election expenses and electoral violence in sections 88, 92, 95, 96 and 99 of the Electoral Act 2010 as amended.

However, in the offences created in Part VII which deals specifically with electoral offences, no offence is defined to assign liability to political parties. All the offences created from section 117 to 132 only contemplate individuals and associations¹ as culprits. None mentions political parties. For instance, Section 124 (6) recognises that most electoral offences are committed on the directive of

1 The term 'association' does not include 'political party'. Association and political party are clearly defined in section 156 of the Electoral Act 2010. A political party is defined as including 'any association of persons whose activities includes canvassing for votes in support of candidates for election under the Act and registered by the Commission'. Association on the other hand is defined as 'a body of persons (corporate or otherwise) who agree to act together for any common purpose and includes an association formed for ethnic, social, cultural, occupational or religious purpose'.

another but fails to name political parties as potential culprits. It only recognises candidates. Ironically, Part VII of the Electoral Act 2010 which fails to recognise the input of political parties prescribes electoral offences that go directly to the election and which have the capacity of directly distorting the will of the electorate in favour of a benefitting political party (See sections 117 to 132 of the Electoral Act 2019).

THE ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN PROMOTING CONSTITUTIONALISM, DEMOCRACY AND THE RULE OF LAW

It is necessary to recognise the impact of political parties on electoral offences because political parties are the constitutional and statutory vehicles for democratic elections in Nigeria (Section 87 of the Electoral Act 2010). Accordingly, it is political parties and not candidates that, legally speaking, contest elections. Candidates are merely representatives sponsored by political parties (Section 87 of the Electoral Act 2010). Thus, without political parties being recognised in the contest, candidates lose their representative status. In other words, there is no independent candidate under the Nigerian electoral legal framework. Candidates, especially elected executives, may however switch parties after elections. Legislators may only do so on strict adherence to constitutional provisions of section 68(1) CFRN 1999 as amended.²

This responsibility coincides with the roles of political parties in the electoral process. The primacy of political parties in the democratic process and constitutionalism in Nigeria is demonstrated by the various functions of political parties. For instance, under the constitution, one of the key requirements for any candidate to run for any elective position, from councillorship to the presidency, is sponsorship by a political party (Ihugba & Aaron 2018, p. 212; see also these case laws *Owuru v. Adigwu* [2018] 1 NWLR, p. 30, paras. G-B; *Uwazuruike v. Nwachukwu*, (2013) 3 NWLR (Pt. 1342) 503; *Daniel v. INEC* [2015] 9NWLR, pt. 1463, page 113 at 155-157; *Tarzoor v. Ioraer & ors* (2016) Vol. 256 LRCN, at. 171 EE, and *P.D.P v. Ezeonwuka* (2018) 3 NWLR, p. 198. Para.8). In other words, without political party sponsorship neither electoral offices nor government would be formed. This is evident in the provision of section 1(2) of the CFRN 1999, to the effect that ‘the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall not be governed, nor shall any persons or group of persons take control of the Government of Nigeria or any part thereof, except in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution’. On this foundation, the constitution empowers individuals under section 40 of

² This exception has been consistently abused by legislators. These incidences of abuse do not however represent the position of law in Nigeria but are instances of failure to enforce. Such actions do not constitute electoral offences as defined under the Electoral Act.

the CFRN 1999 with the right to form and join political parties for purposes of forming a government. Section 221 of the CFRN 1999 clarifies this right thus: 'No association, other than a political party, shall canvass for votes for any candidate at any election or contribute to the funds of any political party or to the election expenses of any candidate at an election'.

These statutory and constitutional provisions demonstrate the importance of political parties in democracy and constitutionalism, and include:

- Sponsorship of candidates for electoral offices
- Conducting party primaries to select candidates
- Establishing the rules and regulation for internal party politics
- Conducting voter education and enlightenment on party politics
- Conducting electoral campaigns during elections
- Funding electoral campaigns
- Effective representation of diverse interests and inclusive participation in democratic governance, (OSCE Human Dimension Seminar 2011, p. 5; Bartolini & Mair 2001), and
- Formation of government upon winning of an election (Section 1(2) of CFRN 1999; Norris 2005, pp. 3–4).

Achieving these is the essence of democratic government. Accordingly, in meeting the above objectives political parties fulfill their role as the cornerstone of democratic society (Norris 2005, p. 4).

THE ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN ELECTORAL OFFENCES

The flip side of the roles of political parties is that failure to judiciously carry out their functions in accordance with constitutional and statutory requirements leads to a breach of constitutionalism and an endorsement of criminality in the electoral process (Isma'ílaa & Othmana 2016, pp. 296–303). Political parties must therefore be made conscious of their responsibility in sustaining democracy; however, it is counterproductive to ignore the fact that political parties are in most cases complicit in electoral malpractices. Electoral malpractices are always to the benefit of a political party and it is unhealthy for a democracy to ignore their involvement. As previously indicated, electoral malpractices include all actions and inactions, omissions and commissions aimed at illegitimately and illegally acquiring political power (Ebirim 2014, p, 51). In Nigeria these actions and inactions, omissions and commissions are constitutionally and statutorily prohibited.

An examination of research on electoral malpractice reveals that political parties are regular culprits in committing electoral offences (Okoye 2013, p.1). For instance, it was reported that a political party was engaged in a religious campaign, contrary to the Electoral Act, by depicting another party's candidate as being from a minority religion in his constituency (Afolabi & Avasiloae 2015, p. 25; Section 95 Electoral Act 2010). There is no report that this offence was prosecuted. There are many other reports of electoral offences by political parties which could not be prosecuted, most of which indicate that political parties encouraged illegality and electoral malpractices and offences (Afolabi & Avasiloae 2015, p. 15; Janda 2005), both by actively encouraging party members to become violent and involved in malpractice, and failing to educate members against electoral offences (Obakhedo, 2011, p. 107).

POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTORAL OFFENCES IN NIGERIA

The actors in breach of the Electoral Act 2010 could be categorised into public officers, candidates, political parties, associations and individuals. In order to effectively curtail and sanction electoral offences by any of these groups, the liability assignment element of the offence must anticipate all potential actors, including those aiding and abetting, in the commission or omission against the Act. Such liability assignment can be determined by considering the objectives of the perpetrators of these offences (Robinson 1994).

This requires the accurate identification of potential perpetrators, (i.e. liability assignment) to ensure that all potential actors are captured in the law. An absence of this may render the law ineffective because if perpetrators cannot be sanctioned the deterrence objective of the law will be lost (Ikeme, Udefuna & Ihugba 2018, p. 3). An examination of the Electoral Act 2010, in particular electoral offences as created under Part VII which contains sections 117 to 132, and specifically, sections 96, 99 and 102, reveals a failure to capture political parties. Evidence however suggests that most of these offences can be and usually are committed in collaboration with political parties (Okoye 2013, p. 1). For instance, with regards to offences committed in collusion with party officials, a study of the trend in electoral disputes arising from electoral offences found that the percentage of offence sponsored by state and political party officials rose from 33.33% in 2003, 69.44% in 2007 to 76.92% in 2011 (Ihugba, Alfred & Ejalonibu 2018, p. 4). This demonstrates that the failure to anticipate party involvement in electoral offences and provide sanctions against such involvement is a considerable obstacle to eliminating illegality in elections.

The implication of this failure is further demonstrated by the complicity of political parties in most electoral offences created under the Electoral Act 2010. The complicity in this instance is hinged on both the potential benefit they derive

from the offences and their failure to instil party discipline and fulfill their statutory and political functions in the democratic process. See Table 1 below for an illustration of this complicity.

Table 1: Electoral offences and suggested liability

S/N	OFFENCES UNDER THE ELECTORAL ACT 2010 as amended	PROPOSED LIABILITY ASSIGNMENT/REVIEW	REMARKS
1	Directly or indirectly using force or violence during a political campaign	This provision should be redrafted to impose serious sanctions against political parties. A mere fine is insufficient, sanctions should include disqualification of the political party and its candidate, especially where there is a repeat offence.	In most instances, reports indict political parties and not individuals (Verjee, Kwaja, & Onubogu 2019, pp. 16–17) which suggests that sanctions should be a sufficient deterrent to political parties. Political parties should also be required to provide for sanctions, in the party constitution, against candidates or members who engage in violence during elections.
2	Campaigning through any persons more than 90 days before the polling day and campaigning less than 24 hours before polling day.	Sanctions should be increased against a political party if an offence is committed on its directive or with its knowledge and/or consent. The maximum fine of N500, 000 is insufficient and should be increased to include disqualifying the party.	Party should be able to ensure that no candidate sponsored by them contravenes the law.
3	Campaigning based on religious, tribal or sectional grounds for the purpose of promoting or opposing a candidate or a party by a person or party.	Political parties should also be held liable if the offence is committed on the directive, with the consent, approval or knowledge of a political party. Due to the implication of causing long-term and post-election religious divisions, sanctions should also be increased.	This is contrary to the constitutional right to freedom of religion (Onapajo 2016, pp. 122–3). Accordingly, political parties should be held responsible for failing to control their candidates and members.

4	Using government or public corporations' vehicles in a manner other than for an emergency by an electoral officer or for transporting those entitled to such vehicle.	Where committed by officers of a political party or with its knowledge and consent, the political party and the candidate should be sanctioned. This achieves two objectives: (a) it ensures a level playing field, and (b) ensures that public funds are not diverted to political party campaigns.	This is most likely to happen with ruling parties or incumbents.
5	Directly, indirectly or through a proxy conspires, bribes or aids and abets any party in order to procure the return of a candidate to any elected office.	Where committed by officers of a political party or with the knowledge and consent of a candidate, the political party and the candidate shall be disqualified from the election. This offence is directly contrary to the functions of governance.	This type of offence is unlikely to have been committed by an individual without party support or assistance (Aluaigba 2016, p. 143)
6	Inciting others to act in a disorderly manner	Political parties to be held liable if the offence is committed by officers of a political party or with the knowledge and consent of a candidate or political party.	Parties are repeatedly indicted for this type of offence (Verjee, Kwaja, & Onubogu 2019, pp. 16–17).
7	Solicits, canvasses, persuades, campaigns, promotes any candidate within 300 metres of the polling unit on election day, snatches or destroys electoral materials, blares siren, convenes, hold or attends a meeting (unless prescribed by the commission) within 300 meters of the polling unit on election day.	Political parties to be held liable if committed by officers of a political party or with the knowledge and consent of a candidate or party. Political parties should demonstrate that there is a rule against such behaviour and that candidates and members have been duly educated.	This type of offence is usually committed by party agents. Accordingly, parties should be held responsible (Onwe et al. 2015, p. 14).

8	Giving or providing or paying money to or for any person to corruptly influence the person to vote or refrain from voting.	Where committed by officers of a political party or with the knowledge and consent of a candidate, the party and the candidate should be sanctioned.	Vote buying and related offences are usually committed in collusion with or knowledge of political parties, their candidates and agents (Alagbe 2019; Aluaigba 2016, p. 143).
9	Directly or indirectly by proxy threatens, uses violence, inflicts injury, abducts, restrains, impedes, uses duress on another to hinder him/her from voting or contesting in an election and preventing political aspirants from free use of the media, mobilising or campaigning.	Where committed by officers of a political party or with the knowledge and consent of a candidate or political party, the political party and candidate should be disqualified from the election. This will help highlight the role of political parties in educating their candidates and members on the ills of electoral malpractices and violence.	In most instances, reports indict political parties and not individuals (Leibowitz & Ibrahim 2013, p. 20).

Source: Author's analysis of Electoral Act 2010.

Consequences of Ineffective Liability Assignment in the Electoral Act 2010

The failure to assign liability to political parties for electoral offences creates a perception of impunity (Okoye 2013, p. 8). This perception of impunity, aggravated by the consistent failure of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to prosecute offenders and the failure of the Act to assign liability to political parties, may be a key factor in the continuous increase in reported electoral offences, especially those which political parties have either aided, colluded or sponsored (ibid.).

It also negates, in its entirety, the constitutionality and democratic principles of elections. Elections should be the basis for establishing fundamental laws that promote constitutionality for the benefit of the citizenry. Where this is abused through the illegitimate investiture of a political party, the principle of the rule of law would be jeopardised and constitutional democracy negated.

In addition, this may cause the shift of political accountability from citizens to political parties, mostly in the interests of the few that control the political parties (Verjee, Kwaja, & Onubogu 2019, pp. 13–14). Where this accountability shift occurs:

- political power tends to be acquired illegitimately through abuse of electoral laws
- the rule of law is jettisoned and electoral abuse legitimised
- legitimate and effective opposition incapacitated, and
- a vicious circle is established of power acquisition and non-accountability in the political process.

These impact negatively on both constitutional democracy and political representation. Constitutional democracy would have been defeated because instead of acquiring political power and the right to form government in accordance with the constitution and the law, the government would have been formed in contradiction to the provisions of the constitution (section 1(2) CFRN 1999 as amended).

A breach of constitutional democracy, via ascension into power through electoral offences, also amounts to a breach of the rule of law. This is because the rule of law implies that everybody abides by the provision of the law and that upon breach of such law an independent judiciary is able to determine and impose liability (Oyewo 2007, p. 1). In relation to electoral offences, this means the capacity for the electoral management body or relevant authority to prosecute electoral offenders and for the electoral tribunal to determine whether power was acquired through the breach of electoral laws and the constitution.

Regarding political representation, acquiring political power by committing electoral offences means that the will of the electorate would be subverted and the result would not represent the vote, that is the choice of the electorate. As a consequence, the 'winners' may not see themselves as representatives of the electorate but rather as representatives of their own interests and of those persons who aided in the subversion of the public will (Aluaigba 2016, p. 150).

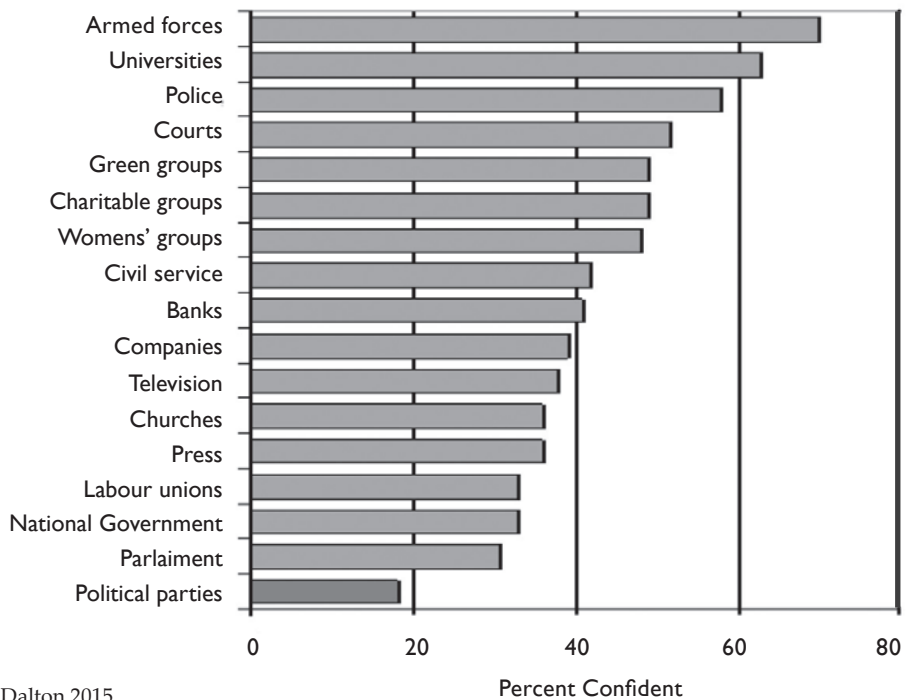
The implications of failing to assign criminal liability to political parties and thereby institutionalising a breach of the electoral law as identified makes the case for an urgent reform of the electoral laws, particularly in relation to electoral offences. The essence of electoral law is to establish a lawful standard and procedure for forming government in accordance with the constitution. If this objective fails because of a failure to update and reform the electoral laws by assigning liability and imposing sanctions to all culprits, particularly political parties, the consequence is the failure of democracy.

FRAGILE NATURE OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND PUNISHMENT FOR ELECTORAL OFFENCES

Generally, political parties contribute to democratic governance by aggregating and representing the interests of constituents (National Democratic Institute 2014).

Hence, political parties should be treated with care as democratic consolidation continues, and this includes the development of electoral frameworks that punishes parties for electoral offences. While it is cogent to assert that the failure to anticipate party involvement in electoral offences is a substantial obstacle to eliminating illegality in the electoral process, it is equally important to note that political parties are still fragile entities. Unmeasured punishment of political parties and their members may impact negatively on the trust and confidence citizens invest in them. This may also reflect on the legitimacy of political parties and their capacity to perform their supposed functions in the democratic process. The intention of liability assignment should be to improve the quality of political parties and not only to use punishment as a deterrent (Robinson 2003, p. 1002).

Thus, as illustrated in the most recent World Values Survey, (see Figure 1 below) the public's declining affinity for political parties also affects virtually all mature democracies.



Source: Dalton 2015.

Figure 1. Confidence in social and political institutions

Data from Figure 1 above shows that worldwide confidence in political parties is less than 19%. While political parties in Nigeria need to be included in the prevention of electoral violence, this ascription of responsibility should be measured to avoid further decline in political party perception and relevance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The most important functions of elections are legitimacy, accountability, constitutionality and representative government. Where elections are conducted in disregard of the constitutionally established standards and laws, it implies a rejection or failure of these objectives. Avoiding this requires the establishment of a comprehensive body of law that reduces the opportunity for electoral impunity and does not create loopholes for the abuse of the electoral process. With particular reference to Nigeria and the electoral offences discussed in this paper, this failure could be avoided by updating the Electoral Act 2010, institutions and process of elections in the following ways:

- The law-making process should be inclusive and incorporate the views of all segments of society in order to create awareness on the intents and purposes of the electoral law, improve its legitimacy and deter any breach of the Electoral Act.
- All potential direct beneficiaries of a breach of the electoral offences should be properly defined in the law through the principle of assigning liability and imposing an appropriate sanction for the breach.
- Political parties should be specifically defined in the law to make them accountable for electoral offences and subject to sanctions introduced to deter political parties from electoral offences, or to punish a breach.
- Political parties should be required to establish policies, rules and regulations aimed at deterring candidates, party members and agents from participating or encouraging electoral offences.
- An independent tribunal or court should be established to prosecute electoral offences. This will help highlight the importance of prosecuting electoral offences and develop a body of knowledge and practice in the control of electoral offences.
- The electoral management body and political parties should, as part of their statutory functions, carry out regular sensitisation programmes and conduct events to discuss the ills and illegality of electoral offences.

The Electoral Act 2010 and the electoral offences contained therein are all aimed at achieving a sustainable democracy in Nigeria. Electoral offences stipulate the standards and limits which parties and other electoral stakeholders must observe in their pursuit of political power. The intent is to create a positive environment through setting procedural and substantive standards for achieving the critical objectives of democratic elections, viz: representativeness, legitimacy, constitutionality and accountability. However, these objectives cannot be achieved with an inadequate electoral law. There is thus an urgent need to reassess the electoral offences and reform them to be holistic, effective and efficient in educating the citizenry and reducing (if not eliminating) electoral offences in Nigeria.

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FACEBOOK IMAGE-MAKING IN ZIMBABWE'S 2018 ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

Social Media and Emerging Trends in Political Marketing

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ABSTRACT

This article explores changing political communication and marketing trends in Zimbabwe when presidential candidates used Facebook to reach out, largely to the youth and urban voters, during the 2018 election campaign. Recent studies have identified the power of social media as a platform on which politicians portray images that convince the electorate to vote for them. These images can be created through the photographs, video footage and texts that politicians post on their Facebook pages. The study employed a qualitative approach to establish the role played by political imagery used by contesting parties and candidates in the campaign period ahead of the 2018 elections in Zimbabwe, in particular the frontrunners and larger political parties. MDC-Alliance presidential candidate Nelson Chamisa and Zanu-PF candidate Emmerson Mnangagwa were both serious contenders for the presidency. The analysis sheds light on the implications of image-making and modern political trends in Zimbabwe and how Facebook manages to reach out to the targeted electorate.

Keywords: political marketing, social media, image-making, online politicking, Zimbabwe

INTRODUCTION

Since its independence from Britain in 1980, election campaigns in Zimbabwe have been conducted mainly through offline platforms and print and electronic

media. However, these forms of political communication have been largely stifled by state interference. The state-controlled media have been tightly controlled by the ruling party, former liberation movement Zimbabwe African People's Union Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF), while the opposition parties have found a space in the independent media to disseminate political communication. Apart from interference by state security agents and ruling party officials, offline campaigns and the use of both print and electronic media have often attracted huge costs for the contesting candidates and political parties. The use of social media for election campaigns ahead of the 2018 elections in Zimbabwe thus offered political candidates and parties an equal chance to portray favourable images to the voters. This paper seeks to establish how social media, particularly Facebook, fill the void created by offline campaign forums; and traditional media's failure to offer contesting parties and candidates an equal opportunity to market their political brand.

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN ZIMBABWE'S 2018 ELECTIONS

Zimbabwe's 2018 election campaign period was relatively peaceful. Instead of resorting to violence, intimidation, coercion and hate speech, political parties seized the opportunity offered by social media to turn that campaign into a marketplace of ideas whereby they would engage with and mobilise citizens to support their political parties as the best brand. As a result of partisan behaviour by the state media, opposition political parties did not receive fair coverage, so they resorted to social media to market their political party activities.

The Global Political Agreement (GPA) of September 2009 brought the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) led by Morgan Tsvangirai into a power-sharing transitional government. This produced a political road map that was meant to guarantee a free and fair electoral environment during the 2013 elections. However, Zanu-PF deliberately delayed implementing the 2013 constitution which guarantees media plurality and diversity, and as a result the 2018 elections were held under the old legislation.

A few independent radio licenses were issued in 2013 to Zi-FM, Star FM and some community radio stations. However, this was merely a cosmetic implementation of the GPA as research established that the owners of these independent radio stations had links with the ruling party. By controlling the media space, the ruling party Zanu-PF consistently used the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) to glorify itself and vilify its opponents. Zimbabweans who had grown tired of listening to relentlessly pro-Zanu-PF propaganda on ZBC resorted to social media to find alternative sources of information.

The Advent and Influence of Social Media

The exponential rise in mobile phone penetration rates in Zimbabwe since the inception of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in 2009 has provided a powerful discursive platform for ordinary citizens to engage in political, commercial, or social communication. The advantage of technology-based applications such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and many more social media applications is that they have the power to gather large amounts of data quickly from thousands of participants (Leo, Morello, Mellon, Peixoto & Davenport 2015). Previous elections in Zimbabwe indicated that the youth, particularly those living in urban areas, showed signs of fatigue in political participation because of allegations of vote rigging and human rights violations in every election from 2000 up to the 2013 polls. The 2013 election campaigns targeted mainly youth voters on social media. These millennials born after 1992 have grown up in an era of technological innovation so they are tech-savvy, having high levels of confidence with technological advancements and innovation. The public sphere offered by social media is a significant communication platform for them and this discursive space empowers them to influence politics in a different way.

Leo et al. (2015) observed that the most popular social networking sites in Zimbabwe are Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter, with the youth spending hours on these sites discussing anything from fashion and gossip to sport, religion and music. By removing the youth from serious engagement with issues that affect their lives, social media is cultivating political apathy among this Zimbabwean demographic (ibid.). However, ahead of the 2013 elections there was a major shift and political players targeted youth voters through marketing strategies on the same popular social media platforms.

Zimbabwean politics was partly inspired by the American presidential campaign in which Barak Obama's campaign team succeeded in using social media to mobilise, involve and empower voters. Obama's social media campaign enlisted supporters, shared information, constantly updated citizens on developments and encouraged genuine conversations without the bias of political campaigns. The trust and confidence elicited by this approach resulted in victory for the Democrats in both the 2008 and 2012 US elections (Hong & Nadler 2012).

Social media became an increasingly popular political marketing and campaign tool ahead of the 2013 elections. The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) led by its founding leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, split in 2009. The then Secretary General Welshman Ncube led a splinter MDC while Morgan Tsvangirai rebranded the remaining larger fraction of the party, MDC-T (Tsvangirai). The opposition MDC-T, whose efforts to use state media during the campaign

period had been stifled by the partisan officials at the ZBC as well as in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, resorted to the use of Facebook to reach out to voters. The party's Facebook page, MDC-T, led by the late Morgan Tsvangirai attracted over 1, 2 million followers. On this platform, the party had the opportunity to engage citizens on a range of issues such as their election manifesto, campaign programmes and messages, photos and videos of campaign rallies, and political regalia.

Social Media, Political Campaigns and the 2018 Elections

In the run-up to the 2018 elections in Zimbabwe political parties and candidates did not only rely on traditional media; they used social media as a platform to market both the political party and the politician as a brand.

The ability of social media to bring together political communities reflects the fact that information and communication technologies (ICTs) are seen as alternative public spheres. They are able not only to bypass restrictive state and corporate mainstream media, but also have the capacity to overcome the limits of time and space (McCaughy & Ayers 2003). Ahead of the so-called harmonised elections in 2018, which included presidential, parliamentary and local government elections, MDC-T created a Facebook page as part of their online campaign strategies to communicate directly with citizens.

While Zanu-PF was not visible on Facebook, some of its influential politicians like Professor Jonathan Moyo, the Minister of Information, Media and Broadcasting, were active on Twitter, attracting the participation of Zimbabweans across the political divide. By using social media, the parties sought to include the youth, using the language of young people to inspire robust political discourse. During the entire election campaign period, the number of followers and quality of political discussions were vital for politicians across the spectrum as they offered insights with which to gauge the general attitudes of young voters.

For the majority of users whose confidence in the polarised landscape of the traditional media had diminished, social media platforms offered more accessibility to political information, which was perceived as being personal, genuine and transparent. However, the outcome of the 2018 elections was not entirely influenced by social media because several factors limited voter freedoms through draconian legislation such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA). This authoritarian legislation limited offline participation of voters, together with threats and arrests of social media users on allegations of undermining a constitutionally elected government. Other factors that limited the influence of social media on the Zimbabwean electorate, in particular youth voters, included the cost and lack of access to the smartphones used to access social media, the cost of accessing data, and low signal strength.

Scepticism About the Influence of Social Media on Elections

Critics of social media such as Baumgartner & Morris (2010) argue that the credit given to social media for its role in creating and mobilising social movements has been exaggerated. Apart from disseminating political information and creating a platform for users to engage both among themselves and with the candidate, there has been no substantial claim about the ability of Facebook activity to transform into quantifiable political outcomes such as increased votes. A study of the political engagement of Facebook in the 2012 elections in the US revealed that simply following the candidate's Facebook page and subsequent posts did not necessarily increase voter turnout or the efficacy of the election itself (Pennington, Winfrey, Warner & Kearney 2015).

The explanation provided for the disconnection between online activity and political engagement is that many may consider political information derived from online interaction to be less credible than information from offline interaction (Kushin & Yamamoto 2010). While acknowledging that many young Zimbabwean voters and urbanites are increasingly active on social media, the traditional offline methods of political marketing remain highly influential. Baumgartner & Morris (2010) suggest that social media do not increase participants' political engagement with the election itself, and that the political participation of many users seems to be strictly confined to online activity. Aouragh (2011) opines that online tactics must be complimented with other offline techniques. Kenya's presidential election on 8 August 2017 produced one important finding: that when it comes to political change, the efficacy of social media, including Facebook, is far from certain because active online participation does not automatically translate into politically meaningful behaviour (Bing 2015). Instead, the key variables that impact politics are the 'societal contexts and arrangements around the technology' (Lim 2012, p. 638). Through Facebook, political parties could reach a wider public and bring out news more freely than is possible through traditional media.

The success of civic resistance demonstrations against a declining economy under former president Robert Mugabe, such as the #Zimshutdown2016, has been largely credited to social media for their ability to rally protesters together online. However, the majority of citizens continued to rely on traditional media for reliable information about the protests (Sabao & Chikara 2018). Fenton (2011) argues that online platforms may offer citizens the opportunity to organise, campaign, and increase political participation; but as these platforms are victim to civic privatism resulting in dispersed and fragmented groups unlikely to muster enough power to influence, the changes they seek remain a substantial challenge. Faris (2010) argues that social media networks can trigger information cascades through their interaction with independent media outlets.

Internet Access in Zimbabwe

In 2013, Zimbabwe opted for so-called harmonised elections which were held in a comparatively tolerant media environment, in contrast to the violent elections of 2000, 2002, 2005 and 2008. This relatively peaceful campaign environment was made possible by the GNU signed in 2009 between Zanu-PF and the two MDC formations led respectively by Morgan Tsvangirai and Professor Arthur Mutambara. The GNU was a SADC-initiated transitional government with the mandate to bring stability to Zimbabwe's dire political and economic situation, after Mugabe's one-man election in the run-off was discredited by local, regional and international election observer missions.

The introduction of the multi-currency system composed largely of the American dollar and the South African rand, coupled with the country's Look-East policy (trade relations with Asian countries), saw a flood of mobile technology gadgets such as cell phones and laptops. Therefore, the relative economic stability that came with the GNU offered many Zimbabweans an opportunity to acquire phones at reasonably affordable prices. According to the Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ 2018), by 2018 Zimbabwe had a total of 6 759 032 internet subscribers and an internet penetration rate of 12.7%. The growing use of the internet by ordinary citizens, particularly urban and youth, offered presidential candidates an opportunity to engage with them online, mainly through Facebook. According to POTRAZ (2018), during the official campaign period from May to 29 July 2018, official figures about social media usage indicate that Facebook was the second most popular social networking site after WhatsApp with an estimate of 3 200 000 active subscribers. This platform thus became a convenient public sphere where presidential candidates would connect with their voters, giving them information and feedback about campaign rallies and campaign messages.

Image-making in Zimbabwean Politics

Political image-making has been defined as the strategic development and use of 'symbolic devices, which can be constructed with both visual and verbal messages, that provide a shorthand cue to audiences for the identification and enhancement of specific attributes of an individual, an organization, a phenomenon, or a cause' (Strachan & Kendall 2004, p. 135). Offline social media users can become offline agents to spread the popularity of political candidate.

Through maintaining visibility on Facebook, political parties and candidates were able to compete and offer the electorate an opportunity to appreciate them based on the imagery they presented. The significance of public image on election

campaigns has been outlined by Strachan & Kendall (2004, p. 135) who suggest that the broader goal of political image-making is to generate, maintain, sharpen, and strengthen favourable perceptions among members of the public in order to affect their personal political attitudes and, by extension, decision-making in strategic ways. Newman (1999, p. 92) observes that an image is often 'created through the use of visual impressions that are communicated by the candidate's physical presence, media appearances, experiences and record as that information is integrated into the minds of citizens'. During the 2018 presidential campaign period, neither presidential candidate had ever contested those positions previously. Through Facebook both Zanu-PF and MDC-T managed to disseminate favourable images about their candidates' messages and political activities in real time and to a wider audience.

Bennett (2016) further unpacks political image-making by isolating a key mechanism which consists of developing simple images, usually targeting narrow slices of the public ('image shaping'). The simplicity of political images is critical as it makes them more likely to be 'emotionally and intellectually accessible' to their target audience (Bennett 2016, p. 109). Lalancette and Raynauld (2017) contend that political images can also optimise the politicians' ability to penetrate and shape the traditional media coverage of politics which ultimately has more impact, as evidenced by recent research on sound- and image-bite politics.

Both contesting presidential candidates Nelson Chamisa and Emmerson Mnangagwa used Facebook to reach out to the online community and use them as offline agents to spread their political image. Campaigns for the 2018 presidential campaign were uploaded on Facebook as a way of reaching out to the youth and urban vote. Both Zanu-PF and MDC Alliance posts on their presidential candidates sought to portray them as the ideal candidates to take Zimbabwe forward. In Zimbabwe's 2018 elections, ordinary citizens were interested in bread-and-butter issues, so political parties posted pictures of their presidential candidates engaged in activities that indicated their potential to transform the economy of Zimbabwe.

The media landscape in Zimbabwe is polarised, with the state media openly showing a bias towards Zanu-PF, as highlighted in the European Union Observer mission report for 2018 elections. The opposition MDC-Alliance were more robust in exploiting Facebook for political marketing and communication in order to address their absence from the state media. In a political context, situational political involvement is a point of entrance into the political process, as the involved voter is more motivated to seek out information, which in turn leads to knowledge gain (Tan 1980) and voting intent (Pinkleton & Austin 2001). Prior research done by Wells and Dudash (2007) suggests that attention to social media is positively associated with situational political involvement, because social media offer users new channels for political information.

In using Facebook for political marketing in a political environment where there is increased competition between an expanding pool of political players with varying interests and objectives, image-making can help by creating images that are straightforward, coherent, and salient across all the communication platforms through which they are circulated. By repeatedly emphasising clear and specific points as well as benefitting from high visibility, political images can have greater and more consistent effects on audience members (Bennett 2016). This study notes that while several scholars have explored the role of Facebook in political communication and marketing, particularly in mature democracies, much more research is needed to understand African electoral environments.

Online Political Communication: Regional Experiences

The use of new media in southern African elections has significantly increased as a growing number of citizens are using the android mobile phone which allows them to access the internet. Success stories of the use of online political communication have been noted in recent elections held in Botswana and Kenya. The campaign period for the 2014 general election in Botswana was arguably the most hotly contested election in the history of that country's democracy, as political parties and contesting candidates reached out to the predominantly young voters by using social media. According to Masilo & Seabo (2014) this extensive use of social media, in particular Facebook, added a new dimension to the campaigns. Candidates did not have to rely on traditional media to communicate with the electorate; their messages could be delivered undiluted and in real time. Opposition parliamentary candidate Ndaba Gaolathe had his own Facebook page called 'Ndaba Gaolathe-Gaborone Bonnington South 2014'. By 22 September 2014 this page had accumulated more than 8 000 likes (Masilo & Seabo 2014). The candidate was able to connect with the electorate through sharing campaign messages, updates on rallies through audios, videos, texts and pictures, and contact phone numbers in order to enhance a two-way communication with the electorate.

Kenya has had hotly contested elections in the last decade which have often become violent. One interesting aspect of these elections is the use of social media as a campaign tool. In Kenya's 2013 general elections, Ndavula & Mueni (2014) note the centrality of branding and campaign messages during online campaigns. Presidential candidate Raila Odinga included a photo of his running mate Kalonzo Musyoka in the cover shot (Ndavula & Mueni 2014), and one of the explanations for Odinga's defeat has been attributed to this inclusion of an unsmiling Musyoka, which could have been negatively perceived by keen observers. The presidential candidates also packaged their campaign messages in a way designed to lure the youth vote. Ndavula and Mueni (2014) note that

one of the presidential candidates, Uhuru Kenyatta, presented himself mainly through Twitter and Facebook as a representative of the digital era, while Raila Odinga presented himself as a visionary and reformist. As indicated by the online political communication experiences of Botswana and Kenya, social media offered politicians and political parties a chance to reach a broad and diverse audience.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Habermas's Public Sphere

Habermas's theory of public sphere is useful in understanding the interactive space offered by Facebook to political parties and candidates and the voters. Habermas (1989, p. 27) defines the public sphere as 'the sphere of private people who come together as a public'; that is, the public sphere is composed of private individuals brought together by societal interests that transcend the boundaries of their personal lives. Facebook users are seen as a community of interest as they follow presidential campaigns online, and not only as observers. This platform also offers them an opportunity to be both producers and consumers of content.

To understand the functional role of Facebook as a platform for political communication, the Habermas theory of public sphere can be used to answer the following questions: First, how does the public sphere theory explain the use of social media in Zimbabwe as a platform where politicians interact with voters? Second, how does this theory explain the power of social media in shaping a political candidate's image? Habermas's theory explains the centrality of the virtual discursive platform offered by Facebook to political parties and presidential candidates to gauge the public perceptions about them.

Theory of Planned Behaviour

Political marketing has been generally referred to as the application of marketing principles and processes in political campaigns. The aim is to position the party and its leader positively in the political or electoral market to appeal to the electorate, thereby garnering votes for the party (Newman 2012). Political marketing considers voters as consumers whose needs and wants have to be satisfied (Ediraras, Rahayu, Natalina & Widya 2013). In order to capture the voters' hearts and minds, politicians used Facebook to communicate their promises to the voters and also receive voters' messages through the same platform.

The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) explains why politicians across the globe have resorted to social media in order to galvanise support and influence public opinion. This theory aims to predict intentions and actions and suggests that attitudes, norms and ability predict behaviour (Nchise 2012). TPB has

assisted researchers of voting trends to understand the predictors of intention and behaviour. In addition, political marketing studies understand voters as consumers; consumer behaviour has thus found a place in voting studies because voting behaviour and decisions are shaped by a range of factors. These include demography, political party image, leadership and partisanship, government policies and performance, and public sentiment. The manner in which voters choose which political party to vote for can be compared to how consumers choose their purchases, which has been researched extensively.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

This research has applied the qualitative research paradigm on the basis that it is more reliable in describing, interpreting and exploring the social world. As an interpretive research, this study hinges on the assumption that access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness and shared meanings. The philosophical base of interpretive research is hermeneutics and phenomenology (Boland, 1985).

Interpretive studies do not believe that the way people behave and communicate can be predetermined and predicted. Therefore, when political parties and candidates use Facebook to market their ideology, manifestos and political brands, the Facebook platform allows them to have an interface with the electorate without having to be physically in the places where they reside. The choice of a constructivist research paradigm thus reflects what Walsham (1993) describes as an attempt to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them. An interpretive method of research is aimed at producing an understanding of the context of the information system, and the process whereby the information system influences and is influenced by the context.

Virtual Ethnography

This paper obtained data through virtual ethnography, which differs from conventional ethnography in that it involves no fieldwork. According to Dominguez, Beaulieu, Estalella, Gomez, Schnettler & Read (2007, p. 1) the label 'virtual ethnography' includes a broad range of methodological approaches aimed at answering the complexities of the object of research and the different ways in which the object has been constructed. Howard (2002) defines ethnography as the systematic description of human behaviour and organisational culture based on first-hand observation.

The proliferation of social media networks posed a new challenge to ethnographers to move away from the physical presence of the researcher to the virtual, where the researcher is a participant observer online. Ethnography is a

useful method for studying organisational behaviour and the social diffusion of new media technologies, but it is still a rigorous and demanding method in that the ethnographer has to give careful thought to the selection of real or virtual field sites (Howard 2002).

The Zimbabwean political landscape is dominated by polarised electronic and print media; but ahead of the 2018 elections social media registered a significant increase in usage, particularly as a political marketing platform. In order to understand the attitudes, feelings and perceptions of ordinary citizens towards presidential candidates, virtual ethnography allows the researcher to be embedded in the Facebook platform while playing a dual role of participant and observer.

Another advantage of virtual ethnography lies in it being centred on specific actors, and this has earned it a reputation for rendering rich description – narratives with historical depth and contextual perspective that trace social processes within groups (Howard 2002). Virtual ethnography gives a detailed narrative of the human rights violations shared as texts, audio or video accounts. The process of participant observation characteristic of virtual ethnography has an advantage in that it drops the reader into the social setting, revealing the mundane and everyday experiences of ordinary citizens (Bate 1997).

Social media has often been referred to as a subaltern space; therefore, political communication shared online is best observed and analysed through virtual ethnography. Ethnography allows the researcher to explore all the open-ended questions that cannot be asked in typical surveys, and these questions allow the researcher to delve into the culture of a new community (Howard 2002). Social media as a subaltern platform allow users to subvert the formal norms of communication, thereby finding independent space to tell stories about how members enter and experience the group, their images of the group, of winning and losing, being injured or surviving, as well as describing and discussing their perceptions about politicians and political parties. Ethnography therefore allows the researcher to discover culture and closely experience organisations (Fineman & Gabriel, 1996).

Purposeful Sampling

The study employed purposeful sampling to obtain data. Yin (2011) defines purposeful sampling as the selection of participants or sources of data to be used in a study, based on their anticipated richness and the relevance of information in relation to the study's research questions. Patton (2015) describes purposeful sampling as a method whose logic and power lie in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. The current study's focus on unravelling the power of Facebook in political communication and marketing presidential candidates

ahead of Zimbabwe's 2018 elections is an information-rich case in which the Facebook posts of political parties and candidates offered citizens an opportunity to understand and interact with them. Much can be learnt from information-rich cases like these about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry (Patton 2015).

The study used qualitative methods to gather and analyse data. Unlike quantitative research where sufficiently large sample sizes are required to produce statistically precise quantitative estimates, smaller samples are used in qualitative research. Gentles, Charles, Ploeg & McKibbin (2015) suggest that accounts for the necessity of smaller samples in qualitative research. They argue that the general aim of sampling in qualitative research is to acquire information that is useful for understanding the complexity, depth, variation, or context surrounding a phenomenon, rather than to represent populations as in quantitative research. In order to determine the point when sufficient sample size has been reached, some qualitative researchers use saturation but other qualitative researchers like Cohen offer different view. Gentles et al. (2015) define saturation as reaching a point of informational redundancy where additional data collection contributes little or nothing new to the study.

Collection of data for the current study started on 1 March 2018 and continued to 30 July 2018. The sample size for this study has been relatively small for qualitative research, and Facebook posts related to particular themes discussed in this research were extracted for analysis. Following a hermeneutical tradition, data was collected intensely over four months. Three Facebook pages were observed and these include MDC-T, Zanu-PF Cape District and Nelson Chamisa Facebook platforms. One advantage of qualitative methods is that they allow researchers to expose how people build up culture from the bottom. Gentles et al. (2015) account for the necessity of smaller samples in qualitative research. They argue that the general aim of sampling in qualitative research is to acquire information that is useful for understanding the complexity, depth, variation, or context surrounding a phenomenon, rather than to represent populations as in quantitative research. Therefore, once there were enough Facebook posts that would speak to the thematic focus of this research, saturation was reached.

ANALYSIS OF ZIMBABWE'S 2018 ELECTIONS

Qualitative Content Analysis

In analysing data gathered on Facebook platforms, this study used qualitative content analysis. Outlining the stages of content analysis, Berelson (1971) suggests that these stages focus on the number of times a word, theme or issue emerges, and meaning is applied to that numerical data. The choice of content analysis

for this paper was appropriate considering that the study seeks to identify and explain lived human experiences. In conducting qualitative content analysis the first step is to define the source material. In this paper, this included declaring the particular Facebook pages from which data was to be gathered, how the sample was chosen and how the text to be analysed was generated (Mayring 2003). In the process of interpreting data, the paper was informed by scholarly views. According to Mayring (2003) there are three basic forms of interpretation in qualitative content analysis, namely summary, that is the reduction of the data; explication, by finding further material; and structuring, that is filtering important aspects from the data. This study therefore structured and filtered the relevant content from the Facebook texts on political communication by political parties and candidates and arranged them in thematic blocks.

Political Trajectory

Alterations in the type of political information to which an individual is exposed leads to differences in the type of information processing.

In April 2018 Nelson Chamisa reconfigured the party as a revolutionary entity. His message on Independence Day, 18 April, shared on his Facebook and MDC-T Facebook platform, clearly demonstrated that apart from targeting the youth vote, MDC-Alliance also intended to win the rural vote. In addition, he hoped to win support from the liberation war veterans by assuring them that they would retain the liberation ideals of the country's war veterans and that he would deliver economic independence. His message redefined MDC-Alliance as a political movement with a vision to 'finish the unfinished business of the liberations struggle' and to be the 'compass of that struggle'. This new message differed from the negative image propagated mainly by the state media about the opposition MDC-T under the late leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, who was seen by some as an extension of the colonial hegemony.

On the other hand, Zanu-PF's presidential candidate Emerson Mnangagwa intended to portray himself as a clear departure from former President Robert Mugabe. He wanted to be seen as a reformist with business acumen who could turn around the economic fortunes of Zimbabwe. He was also keen to be seen as an extension of the revolutionary image associated with the former president so that he could speak to the war veterans and the rural voters, most of whom had benefitted from indigenisation programmes. His electoral campaigns were hinged mainly on the mantra, 'Zimbabwe is open for businesses'; therefore, Zanu-PF Cape District posted on Facebook all of Emmerson Mnangagwa's re-engagement activities. One of these posts depicted the president receiving Chinese investors in April 2018 for what were termed mega deals. This post was meant to

instil confidence in the ordinary people who had suffered more than a decade of economic stress under the leadership of the deposed Robert Mugabe.

President Mnangagwa wanted to be seen by both the domestic and foreign community as charting a new democratic path for Zimbabwe; thus, most of his Facebook posts presented the president attracting white communities both in Zimbabwe and abroad. On the other hand, Nelson Chamisa and MDC-T Facebook posts echoed the party's vision for social and economic prosperity hinged on technical advancement. The imagery echoed by Nelson Chamisa and MDC-T's Facebook posts were meant to excite the youth which accounted for the majority of the electorate.

Political Rallies and Images

Through use of Facebook, both Zanu-PF and MDC-Alliance combined campaign messages with images of their party programmes, particularly rallies, in order to appeal to Facebook users. In politics, the electorate seldom vote for losers; projecting positive images of their political rallies filled to capacity with supporters was intended to create a sense of optimism in election victory. Both Zanu-PF and MDC-Alliance posted details on Facebook of their final rallies in the capital city, Harare, a few days before elections. Both posts carried messages of what the parties promised to deliver but portrayed different angles to the massive crowds in attendance at the rallies.

The contrasting images of young and old were central to marketing the presidential candidates. However, after the departure of Mugabe, one of the world's oldest presidents, Zimbabwean voters – particularly the younger generation – rejected elderly politicians at all levels, including both council and parliamentary elections. Against this background age became a defining feature of their presidential election. The MDC-Alliance Facebook platform presented the youthful image of their presidential candidate as the future of Zimbabwe. This image of Nelson Chamisa resonated well with their party manifesto and policy document which was based on ICT, and was synonymous with a generational transformation that would inspire the youth to vote for one of their own. Seeing a photograph of a politician is sufficient for constituents to make inferences about the candidate's characteristics, such as their level of competency, honesty, and warmth (Todorov, Mandisodza, Goren, & Hall 2005).

Zanu-PF, on the other hand countered by presenting the youthful image of Nelson Chamisa as a symbol of immaturity while Emmerson Mnangagwa was depicted as representing mature leadership. His political image was designed to attract both young and older voters with the assurance that the country would be in the safe hands of a mature leader.

Role of Religious Imagery

From the data collected for this paper, it was obvious that Facebook also became a platform to disseminate political communication about the spiritual values of the competing presidential candidates. Images that represented the spiritual values of the candidates were posted on the political parties' Facebook pages. The data collected showed that the presidential candidates were aware that the majority of Zimbabweans take issues of spirituality seriously when choosing political leaders. MDC-Alliance Facebook page posted pictures with inscriptions from Chamisa's UK tour where he was presented as praying for a child. Another image was a prayer in the form of an election advertisement in which Nelson Chamisa prayed for Zimbabwe to be delivered from poverty and tyranny through his ascendance to the presidency. The meaning embedded in these texts was that Nelson Chamisa was the ideal, God-fearing man who could take Zimbabwe forward. The sense of religious conviction and a love of God coming from the candidates was also important for Facebook users. Emmerson Mnangagwa was also presented as a God-fearing leader in one of his pre-election visits to the Johanne Marange Apostolic shrine. Zanu-PF Cape District Facebook page posted pictures of Mnangagwa wearing white garments as part of the huge congregation at this shrine. The impression created by his presence there was that he was a religious man of the people who was willing to join ordinary citizens in prayer.

Dress Code as a Form of Political Marketing

There is no consensus among scholars regarding the definition of political image; however, as noted by Hacker (2004, p.4), the general essence of a candidate's image refers to 'clusters of voter perceptions of candidates'. Berger (2004, p. 11) asserts that many corporations use symbols and icons as a means of establishing some kind of 'corporate identity' because it is easy to remember these visuals. When we 'read' people, either in reality or in mass-mediated texts such as advertisements, commercials and films, we pay a great deal of attention to physical appearance such as their hairstyles, the clothing and the shoes they wear, and their body ornaments. All these objects are signs that convey certain notions about what these people are like (Berger 2004, p.11).

Zimbabwe's political landscape is polarised, so after the departure of the founding president of MDC, Morgan Tsvangirai, the incumbent had to portray an image of the 'anointed one'. Data collected for this paper showed that the dress code for both Nelson Chamisa and Emmerson Mnangagwa as posted on Facebook mirrored both the candidates' connections and disconnections with their predecessors. The 2018 elections came at a time when both presidential

candidates were desperate to present an image that would associate them with the electorate.

In a leaked US cable, the founding president of MDC-T, Morgan Tsvangirai, was described as an 'indispensable leader'; therefore, in order to invoke the memory of Tsvangirai during the election campaign, his successor Chamisa mimicked Tsvangirai's dress code, though with a slight variation. Morgan Tsvangirai had created the image of a humble leader by wearing popular safari bush jackets during campaigns, and Chamisa may have adopted the same dress code for several reasons. First, this presented the image of a leader anointed by both the former president and the party to inherit and continue Tsvangirai's tradition. This image would give the voters the impression that the incumbent, though young and different, was as powerful and popular as Morgan Tsvangirai. Second, the safari dress code depicted a humble, ordinary leader uncorrupted by the excess of power represented by the expensive suits paraded by some politicians. By appearing as a down-to-earth man of the people in the Facebook posts, Chamisa was reaching out to and identifying with the ordinary voters, most of whom live below the poverty datum line.

Zanu-PF presidential candidate Emmerson Mnangagwa, on the other hand, wore new regalia that would present him as a contrast to his predecessor Robert Mugabe, by introducing a scarf with Zanu-PF colours. The meaning embedded in the scarf is that it echoes the scarf that Bob Marley wore when he visited Zimbabwe to perform on Independence Day in 1980. This scarf signified independence from the authoritarian rule of his predecessor, and was a symbolic separation from Mugabe's style of governance.

Berger (2004, p.12) contends that people are 'speaking' all the time, even when this is non-verbal. Hairstyles, eyeglasses, clothes, facial expressions, posture, gestures, and many other physical and corporal manifestations communicate or 'speak'. Considering that Mugabe was removed from power by a military takeover, the electorate was not prepared to support a candidate with the same qualities. Thus, the thinking was that if Mnangagwa projected a different image from Mugabe, voters would have renewed faith in both the person of the candidate and Zanu-PF as a party.

CONCLUSION

This paper has discussed the use of social media in political communication as a pivotal campaign tool during Zimbabwe's 2018 presidential election race. One of the key findings is that serious political candidates engaged with young voters on the social media platforms where they spend much of their time, in order to solicit their vote. Social media has reinforced the importance of the here and now during election campaigns, where politicians generated enticing images on their

Facebook platforms as they communicated with voters in real time. Zimbabwe's political parties and politicians, just like business organisations, regarded the political image as central in marketing the political brand. Although the debate on whether online political communication translates into real votes is inconclusive, the use of Facebook by politicians ahead of Zimbabwe's 2018 presidential elections ensured that they remained in touch with the electorate. Apart from its affordable costs, Facebook, if used well, can help politicians build essential emotional linkages with voters, thereby creating a profound impact on the voting outcomes. The voters can become partners, helping to tell the brand story.

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THE 2019 SOUTH AFRICAN ELECTIONS

Incumbency and Uncertainty

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ABSTRACT

The 2019 South African elections marked the country's sixth iteration of free and fair electoral contests since its democratisation in 1994. Although the outcome gives the African National Congress (ANC) yet another five-year mandate, the party has not gone unchallenged at the polls. It registered its lowest national vote share since the transition, a major concern for the party of liberation. The most recent contest also demonstrates the resilience of the main opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA), and the continued upward trajectory of its closest rival, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). In this article, we analyse available survey data on South Africans' attitudes and offer some empirical answers to account for the election results. We argue that race continues to feature prominently in electoral decision-making but it does so in ways that deviate slightly from conventional wisdom. Further, we put forth an explanation that the parties' leaders played a central role in shaping citizens' voting behaviour, especially among their own partisan supporters.

Keywords: South Africa, elections, electoral politics, voting behaviour, party politics

INTRODUCTION

The 2019 elections marked the sixth successive post-apartheid contest in South Africa. Voters went to the polls on 8 May partly looking to the past, partly looking to the future. Much had changed in the country's political landscape since the 2014 elections. In the sixth national and democratic elections in South Africa's history, the electorate faced a crucial question – whether to reward the dominant

African National Congress (ANC) with yet another five-year mandate. The party of liberation, in office for 25 years, sought to shore up electoral support from its core constituencies. It suffered widespread losses in the country's 2016 municipal elections, losing control of key municipalities. Its leader, Jacob Zuma, had severely tarnished the party, eroding the moral legitimacy of the organisation. Sensing its profound electoral vulnerability, ANC elites moved to replace Zuma with Cyril Ramaphosa in February 2018. In short, the ANC faced perhaps its sternest electoral challenge since the country's democratisation; citizens were likely to exercise other options – to vote for an alternative party, or not vote at all.

Table 1: Party Vote Share (%) in National Elections Over Time

Party	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014	2019
African National Congress (ANC)	62.7	66.4	69.7	65.9	62.2	57.5
Democratic Alliance (DA)	1.7	9.6	12.4	16.7	22.2	20.8
Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)	--	--	--	--	6.4	10.8
Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)	10.5	8.6	7.0	4.6	2.4	3.4
Freedom Front Plus (FF+)	2.2	0.8	0.9	0.8	1.6	2.4
Vote share total of top 5 parties*	97.5*	94.9*	93.1*	95.4*	94.8	94.9
Number of parties competing	19	16	21	27	29	48
Turnout	86.9	89.3	76.7	77.3	73.5	66.0

Source: Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC)

* The National Party received 20.4% of the vote share in the country's first democratic election. In 1999, the New National Party (NNP) received 6.9% of the vote; while the United Democratic Movement (UDM) came fifth with 3.4%. The United Democratic Movement gained 2.3% in the 2004 election, and the Independent Democrats (ID) won 1.7%, rounding out the top five. In 2009, the Congress of the People (COPE) received 7.4% of the vote, placing them third. The final figure of 95.4% for the 2009 election includes these parties in order to keep the row totals consistent across elections.

Like many countries throughout Africa, South Africa has a dominant ruling party with many smaller opposition parties. This year's election featured the continued participation and relatively successful outcomes for several opposition parties – the Democratic Alliance (DA), the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) – long a mainstay in the electoral arena. South Africa thus has a viable opposition with more than one party and relatively high party

system stability, especially when elections are examined over time. Table 1 above illustrates the success of each major party in the six elections from 1994 to 2019.¹

Table 1 yields interesting findings: the electoral outcomes in South Africa over time illustrate that the 2019 edition continues a handful of historical patterns: First, the ANC's vote share has steadily declined since its peak in 2004. Second, both the DA and the EFF have continued to chip away at the ANC's electoral advantage and victory margin. Third, South African elections are characterised by a relatively high degree of electoral stability in the sense that the major parties have perpetuated their political presence and electoral foothold. This is reflected in both the lack of electoral volatility in the makeup of the top five parties across elections, and the consistent vote share allotted to the top five contenders in each election. This is unique in the African context, as most countries with single dominant parties also experience a large degree of party volatility over time (Bleck & van de Walle 2018).

Fourth, the most recent election seems to suggest a continuing pattern of declining turnout, possibly a consequence of decreasing voter enthusiasm after the initial democratic moment, and as their frustrations with democracy's imperfections manifest (Carothers 2002). In this regard, South Africa is yet again an African outlier as most countries have not experienced the expected trajectory, rather maintaining high and stable turnout levels well past the initial democratic exuberance of a founding election (Kuenzi & Lambright 2007, 2011; Lindberg 2013). Fifth, the most recent elections witnessed the continued proliferation of political parties willing to compete in the national race. The list of contenders has roughly tripled since the inaugural two contests, indicating a boom in political party supply and a possible disequilibrium (a surplus of party options) with citizen demand in the electoral marketplace.

Of the five electoral patterns observed in Table 1, we set out to explain two in this paper. We set our sights on the first two observations – the decline of support for the incumbent ANC, and the steady electoral performance of the major political parties. We briefly touch on the other observed patterns, and do so only to better understand our main research foci. Others (in particular Schulz-Herzenberg 2014, 2019a, 2019b) have extensively explored and explained the country's declining turnout levels, and some have provided descriptive accounts of the main political parties in each electoral cycle (Johnson & Schlemmer 1996; Reynolds 1999; Southall & Daniels 2009; Schulz-Herzenberg & Southall 2014); to the best of our knowledge,

1 The EFF was created in 2013 and thus their row reflects only the elections they have contested. Similarly, we illustrate the vote share in the 1990s of the Democratic Party (DP) the DA's predecessor. From 2000 onward, the DP was known as the DA after it briefly merged with the New National Party (NNP) and Federal Alliance (FA). Prior to 2004, the FF+ competed as the Freedom Front. It added the plus for the 2004 election when it merged with the Conservative Party and the Afrikaner Unity Movement.

party proliferation has yet to be investigated. In short, we wish to update previous empirical findings, and provide some suggestive evidence for the effects of party leadership in the most recent South African elections.

In this paper, we provide a brief theoretical overview of past voting behaviour studies in the South African context, and develop a new argument – the role of party leadership. For the first time in South Africa’s history, all major parties had black leaders at the helm, yet these leaders have significantly different political backgrounds, make use of very different political tactics, and steered their parties’ campaigns under very different contexts and circumstances. We rely on South African Citizens Surveys and Afrobarometer survey data to test these dominant explanations. We conclude with the broader lessons to be drawn from the latest electoral iteration.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Role of Race

Race, and to a lesser extent ethnicity, has occupied a dominant role in studies on South African voting behaviour. Scholars have considered the very long sociopolitical and socioeconomic shadow that apartheid has cast on citizens’ political attitudes, policy priorities, and on their daily lived experiences. Central to this form of inquiry has been the racial stratification that continues to define the country’s social landscape.

Early studies of voting behaviour in the South African context identified race as a key explanatory variable for electoral decision-making (Johnson & Schlemmer 1996; Lodge 1999; Mattes 1995; Reynolds 1994, 1999). Some even went so far as to proclaim that the country’s electoral dynamics reflect a ‘racial census’ of sorts. These studies illustrate the chief racial cleavage that underpinned South African politics – black Africans would vote for the ANC, other racial groups would select from an array of alternative opposition parties. In a more recent study, de Kadt and Sands (2019) use precinct-level data to illustrate that white voters who live in areas that are predominantly white and have few interactions with non-whites are less likely to vote for the ANC. In line with past studies, we posit the following:

Hypothesis 1a: Race strongly predicts voting behaviour

We leave this hypothesis somewhat vague for the moment but will add more specificity in our analyses below. In short, we expect black citizens to be much more likely than non-black citizens to vote for the ANC. In our analyses we examine exactly why they may consider the other ‘black’ options, the EFF and the IFP. In addition, we consider why coloured, Indian, and white voters may

decide to vote for the ANC and not select the traditionally 'white' parties, the DA and the FF+.

As more democratic contests were held in South Africa, scholars started to explore why exactly the 'racial census' continued to remain highly stable. Later works (Ferree 2006, 2010; Mattes & Piombo 2001) delved deeper into the associations between race and citizens' voting behaviour. Refining past arguments that centred on race, these scholars argued that race on its own does not explain individuals' behaviour. Ferree (2006, 2010, 2013) argued that voters use 'racial heuristics' to distinguish which party will best represent their group's interests. She also argued that racialised images of political parties permeate citizens' perceptions. Specifically, the DA had struggled to diversify its support base because it was viewed as representing the interests of wealthy, non-black communities (Habib & Schulz-Herzenberg 2011).

At the time of these writings, the South African electoral menu offered citizens a stark choice primarily between the ANC and the DA, and to a much lesser extent, the IFP. Further, historically the ANC has successfully portrayed the DA as a 'white party' of the apartheid era. The DA has continuously struggled to refute this image (Ferree 2010), yet its organisational presence in rural black areas and townships has remained relatively weak (Butler 2014). In recent years, the party has gone to great lengths to make electoral inroads with considerable efforts at rebranding, including a racial makeover of its key and most publicly visible leadership positions (Jolobe 2014).

More recently, the EFF has unambiguously claimed to truly and solely represent the interests of the country's marginalised black citizens. As such, the electoral calculus has changed somewhat, with the inclusion of the EFF competing for the black vote. The flip side of this political coin is that the FF+, under the leadership of Dr. Pieter Groenewald, has taken an avowedly exclusive approach to politics, campaigning on the platform of providing a voice for minority groups' rights. During the 2019 electoral cycle, Groenewald tried to buttress this image by recruiting Peter Marais, founder of the Bruin Belange Beweging (Brown Empowerment Movement), to run as his party's candidate for provincial premier of the Western Cape (Davis 2019). In essence, the historical racial cleavages underpinning party support have been amplified and seemingly reinforced in the 2019 electoral cycle.

In line with the above, we next posit:

Hypothesis 1b: Race is associated with party affiliation

Building on the above hypothesis, scholars have convincingly argued that people of different races in South Africa experience political, social, and economic life differently and thus tend to evaluate the government and opposition parties

quite differently. Mattes and Piombo (2001) argue that different racial groups not only diverged in how they saw the same information, they reached different conclusions, and even differed on which issues mattered most for them. Bratton and Mattes (2003) also found that white and black South Africans differ significantly in their support for various policies.

Finally, in line with these arguments, we posit:

Hypothesis 1c: Race is associated with citizens' government evaluations

In our analysis we seek to explore a more nuanced response across racial groups. More recent studies have cautioned against these stark claims across racial groups, and some have even pointed to intra-racial variance. Firstly, we must assess whether or not these racial group differences do in fact exist. Mattes (2015, p. 677) argued that middle-class black citizens were less likely to support the ANC than poor black people, and prioritised corruption more than 'basic survival needs', and crime and security when forming political decisions. Secondly, we must consider whether these attitudes affect voting behaviour. Booysen (2007) convincingly demonstrated that although poor black communities engaged in service delivery protests prior to the 2004 elections, they still overwhelmingly rewarded the ANC at the ballot box. The underlying reason why the ANC increased its vote share from 1999 to 2004 was that poor black voters still trusted the ANC more than other parties to solve their particular grievances.

Leadership Effects

Starting in 2009, the ANC and DA began to run national television advertisements showcasing their policy proposals but also relying on clear political symbols to reach their audience. In particular, these advertisements feature current party leaders, with an emphasis on their backgrounds and political history (Bleck & van de Walle 2018, p. 172). In one sense, the South African electoral campaign season has become more 'personalised' or 'presidentialised' like many countries across the industrialised world, with increasing political and campaign coverage on television (Garzia 2014). The specific effect of party leaders on citizens' voting behaviour and political attitudes has received surprisingly limited empirical examination. In one past study, the authors (Mattes & Piombo 2001, p. 115) found that survey respondents' views of party leaders provided the strongest explanatory power for electoral decision-making among independent (non-partisan) voters. Given that over time nearly half of South African citizens (Mattes 2005) have no party affiliation, this seems to have been an overlooked and understudied explanation. As such, we posit:

Hypothesis 2: Leadership evaluations will predict voting behaviour

Again, our hypothesis is non-directional and purposely vague to allow for examination across parties and their chief figures. We expect that citizens who have less favourable opinions of Cyril Ramaphosa, Mmusi Maimane, and Julius Malema are more likely to consider alternative parties, and this effect will hold even among survey respondents with party affiliations.

METHOD

In this study we make use primarily of the May and June 2019 South African Citizens Surveys (SACS), and rely on the 2015 and 2018 Afrobarometer surveys for South Africa to complement our analyses. The SACS project is nationally representative and has been conducted on a monthly basis since 2015. Each monthly survey polls 1 300 citizens, and achieves a nationally representative sample. For this study, we rely on available data from the surveys conducted on 19 May and 19 June. Together, this pooled sample includes 2 600 citizens, and offers the most temporally proximate data to the actual elections of 8 May. The Afrobarometer data have samples ranging from 1 840 to 2 388 respondents and the field teams collected data in June 2015 and April 2018. Due to the temporal disconnect of these surveys, we rely on them merely as another data picture, offering a reference point for over time changes in citizens' political concerns and evaluations.

In examining the survey data, we employ two statistical techniques to better answer our research questions and test the above hypotheses. First, we examine 'surface-level' national results from the sample to identify which issues South Africans believe to be the most pressing facing the country. We also examine group-level (race, partisanship, and leadership perceptions) perceptions of respondents to investigate the effects, and their interaction, of race, party affiliation, and party leaders' favourability on voting decisions. These analyses are presented in the tables that follow and offer the crosstabulations, or contingency tables, of two or more variables.

Second, we model the voting behaviour of South Africans by using a multinomial statistical regression that treats voter choice as our dependent variable.² Using this approach instead of other regression techniques (e.g. linear or a series of logistic models) better captures the electoral decision-making process – voters weigh the political party options on their electoral menus before making a selection. This approach models respondents' support for the ANC in relation to

2 We use the survey question that asks, 'Regardless of whether you voted or not, who would you vote for?'

the other party options (the DA, EFF, IFP, and FF+), and is particularly appropriate for ordered categorical outcomes like party affiliation and voting decisions (Gelman & Hill 2006, p. 119). The approach is increasingly used in empirical studies of South African political dynamics, allowing for more nuanced examinations of categorical explanatory variables (Gordon, Struwig, & Roberts 2018; Schulz-Herzenberg 2019b). We exclude the options of 'uncertain' and 'don't know' from the regression analysis because they constrict the sample too narrowly across categories. However, we include these options in our other analyses below, to probe motivations for citizens' decisions to not turn out.

For each specific analysis, we include the survey questions as footnotes below the table results. Our regression output featured in Table 3 below requires more discussion for us to present the survey questions we used to measure our explanatory variables. In measuring age, we include a survey question that asks the age of the respondent and scores the variable from one to five. Gender is treated as a binary variable in the response; female respondents are coded as zero and serve as the reference group, and males scored as one. Education is a categorical variable that ranges from one to eleven, with a higher score reflecting more years of education. Race includes four categories – black, coloured, Indian, and white. Part of our focus is on how non-black citizens make their electoral decisions in comparison to their black compatriots. As such, we use those who self-identify as black as the reference category, a standard practice for the modal response. Income is another categorical variable, coding respondents from one to fourteen, based on their self-reported monthly income ranging from 'no income' to R10 000 and more.

Our main explanatory variables include measures aimed at examining respondents' perceptions of the country's economic situation, corruption, and their opinions of Cyril Ramaphosa as a leader. Our decision to select these measures stems from the results in Table 2 below, illustrating that economic ills and corruption are two of the most important problems for most South Africans, the other pertinent issues being crime, education, and housing. Unfortunately, the survey design (lack of question availability) does not allow for a test of governmental performance on these issues. Further, the survey did not ask directly about unemployment or poverty. Despite these shortcomings, we include a question asking respondents for their perceptions of the South African economy over the past twelve months ('retrospective' evaluations), and whether they expect the economy to improve over the next twelve months ('prospective' evaluations). Corruption is measured in a question that asks respondents, 'In your opinion is the level of corruption in South Africa increasing, staying the same or decreasing?', and higher levels indicate a more optimistic assessment among citizens. Lastly, to test leadership effects, we include a question that asks,

'Knowing what you know now, do you have a favourable or unfavourable opinion of Cyril Ramaphosa?' Like other variables, higher scores indicate more favourable opinions of the incumbent president.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

A helpful starting point to understanding the voting behaviour of South Africans is uncovering which issues matter most to them. An early study by Bratton & Mattes (2003) argued that members of racial groups differed on their (lack of) support for public ownership of corporations and the size and role of government. Others (Mattes & Piombo 2001) contended that blacks and whites used similar evaluative standards when gauging ANC governmental performance, but often arrived at remarkably differently conclusions.

Our initial empirical foray into the survey data yields a few findings of note. By and large, South Africans' major concerns revolve around economic underperformance (unemployment and poverty), lack of social provisions (housing, education, electricity, water supply, and health), and social ills (crime and corruption). Of these, there is remarkable stability in the most pressing issues as unemployment, crime, and housing are usually the top concerns, while poverty became much more salient in the 2019 survey. These findings direct our analyses below but merit a few quick reflections. We do not *a priori* assume that all South Africans across racial and socioeconomic distinctions will experience each problem to the same degree. Rather, the relative importance each individual and group assigns to these problems provides the focal points of our subsequent analyses, as does a consideration of how individuals and groups assess a suitable political selection from among the political party options on their electoral menus.

Building on the descriptive statistics above, we shift our analytical gaze to our statistical model. The large-N statistical test allows for a broad testing of the common voting behaviour explanations, and allows for theories to be examined systematically, especially at the individual level. The models we include investigate each explanatory variable's relative importance and we add interactive effects between respondents' racial identification and retrospective economic evaluations, as we attempt to tease out the interplay between race and government performance.³

3 We ran identical models for the other performance evaluations on corruption and found similar results. For the cohesiveness of this article, we discuss only economic performance as it registered more statistically significant results across comparisons, and unemployment has dominated citizens' political concerns.

**Table 2: The most important problems facing South Africa
(survey response %)⁴**

Problem	2015(AB)	2018(AB)	2019 (SACS)
Unemployment	78.0	62.4	73.8
Housing	26.6	23.8	19.8
Crime and security	26.5	29.3	33.6
Corruption	23.5	19.4	26.4
Education	21.5	17.7	13.6
Poverty/destitution	19.4	14.8	27.4
Electricity	15.0	10.3	10.6
Water supply	12.8	16.8	10.9
Health	12.5	8.4	6.2
Infrastructure/roads	10.8	11.9	8.4
Management of the economy	6.3	13.1	7.0

Sources: *Afrobarometer* (AB) Surveys, Rounds 6 (2015) and 7 (2018); 2019 May and June *South African Citizens Surveys* (SACS).

Table 3 illustrates several statistical relationships between sociodemographic factors and electoral decision-making, but also the profound effect of Cyril Ramaphosa as the leader of the ANC and other evaluative considerations, namely economic factors and perceptions of corruption. Compared to the ANC's supporters, the DA draws its support from a younger, more educated, and more female base. As expected, those survey respondents who self-identify as coloured, Indian, and white are much more likely to select the DA at the ballot box. However, three very interesting patterns emerge from the first column. Citizens who view corruption to have improved in the country are much more likely to reward the ANC over the DA when making their electoral choices, and although the results are not statistically significant ($P > 0.05$), citizens who view the country's economic conditions as having improved over the last year are much more likely to support the ANC than the DA, and this relationship is much stronger when race is taken into account. In short, non-black citizens who consider the DA as a viable political alternative are less enthusiastic in their support for the party if they sense the macroeconomic situation to have improved and have more favourable perceptions of Cyril Ramaphosa.

⁴ The surveys asked the same question, 'In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address?' Respondents were allowed three responses. The figures in this table represent the frequency of each response.

**Table 3: Multinomial Regression Model for Vote Choice
(ANC as reference)⁵**

Variable	DA		EFF		IFP		FF+	
	Beta	SE	Beta	SE	Beta	SE	Beta	SE
Age (male)	-0.021	(0.08)	-0.427	(0.10)***	-0.087	(0.23)	0.127	(0.27)
Gender	-0.412	(0.20)*	0.994	(0.22)***	-0.379	(0.57)	2.439	(1.09)*
Education	0.012	(0.06)	0.120	(0.06)*	-0.114	(0.20)	-0.121	(0.16)
Race (Coloured)	4.670	(0.69)***	1.117	(1.30)	-7.423	(0.00)***	11.932	(0.00)***
Race (Indian)	3.762	(0.97)***	-14.789	(0.00)***	-5.870	(0.00)***	8.327	(0.00)***
Race (White)	6.039	(0.90)***	1.923	(2.31)	4.832	(0.00)***	45.204	(1.59)***
Income	-0.047	(0.02) ⁺	0.012	(0.03)	0.028	(0.07)	0.000	(0.09)
Economy (better)	-0.215	(0.15)	-0.204	(0.12) ⁺	0.219	(0.28)	4.472	(0.24)***
Prospective economy	0.011	(0.09)	-0.078	(0.10)	-0.057	(0.24)	-0.287	(0.41) ⁺
Corruption (better)	-0.345	(0.09)***	-0.355	(0.11)**	-1.215	(0.28)	-1.123	(0.51)*
Ramaphosa (good)	-0.851	(0.14)***	0.623	(0.14)***	1.213	(0.35)***	0.428	(0.59)***
Economy *Coloured	-0.384	(0.25)	-0.372	(0.52)	-6.968	(0.00)***	-1.382	(0.00)***
Economy *Indian	-0.006	(0.37)	0.091	(0.00)***	-6.876	(0.00)***	-1.481	(0.00)***
Economy *White	-0.446	(0.31)	-1.104	(1.05)	-11.988	(0.00)***	-5.210	(0.24)
Intercept	1.607	(0.69)*	0.061	(0.72)***	0.407	(1.78)	-44.141	(1.59)***

⁺: P<0.1, *: P<0.05; **: P<0.01; ***: P<0.001

⁵ The authors used the R statistical software to obtain these results.

The use of multinomial regression also allows the researcher to investigate the ANC relative to other parties, not just its main oppositional challenger. When comparing the incumbent to the EFF, some similarities with the DA voting patterns emerge but several differences also come to the fore. The EFF, in relation to the ANC, attracts supporters from a younger, more educated base that skews disproportionately male. One major difference with the DA calculus, is that race no longer serves as an explanatory factor, except for self-identifying Indian South Africans. This is not entirely surprising for two reasons. First, the EFF has proudly established and marketed itself as a party that exclusively represents the interests of poor, black South Africans who live in the townships and have been marginalised by dual enemies – a long legacy of racial oppression and continued suffering at the hands of both white economic elites and a narrow black political elite. As such, very few non-black South Africans consider the EFF to be a viable electoral option, suggesting that they view the party as highly exclusive and unlikely to represent their interests. Party exclusivity has been shown to be a political non-starter for potential supporters (Habib & Schulz-Herzenberg 2011). Even more damaging for the party was the confrontational approach its leader, Julius Malema, openly took during the campaign against Indian South Africans. He repeatedly accused Indians of exploiting black Africans, especially domestic workers, and embracing ‘whiteness’ (Hans 2019).

Much like voters pondering a decision between the ANC and the DA, voters developed their electoral preferences between the ANC and EFF largely on their perceptions of whether corruption had improved, and their opinion of the country’s president Cyril Ramaphosa. Similarly with the DA, if citizens had more favourable economic views, they were less likely to select the EFF than the ANC.⁶ The consistent voting patterns – the interaction between race and economic perceptions, and, perhaps most importantly, the evaluation of Cyril Ramaphosa – also explain to a large extent whether or not citizens view either the IFP or the FF+ as credible or viable alternative oppositions. Neither party received more than 4% of national votes, and the data illustrate that few survey respondents considered these parties, and did so only if they had extremely negative opinions of both the macroeconomic trajectory and the incumbent president.

Moving from an individual level of analysis to a more aggregate one, we continue to probe the survey data to uncover more nuanced understandings of South Africans’ voting behaviour. Previous work by Habib and Schulz-Herzenberg (2011) found that citizens in the country placed a great deal of stock in basing their decisions on how responsive a specific party might be to their racial group’s

6 For survey respondents who identified as coloured and white.

interests. Ferree (2006, 2010) similarly argued that voters use party labels as ‘racial heuristics’ when making electoral choices in the country’s complex environment, especially when they operate with imperfect information. Following these scholars’ logics and analytical frameworks, we set out to examine the available survey data that interrogates respondents’ perceptions of which party may be best equipped or able to deal with the country’s gravest problems. Further, we consider three of the most important issues – unemployment, crime, and corruption.⁷ We also list the results first for the full sample, and then bifurcate the outcomes by race – specifically for black survey respondents, and compare these percentages to non-black (coloured, Indian, white) respondents in the sample. Although it may be beneficial to disaggregate the non-black category, the above regression results (in Table 3) suggest that non-black voters operate using similar logics. We also did not find significantly different results across non-black races; at least nothing that would warrant dividing the results even further.

Table 4 below illustrates several findings that provide additional insight into how South African voters cast their ballots in May 2019. On the most important issue and gravest problem facing the country (unemployment), a plurality of survey respondents considered the ANC to be most competent at creating jobs and lowering the unemployment rate. Again, there is a noticeable and sizeable divide between the black and non-black subsets. As expected, black survey respondents have much more faith in the long-ruling ANC, although the unemployment rate has remained debilitatingly high under its tenure. What is of further interest is that the same racial divide characterises respondents’ (lack of) confidence in the EFF to manage macroeconomic conditions. Black respondents are more than six times as likely as non-black respondents to place their trust in the EFF as potential economic stewards. Lastly, non-black respondents are also more than twice as likely to exhibit systemic disillusionment or despair, by claiming that no political parties are able to solve the country’s lingering economic woes.

When considering the serious issue of crime, the ANC is seen as less capable across the sample. Again, there is a stark racial divide which plays out not just for the ANC but also for the EFF. The non-black subset once again views the DA as the most competent party to combat crime, but this group also indicates considerable and widespread political scepticism. They are even more concerned about crime than about unemployment, as roughly one in six non-black South Africans believe that no party has the political wherewithal to wage an effective campaign against crime.

⁷ Similar results were found for the other two major policy issues, housing and education.

Table 4: Respondents' perceptions of the party best able to deal with most important issues

	ANC	DA	EFF	IFP	Other	None	Don't Know
Unemployment							
Full sample	46.3	28.3	7.0	1.3	1.2	10.0	6.1
Black respondents	63.4	12.7	10.7	1.4	0.7	6.6	4.4
Non-black respondents	21.8	50.5	1.6	1.0	1.9	14.7	8.5
Crime							
Full sample	42.1	28.3	9.5	1.4	1.5	10.5	6.8
Black respondents	58.0	12.9	14.4	1.8	0.9	6.7	5.4
Non-black respondents	19.4	50.3	2.4	0.7	2.4	16.0	8.9
Corruption							
Full sample	40.1	28.2	10.9	1.6	1.6	11.1	6.5
Black respondents	54.2	13.4	16.7	2.0	1.0	7.7	5.2
Non-black respondents	20.0	49.4	2.6	1.0	2.5	16.0	8.5
Voting intention							
Full Sample	49.0	25.9	7.3	1.1	3.6	10.2	2.9
Black respondents	70.9	5.4	11.1	1.6	1.3	2.0	7.7
Non-black respondents	17.7	55.1	2.0	0.3	6.9	4.2	13.8

Source: 2019 May and June South African Citizens Surveys

The ANC is on even less solid footing when respondents consider corruption. Once again, a plurality of the sample views the ANC as the most qualified to root out nefarious practices. However, this is largely driven by the ANC's perceptual dominance among black interviewees, who rightly and demographically correctly

make up the overwhelming majority of the survey sample. As with other issues, there is a considerable racial divide for both the ANC and the EFF, and a consistent pattern of a healthy (16%) number of non-black respondents losing faith in the available political options to solve one of South Africa's most pressing issues.

There are two key takeaways from the above discussion, which all play out in the last few rows of Table 4. First, the stark racial divide between black and non-black respondents on which party (or parties) is most qualified and competent to address the country's vital problems affords both the ANC and the EFF the luxury of majority black support. One major challenge (as yet unaddressed and which may be politically intractable) that lingers for the DA is that it has yet to convince black voters that it can offer solutions to the community's most pressing needs. Previous scholars (Habib & Schulz-Herzenberg 2011; Jolobe 2014) have noted repeatedly that despite the party's concerted efforts and institutional racial makeovers they have been unable to make electoral inroads into poorer black communities across the country. Of more concern for the party, Table 4 above also shows that the DA has yet to convince a commanding majority of the non-black community that it is best able to lead. Although it obtains roughly half of the non-black confidence, this means that it fails to inspire confidence in the other half of its key supporter demographics.

Second, there is a disconnect between votes and groups' perceptions of the party best able to address grave concerns. This holds across racial groups, as black respondents are far more likely to vote ANC than agree they are the best to tackle unemployment, crime, and corruption. The other side of this coin is that the EFF therefore polls slightly lower than its stronger performance in developing credibility among black respondents. Among non-black respondents there is a slight boost for the DA, but this may indicate that no other party offers a credible option for them. Of note is that the 'do not know' responses and electoral uncertainty are much more pronounced among the non-black sectors of the electorate. That would suggest that black voters feel their demands are somewhat met by the electoral supply, benefitting from the two parties that can credibly claim to represent them, the ANC and EFF. In other words, electoral supply and demand are much closer to equilibrium for the black voting population than for their non-black compatriots.

Elaborating on our findings above, we next examine whether these same effects hold for the partisans in each party. Past studies (Bratton & Mattes 2003; Ferree 2006; Mattes 2005) have repeatedly illustrated that levels of partisanship among South Africans have dwindled over time, mimicking developments in other industrialised countries around the world (Dalton 2002). Table 5 below illustrates that partisanship has declined even more than initially thought. When

asked if they feel close to any political party, the top three parties accounted for a combined 46.4% of the sample, while the modal answer was ‘no political party’ with 48.0% of responses. This should come as a major surprise and concern to all political parties in South Africa as the ‘nones’ would be the largest party, with the ANC following as a distant second with only 32.4% of the sample.⁸

Table 5: Vote Choice among Partisans⁹ (survey response %)

Party Affiliation	Party Loyalists	Vote Defectors	Vote Viable Opposition*	Refused/ Undecided
ANC (N=843)	90.3	4.8	4.0	5.0
DA (N=249)	91.2	3.2	0.4	5.6
EFF (N=115)	88.7	6.9	1.7	4.3

Source: South African Citizen Surveys, May and June 2019

The only saving grace for the major political parties is that those who do feel close to them are highly likely to vote for them on election day. The second column in Table 5 above demonstrates that the three major parties maintain roughly nine out of ten enthusiasts. The DA seems to have the most loyal enthusiasts, with only 3.2% defecting to other parties. Of this small number, 1.6% claimed that they voted for the ANC and 0.4% chose the EFF. Contrary to speculation in many publications and media (Gottschalk & Kotze 2019; Kiewit 2019; Naki 2019) that the smaller FF+ attracted disillusioned DA supporters, only three DA enthusiasts selected other smaller parties, of which *zero* indicated they voted for the FF+.¹⁰ Similarly, ANC enthusiasts largely support their party, and when they do not, they most often select alternatives using a somewhat strategic logic, with most of their supporters choosing the DA or the EFF. The EFF’s enthusiasts also displayed a high level of loyalty, and when they defected they generally selected the ANC. We employ a high degree of caution in interpreting these results as the number of vote defectors for both the DA (eight) and EFF (also eight) is relatively small.

Our final analysis seeks to provide a more nuanced assessment of the effect of leadership, and we extend our purview to consider not only Cyril Ramaphosa but

8 These percentages reflect these answers from the entire answer menu which includes ‘don’t know’ and ‘refused’ options. However, the combined total of these two options was merely 2.5%.

9 By ‘viable opposition’ we mean either the second-placed DA or third-placed EFF. Not all rows add up to 100% due to our rounding practice. In our entire sample, there were only 11 IFP partisans and 10 FF+ supporters. Thus, we do not include those parties in the table above. The modal response is ‘no party at all’ which registered 48% of our sample of 2 600 respondents.

10 These three DA enthusiasts supported the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), the Congress of the People (COPE), and one responded with ‘another political party’.

also the opposition figures Mmusi Maimane and Julius Malema. One contribution we hope to make in this paper is an empirical underpinning of the less frequently, if ever, discussed explanatory variable of leadership effects on voting behaviour.

Leadership seemed to play a major role in how citizens approached the 2019 elections. Jacob Zuma had served as president for nine years, reigning over a regime that witnessed corruption scandals become the political status quo. In the process, Zuma had significantly contributed to undermining the ANC's historical claims to serving the masses with a sense of moral legitimacy.¹¹ Cyril Ramaphosa was therefore tasked with restoring his party's legitimacy in the eyes of its most ardent supporters, and also shoring up and unifying internal factions that had beset the ANC for several years. Given these dynamics, and with Ramaphosa leading the ANC's campaign efforts, we expect citizen evaluations of him and other party leaders to play a major role in shaping voters' behaviour. We found that perceptions of Ramaphosa were a major predictor for voters in selecting whether or not to vote for the ANC, when compared to all other major parties (see Table 6 below).

Table 6: Party Leader Evaluations and Vote Choice (survey response %)

Party Affiliation	Party Loyalists	Vote Defectors	Vote Viable Opposition	Refused/ Undecided
ANC, positive Ramaphosa	92.5	3.2	2.5	4.3
ANC, negative Ramaphosa	78.3	14.5	13.0	7.2
DA, positive Maimane	91.7	3.6	0.6	4.7
DA, negative Maimane	82.5	5.0	0.0	12.5
Eff, positive Malema	89.6	7.3	1.0	3.1
Eff, negative Malema	72.7	9.1	9.1	18.2

Source: 2019 May and June SACS surveys

Table 6 presents a considerable amount of information to analyse. Across all parties there is a noticeable gap in party enthusiasm among supporters, depending on their opinion of the party's leader. First, negative evaluations of the party leader

11 Among ANC party officials, Zuma is not alone in his unethical behaviour. However, as the face of the party he has done significant damage to its brand.

seem to play out differently between the ruling and opposition parties. In general, ANC supporters defect to the viable opposition, while the DA and EFF supporters either refuse to answer or are undecided. The latter do not consider the ANC as a viable option.

Second, the leadership effect appears to be much larger for the ANC and EFF than for the DA. For ANC supporters that gap is 14.2%, and those who do not view Ramaphosa in a positive light express their concern by voting DA (7.2%) or EFF (5.8%). When considering leader evaluations DA supporters are more loyal to their party than are the followers of the other two main competitors. The enthusiasm gap is only 9.2%, substantially lower than in other parties. DA partisans are more likely to be uncertain or consider not voting when they hold less favourable opinions of Maimane. The EFF supporters closely resemble the ANC's base in their large enthusiasm gap (16.9%); but, more like DA partisans, they most often consider not voting, while some entertain supporting the DA, when they hold more negative views of Malema.

One curiosity of EFF partisans is that the number of defectors is remarkably similar regardless of their opinions of Julius Malema, with those having negative opinions (slightly higher at 1.8%) more likely to defect. What is even more striking is that all of these respondents claimed they supported the DA at the ballot box. Further study of why these supporters acted in unison is warranted. Again, we exercise a note of caution with some of the conclusions we can draw from the table above. With a limited sample, many of these rows and cells have small numbers, and the percentages therefore reflect the behaviour of only a few individuals.

CONCLUSION

On 8 May 2019, South Africa held its sixth successive free and fair national elections, a noteworthy democratic accomplishment. The country continues to have a competitive political system that regularly facilitates multiparty elections free of interference, intimidation, and other grave irregularities that plague much of the continent. Although many democratic imperfections remain, there is much to celebrate from a democratic institutionalist point of view.

In this article we set out to examine the motivations of South African voters, relying on survey data collected a few days after the election. Past scholarship identified the central role of race in political behaviour and attitudes among citizens. Race has traditionally shaped voting behaviour, partisan affiliations, and the issues that groups find most important and pressing. We find that South Africans are overwhelmingly concerned with the country's economic woes (unemployment and poverty), lack of adequate social provisions (housing, education, electricity, water supply, and health), and widespread social ills (crime and corruption). Racial identifications largely predict which party survey

respondents believe is best able to solve these issues. Unsurprisingly, a majority of black citizens still views the ANC as best for their interests, yet this bloc of citizens views the party less able to address corruption than unemployment and crime. Similarly, among non-black respondents, the DA is seen as the best equipped of all the parties to tackle the country's most pressing problems, although there is cause for concern for the largest opposition parties. A very worryingly trend has emerged (mostly for the DA but also the EFF) in that nearly one in six non-black citizens considers that no political party is able to solve the country's most vital problems. This reflects the view that neither of these parties has offered credible solutions that convince a large proportion of non-black citizens of their potential governing viability.

Although the ANC's credibility among black citizens on the issues stated above indicate that it is still viewed as the party best equipped to improve their lives, this advantage has an increasingly narrow margin. The ruling party, however, does much better when the same sample is asked about their voting intention. As such, racial identification offers a robust explanation for overall voting behaviour. Coloured, Indian, and white supporters are more likely to support the DA than the ANC. However, these associations are not as neatly delineated as the 'racial census' arguments let us believe. When non-black respondents have more favourable views of the country's economic conditions they are more likely to consider voting for the ANC than for any of the other political parties. Further, favourable attitudes towards Cyril Ramaphosa consistently produced statistically significant associations with survey respondents' propensity to vote for the ANC above all other parties. This offers convincing evidence that leadership had a profound influence in South Africans' 2019 electoral decisions. On this last point, when DA and EFF partisans had negative opinions of their party leaders, they were more likely to express electoral uncertainty, whereas ANC supporters probably defected to either the DA or EFF.

Future research should continue to wrestle with the intersection of race, class, language, and policy evaluations to paint a fuller, more complete picture of the South African political environment and electoral context.

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THE MANIFESTO EXPERIMENT AND INTERNAL ELECTIONEERING IN THE BOTSWANA DEMOCRATIC PARTY

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ABSTRACT

Written manifestos seem to be a rarity in intra-political party electioneering in Africa, and there is a view that African party electioneering is largely non-issue based, instead being personality-driven. This article observes that the phenomenon seems applicable even to Africa's supposed 'senior democracy', Botswana. Yet, the enduring, issueless factional electioneering of the long-ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) resulted in a significant, albeit one-off, interregnum in 2015. In the 2014 general elections, the combined opposition had garnered 53% of the popular vote, while the BDP received just 47%. The BDP managed to hold onto power, however, due to the country's first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system. This development appears to have shaken and confused the elites of the BDP and caused concern among the party's hard-line factionalists. Subsequently, Botsalo Ntuane did extremely well in the party's 2015 central committee elections. In an unprecedented move he competed for the influential position of secretary general as an independent candidate and with an actual policy manifesto. This move was outside of the traditional factional sponsorship method long-dominant within the BDP. However, the factionalists soon regrouped and acted to marginalise him and his manifesto. Ntuane consequently performed quite poorly in the later 2017 elections, which once again were fought along strict factional lines with no space for ideas or policies. This article argues that Ntuane's manifesto may have been perceived as too radical and unacceptably ambitious by the conservative party elites. This manifesto also seems to have threatened entrenched personal interests and corrupt practices within the BDP-led government. The article concludes with a note on the dynamics and results of the 2019 general elections.

Keywords: electioneering, factions, manifesto, corruption, reform

Ntuane's expenditure to rally the democrats to a debate so that this year's Congress might be fought on ideas is enticing enough. It prescribes a break with the past – however half-heartedly. But without first conceding to the existence of deep-seated problems by those in power, such a rally to arms will no doubt fall on deaf ears.

Spencer Mogapi 2015

INTRODUCTION

In theory, political issues or ideas and policy alternatives are central in electioneering. These tend to be limited to party manifestos, which are produced for national elections. Manifestos certainly play a critical role in elections in liberal democracies worldwide (Caplan 2007; Kiewert & Mattozzi 2008). However, in emerging African democracies it is claimed that personalities, as opposed to clearly articulated manifestos, play a primary role: 'The literature on Africa has tended to dismiss these campaigns as largely lacking in substance and focused entirely on the clientelist and ethnic appeals that are argued to dominate electoral contests' (Bleck & van de Walle 2011). A strong point is made by Bleck and van de Walle who argue 'that such a view is at best a simplification. It is true that elections in Africa rarely elicit appeals to class cleavages, but the absence of ideological debate should not be confused for a dearth of programmatic politics' (Bleck & van de Walle 2012, p.1395). They further contend that African 'political parties do in fact invoke salient political issues, but usually through valence appeals, rather than by taking identifiable positions. Though electoral campaigns in Africa include much mediocre rhetoric and sometimes less than edifying personal insults and empty posturing, they do also include discussions of the political issues that resonate with their constituents' (ibid.).

However, with regard to *internal* party politics, it is extremely rare for a central committee or internal party election candidate to produce a manifesto, let alone a written one, in competing against other party members. A rare occurrence of this phenomenon occurred in 2015 in Botswana within the ruling BDP. This event was in fact so exceptional that it threatened to shake up politics within the party and undermine the personality-driven factional politics that have bedevilled the BDP for decades. A discussion of this incident is the subject of this article.

THE BDP'S ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Ideology is largely absent from politics within Botswana, apart from a generic commitment to free market policies:

[P]olitical party competition is based on or generated by political ideas and policy alternatives. However, a defining characteristic of political parties in Botswana is that they do not present clear ideological differences... Based on the basic maxim of political science, ideology is understood to mean the vision or the worldview that political parties develop for and about society with a view to shaping its future. It is a guide to action or non-action. However, if by ideology we mean... a set of theoretical assumptions that represent a guiding philosophy for political parties, then its lack of rigour raises important questions for the Botswana situation... What seems to beset Botswana's campaign trail is that it is not based on issues but differences of personalities.

(Molomo 2000, pp. 69–74)

The BDP was formed in 1962 and easily won the 1965 national elections that led to the independence of Botswana from British colonial rule on 30 September 1966. Since then the party has won all national elections, held every five years, in what Doorenspleet (2003, p.171) has described as the 'senior democracy in Africa'. A brief background to the party's organisational structure in relation to central committee elections may be helpful for contextual purposes:

The constitution of the BDP provides for a mass-based structure. It has an elaborate structure working upwards from the party cell, sub-wards, wards, sub-branches, a regional organization, the National Congress, up to the National Council and a Central Committee... Article 28 of the BDP constitution stipulates composition of the Central Committee. It consists of eighteen members as follows: the President; the Chairperson; the Secretary General; the Deputy Secretary General; the Treasurer; the Deputy Treasurer; ten ordinary members of the party; Chairpersons of the Women and Youth Wings. The Central Committee meets when convened by the President of the Party, or at the requisition of at least one third of its members. It controls the day to day affairs of the party with power to determine the policy within the framework of decisions taken by the National Council and/or National Congress. It is also responsible for and has the power to make regulations for the effective running and administration of the party.

(Lekorwe 2005, pp.124–125)

Although Lekorwe was writing in 2005, the status quo remains largely the same today. Whereas Article 29 of the party's constitution provides for the election of the party president, this has not happened from the time of the party's formation

in 1962 until 2019 when the former president (Ian Khama, 2008-2018) and the incumbent president of the party (Mokgweetsi Masisi) publicly disagreed, and Khama rallied a faction against Masisi in a bid to oust him. The campaign was acrimonious and controversial, yet it was not based on ideas as neither Masisi nor his challenger, Pelonomi Venson-Moitoi, had either manifestos or personal platforms. Venson-Moitoi had claimed that she would produce a manifesto to challenge Masisi, but this never appeared.

The party structure consists of electoral colleges, councillors, regions and, most importantly for central committee elections, delegates. By the time the BDP held its central committee elections in July 2017, its electoral college had eight categories. These included the central committee, members of parliament, councillors, the National Youth Executive Committee, the National Women's Executive Committee, regions and delegates. 'Under the BDP strategy of one person one vote it means that nine members within the Central Committee will have to forfeit their votes as members of parliament as they cannot vote twice. All the MPs will have a vote including the specially elected ones but those holding positions in other portfolios... will have only one vote' (Mmeso 2017).

Mmeso further noted that councillors 'are the king makers as they have numbers as there are more than 500 councillors. The councillors are said to be also very influential on who are elected into regional committees and elected as delegates for the congress. Candidates are jostling to have them on their side' (ibid.). He also noted that when it came to regions, these 'translate into 28 votes as each has been allocated two votes. There are 14 regions'. As for delegates 'this is where the votes lie as they constitute the highest number. They are 570 as each constituency will send 10 delegates' (ibid.). When elections are fought along factional lines, as is normally the case, a great deal of manipulation and buying or bribing the delegates by faction elites is the norm within the BDP.

Every-day party activities are handled by the executive secretary who reports to the secretary general. Sir Ketumile Masire, a BDP founding member, first secretary general (1962-1980) and later president (1980-1998), wrote that:

The office kept members informed, looked after membership recruitment, and followed the activities of MPs and local councillors.... The Executive Secretary of the party needed to understand the issues facing the nation and the party, and he or she also needed to be well informed about what was going on in terms of both legislation and policy. We involved the Executive Secretary in the parliamentary caucus, as we wanted the Executive Secretary to be available when matters relevant to the party were being discussed.

(Masire 2006, p. 54-55)

It is worth noting that Ntuane was the executive secretary from the mid-1990s to 2004, when he became an MP.

FACTIONALISM WITHIN THE BDP

Since the early 1990s, the BDP's central committee elections have been fought between hostile factions who have neither ideological or policy issues, but are rather underpinned by personal antipathies and the pursuit of private interests (Makgala 2006; Makgala & Botlhomilwe 2017, pp. 54–72). The different factions produce what they call 'lobby lists' of their candidates for different central committee positions, which are circulated secretly or sometimes published in newspapers or leaked to social media. There already exists an appreciable literature on the origins, dynamics, durability, and management of factions in Botswana's political parties (Makgala 2006; Makgala & Botlhomilwe 2017, pp. 54–72; Makgala & MacGiollabui 2014, pp. 69–86; Maundeni & Seabo 2013, pp. 28–39; Masire 2006; Magang 2008; Nasha, 2014; Merafhe 2015; Poteete 2012).

Factions have become critical to central committee elections in the BDP, and it is not the calibre of a candidate that matters, but the strength of the faction that sponsors the candidate. According to Margaret Nasha, former speaker of parliament and a losing candidate for the secretary general position in 2005, BDP factions engage in aggressive recruitment of members, hold secret nocturnal meetings, raise funds, spy on each other, and plot against each other (Nasha 2014). Defections from one faction to another for personal advantage are quite common. 'Democrats [BDP members] tend to derive immeasurable pleasure in destroying each other and in the process pulling the party down the drain. Sad but true' (Nasha 2014, p. 105).

In the build-up to the 2009 central committee elections, the BDP was polarised into two major hostile factions. One faction, the so-called A-Team, had the full backing of President Ian Khama, while the rival Barathaphati (those who love the party), was headed by a BDP veteran, Daniel Kwelagobe. The latter faction swept the board at bitterly contested intraparty elections, reflecting a generalised discontent within the party towards Khama. However, as per tradition, the president of the party was not challenged and thus Khama retained the position. He quickly marginalised and nullified the newly elected central committee by filling many party committees with his loyalists (Makgala & MacGiollabui 2014). This was followed by Khama's persecution campaign of Barathaphati leaders, including Ntuane, who eventually defected from the BDP to form their own party, the Botswana Movement for Democracy (BMD).

THE 2014 GENERAL ELECTION

For the first time since Botswana gained independence in 1966 the BDP faced a real threat of losing power. Opposition parties (with the exception of the Botswana Congress Party (BCP)) had formed an alliance, the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC). The labour movement had played a critical role in this development, with the Botswana Federation of Public Sector Unions (BOFEPUSU), which represented close to 100,000 government employees, staging the longest strike in the history of the country's public service from mid-April to late June 2011. This had followed Khama's refusal to increase government workers' salaries by the 16% which BOFEPUSU was demanding (Makgala & Malila 2014). A large number of workers were dismissed from work as a result of the strike, which had become heavily politicised.

Opposition politicians exploited the situation and addressed BOFEPUSU rallies where Khama's government was severely criticised. Trade unionists and opposition politicians began to chant calls for regime change, much to the alarm of the BDP and the government (Makgala & Malila 2014). Most importantly, the militant BOFEPUSU leadership managed to influence and back the formation of the UDC, something opposition parties themselves had failed to achieve since independence. Moreover, BOFEPUSU, the American Embassy in Gaborone and a few other groups sponsored debates by parliamentary candidates on the privately-owned Gabz FM radio station. The BDP boycotted the debates, although many BDP activists felt it was unwise for the party to do so (Manual Workers Union 2016a). Historically, the BDP/government axis had marginalised the opposition by denying them access to state resources and had proved itself unwilling to provide a level playing field at election times (Molomo & Sebudubudu 2005; Magang 2008). BOFEPUSU radically changed this situation.

In addition, BOFEPUSU published a hit list of politicians, mostly from the BDP, whom the federation felt acted against the interests of the workers. Meanwhile, the country's biggest trade union, the Manual Workers Union, issued a lengthy and well-prepared document, *Two Years to Vision 2016 Yet Too Far Away!: A Quick Guide to Disturbing Developments in the Governance of Botswana*. This was distributed to voters to influence them to vote against the BDP. On its front page, the privately-owned *Mmegi* newspaper had a daily countdown to the elections, using a photograph of a ballot box with photographs of the three presidential candidates (BDP, UDC and BCP). The box had six issues of great concern to the voter written on its side: unemployment, land, services, corruption, education, and civil liberties.

The subsequent general elections, held on 24 October 2014, proved to be the most competitive ever. The BDP, which was used to easy victories, faced a tough

contest from the UDC. Eventually, the opposition parties secured 53% of the popular vote and the BDP's popular vote plummeted to 47%. It held onto power, however, through the FPTP arrangement, winning 37 out of 57 parliamentary seats. The UDC obtained 17 seats and the BCP 3 seats. It was this reversal of party fortunes that motivated Botsalo Ntuane to throw his hat into the ring for the position of secretary general during the 2015 central committee elections.

ENTER BOTSALO NTUANE

Ntuane cut his teeth as an activist of note in student politics at the University of Botswana in the early 1990s, where he helped make the then unpopular BDP more visible on campus. His industry was noticed by President Masire who co-opted him into the party leadership as a specially nominated member of the central committee. Not long thereafter, Ntuane was appointed executive secretary for the BDP, at which he excelled, and was subsequently nominated as a specially elected member of parliament by President Festus Mogae (1998–2008) following the 2004 general elections, which the BDP had won comfortably.

From early on as a parliamentarian, Ntuane was a maverick and non-conformist, while the BDP has always put a premium on conformity. Ntuane became an active member of the Barataphathi faction that defeated Khama's group during the 2009 central committee elections. When this faction broke away from the BDP to form the BMD, Ntuane served as the BMD's vice president and also became the leader of the opposition in parliament. However, in 2012 he defected back to the BDP. This proved to be a mistake, as he lost his Gaborone Bonnington South constituency to BMD's president, Ndaba Gaolathe, in the 2014 general elections.

After initially dithering, Ntuane announced in February 2015 that he would be competing for the position of secretary general of the BDP in the party election scheduled for early July 2015. Much against entrenched tradition, Ntuane declared that he would be contesting the election as an independent candidate, not representing any faction. Eschewing factions and going it alone was apparently based on his determination to become something of a unifier, prepared to work with any BDP member (Ntuane 2015b). The 2015 BDP central committee election was in fact notable for its range of independent candidates, competing mostly for the party chairmanship against Ian Khama's vice president, Mokgweetsi Masisi. These candidates were Tebelelo Seretse, Ndelu Seretse, Tshekedi Khama (Ian Khama's younger brother) and Biggie Butale. Ultimately, Ntuane competed for the secretary generalship position against Gaotlhaetse Matlhabaphiri, Ntuane's long time mentor and campaign manager, who unexpectedly abandoned Ntuane to contest against him.

Ntuane had over the years written insightful articles for local newspapers on various socio-economic and political issues. As a parliamentarian he visited various African countries as part of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) election observer missions. He wrote informatively on historical, socio-economic and political situations in Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and at one point reviewed the autobiography of the Zimbabwean opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai (Ntuane 2012). His growing influence led to him being described as ‘a consummate strategist and intellectual of note’ and that ‘all the three candidates for BDP Chairmanship (Ndelu Seretse, Tebelelo Seretse and Tshekedi Khama) want him on their respective lists for the position of Secretary General. For the first time in many years Ntuane feels he is back where he belongs – kingmaker’ (Mogapi 2015). Ntuane, however, decided to go it alone.

NTUANE’S ROADMAP

Ntuane’s lengthy manifesto, *BDP Reform Agenda Conversation: 22 Discussion Points* was published in two newspaper installments in May 2015. A manifesto of this nature was an unprecedented development in the BDP. Ntuane opened his manifesto by dismissing faction lobby lists as divisive and denying delegates the freedom to elect capable candidates ‘simply because they are on the “wrong” list’ (Ntuane 2015a). He also gave a brief background to previous discussions on reform in the BDP when the party faced an uncertain future after the Botswana National Front (BNF) won an unprecedented 13 out of 40 parliamentary seats in the 1994 general elections. Unlike in 2015, the previous reform discussions in the BDP in the 1990s were not the brainchild and project of a single candidate. Instead, South African political scientist Lawrence Schlemmer had been brought in as a consultant to reorganise the internal structures of the BDP.

Ntuane argued that ‘The world over, when parties are faced with existential threats to their prospects for growth, in the case of opposition, or in the instance of incumbents their grip on power, they engage in conversations around reforms’ (Ntuane 2015a). To support this contention, he gave an example of the Labour Party in Britain which had lost power to the Conservative Party in 1979. It remained in opposition for nearly two decades until it reformed itself in 1995 as New Labour, subsequently winning the general elections in 1997. Closer to home, Ntuane gave examples of the ruling South West African Peoples’ Organisation (SWAPO) in Namibia and the opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) in South Africa. Surprisingly, Ntuane did not balance his observation by indicating that in many other countries ruling parties went on to lose elections despite efforts at reform.

Ntuane believed that, while the controversial BDP primary elections may have had a negative impact on the party, as the losers allegedly did not support the winners, the youth, middle class and the unemployed were the most critical factors in voting against the BDP. Unemployment, particularly among the youth and graduates of tertiary institutions, had reached crisis levels in the country (Manual Workers Union 2016b). The unilateralist President Ian Khama also appeared hostile to the middle class while enthusiastically embracing rural folk and urban poor with populist and paternalistic programmes (Hamer 2016). However, Khama was openly hostile to unionised government workers, as evidenced by the 2011 strike. Ntuane argued that the BDP ought not marginalise the labour movement or other sections of the society, such as the private media and university students.

His 22 *Discussion Points* were divided into four distinct areas, namely party, government/economic development, electoral reforms and others. As for the party, Ntuane advocated for what he called a strong activist central committee. He also argued for the strengthening of the BDP's policy forum in order 'to vet and report to Central Committee all government Bills ahead of tabling before Parliament. Likewise in the case of public policy, ahead of any unveiling of schemes and programmes of government, the Policy Forum must accordingly advise Central Committee as the final political arbiter, for endorsement' (Ntuane 2015a).

Revival of regular party workshops and seminars throughout the country to strengthen political education in the party was also stressed. As far as Ntuane was concerned, this political education had to put more emphasis on the BDP and Botswana's founding values in the form of nationalism and the country's developmental trajectory. As if taking his cue from the ill-advised non-participation by the BDP in the radio debates building up to the 2014 elections, Ntuane worried that 'It is evident that pound for pound the opposition is outboxing us in public communication'. Hence, he advised the BDP to secure 'competent spokespersons who will make our voice heard by articulating policies and defending the organisation'.

The second instalment of Ntuane's 22 *Discussion Points* focussed on issues of governance or economic development. The argument was that through a strong activist central committee, the BDP 'must restore confidence and credibility in its government by robustly addressing increasingly damaging perceptions/allegations of corruption and abuse of public office' (Ntuane 2015b). Whereas for many years Botswana had been routinely described by Transparency International as the least corrupt country in Africa, at home there was growing concern that the ruling elites had become increasingly corrupt and had mismanaged national resources with impunity (Mogalakwe & Nyamnjoh 2017; Manual Workers Union 2014). A strong perception emerged that President Khama had turned a blind eye to corrupt senior government officials and to his cabinet ministers. Serious

claims of corruption on the part of Isaac Kgosi, the director general of the dreaded Directorate of Intelligence Services (DIS) appeared in privately-owned newspapers with disturbing frequency. While investigations were undertaken, there seemed to be no political will to prosecute the man who was said to be Khama's closest friend and confidant.

As indicated above, corruption was one of the main issues for the opposition during the elections. Ntuane thus asserted that 'To demonstrate our commitment to good governance and zero tolerance for corruption and abuse of public office, the long overdue law on declaration of assets and liabilities must be enacted. This action will also shield innocent public officers/politicians from often unfounded accusations of looting. In the eyes of the public, the BDP refuses to bring the law because the party is protecting looters' (Ntuane 2015b).

The creation of sustainable employment for young people produced by the education system was noted by Ntuane as critical. He wrote that the 'BCP had the best crafted political message of the preceding elections: the Bring Back Our Jobs idea spoke to every sincere citizen.... Bring Back Our Jobs is viable and must be pursued aggressively by government. The many jobs created by our natural resources in foreign countries must be brought back to ameliorate the situation of thousands of graduates produced by our education system'. As for the plight of the middle class, Ntuane was of the view that:

Yes, we have educated our people and developed a sizeable middle class but aspirational Batswana are growing resentful of being spectators when the economic cake appears to be enjoyed disproportionately by foreign Asians, white South Africans and even our black African brothers. The BDP must sponsor and drive an unapologetic citizen empowerment law that will facilitate participation of our own people in all sectors of the economy including major projects. For instance, an activist Central Committee could have instructed government to ensure that of the 25 billion budgeted for the ongoing Debswana Cut 8 [Diamond] Project, 50% of it be reserved for companies owned by Batswana. The same must apply for all major projects but with vigilance exercised to prevent a revolving door scenario whereby the same faces and names get empowered.

We must explore other ways of further empowering middle class Batswana who should be ambassadors of our educational policies, many having risen from humble beginnings to middle class status within a generation. We must recognise they assist the state by paying taxes, relieving the burden on social services by enrolling in medical aid and sending their children to private schools, among others. For

example, in the case of highly qualified Batswana middle class working overseas why not allow them dual citizenship instead of educating them for the exclusive benefit of the countries where they have opted to live?

(Ntuane 2015b)

To Ntuane it was not unreasonable 'to insist that all foreign business people bidding for government tenders should partner with Batswana on a shareholding basis stipulated by law. We must learn from bold countries like Malaysia, Namibia and others that have introduced stringent measures to alleviate poverty, create wealth and jobs for their people'.

He was also of the view that economic growth in Botswana could be stimulated by reviewing the Bank of Botswana's foreign exchange controls policy 'to limit repatriation of profits accrued by foreign companies working on government tenders. Why should a speculator fly into the country, bid for a government tender worth billions, win it, complete the project, collect his profit and be allowed to repatriate all of it?' he asked. 'Why can't 50% of the profits remain inland? A distinction must be made between genuine foreign investors who actually bring money into the country and speculators who arrive here just to bid for lucrative tenders' (Ntuane 2015b).

Ntuane observed that the BDP suffered a political backlash owing to unfinished mega government projects, while the culprits escaped scot free. Some of the major projects included upgrading of the national stadium in Gaborone, which was meant to capitalise on the hugely popular FIFA World Cup in neighbouring South Africa in 2010. Four years later the stadium was still not finished. Ntuane believed that 'an activist Central Committee must demand accountability and for heads to roll when wasteful expenditure occurs resulting in the nation being short changed'. He also advocated for introduction of a system of executive mayors in urban centres in order to enforce greater accountability and improved service delivery (Ntuane 2015b).

Furthermore, he called for introduction of an aspect of the proportional representation (PR) system in order 'to attain a more inclusive and broader representation of interest groups in the Legislature'. This was an issue Ntuane had raised even before he joined parliament. However, the argument had always been rebuffed by the BDP because the FPTP system benefitted it greatly, with the 2014 elections being a classic example. Again, the maverick Ntuane called for an introduction of political party funding by the state, something he had also advocated even before his days in parliament. He argued that as the majority party, the BDP would benefit the most from such an arrangement.

On electoral reforms we must live with the sober reality that BDP will not rule forever; as indeed no party does. However, my view is we can still retain office for two more terms (10 years) either on our own or in coalition. Should our tenure in power come to an end without having introduced key electoral reforms such as PR and party funding we will go the way of the dodo because the new rulers will have no incentive to oblige us on what we refused to extend to them over the years.

(Ntuane 2015b)

He warned that 'life in opposition for long ruling liberation/independence parties on this continent is traumatic. Once out of power if they don't go extinct like the dodo, they become pale shadows of their once mighty selves. Known examples are the likes of UNIP in Zambia, MPR in Zaire, Basotho National Party, Malawi Congress Party, KANU in Kenya to name but a few'.

On the campaign trail, Ntuane's team held a meeting in late June 2015 in the mining town of Selebi Phikwe. 'Attendants... said the reforms Ntuane is talking about in his campaigns are exactly what the doctor ordered for the party to survive' and that the 'delegates also pledged to support any chairman candidate who aligns to Ntuane's strategy' (Kelebeile 2015).

Although a few other contestants emerged to challenge Ntuane for the position of secretary general of the BDP, they did not have clear campaign issues, let alone a well-articulated manifesto. One commentator who supported Gaotlhaetse Matlhabaphiri against Ntuane, conceded that 'intellectual debates are so foreign to Matlhabaphiri. Actually, before I wrote this piece I surfed the internet in search of any writings from Matlhabaphiri. *Waii*, all I could find was reports of him being a champion for the male circumcision campaign' (Serite 2015). Ntuane's campaign for reforms was given a boost by another party activist, Bugalo Chilume, who wrote five or six lengthy articles in the *Botswana Guardian* strongly arguing for the need to reform the BDP (Chilume 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2015e).

Another contestant for the secretary general position, Olebeng Ngwakwena, tried to undermine Ntuane by personalising the issue instead of rebutting his manifesto, saying that 'I have never resigned nor abandoned the BDP to form an opposing political party or joined another political party. I have remained loyal and dedicated to the BDP in times of need and greatest challenges over the years. As such, I have been part of the BDP legacy for life' (*The Telegraph* 2015). In terms of actual issues and policies, he was limited to stating 'there is need to continuously improve and review all policies and laws in order to make them more relevant and effective. Going forward, there is a need for Citizen Empowerment Act, Freedom of Information Act just to mention a few' (*ibid.*).

CHAIRMANSHIP ASPIRANTS AND BIGGIE BUTALE'S
100 POINT REFORM AGENDA FOR BDP

The crowded contest for party chairmanship was characterised by a lack of issues raised by the candidates, some of whom merely levelled accusations of favouritism against the party leadership. Ian Khama's Vice President, Mokgweetsi Masisi, whose name was initially not included, would later enter the competition against Ndelu Seretse, Tebelelo Seretse, Tshekedi Khama, Biggie Butale, Dithapelo Tshotego, Seteng Motalaote and Moemedi Dijeng. 'The charges and counter-charges are flying fast and thick as the race for BDP chairmanship is heating up and candidates are accusing the party leadership of employing dirty tricks in favour of other candidates' (Ontebetse 2015). The candidate alleged to be unfairly backed by the party leadership was the well-resourced Masisi, with claims that the elections were being rigged in his favour (Kavahematui 2015). It was also observed that 'Some political commentators see the congress as singularly crucial because it will make or break Masisi's ambitions. Masisi, who is being accused of namedropping on his campaign trail, told this publication last week that he entered the chairmanship race with his eye on the ultimate prize – the country's presidency' (ibid.). Traditionally, the BDP chairmanship was held by the vice president of the country, and the party has no provision for the position of vice president.

Biggie Butale, parliamentarian for Tati West, was the only aspirant (other than Botsalo Ntuane) who produced a written manifesto to discuss actual policies. Despite its ambitious title, the *100 Point Reform Agenda for BDP*, Butale's manifesto was quite modest and not as far-reaching and ambitious as Ntuane's. The platform, which he argued he would implement in the first 100 days in office if elected, received miniscule media attention and had no positive impact on his campaign (he would suffer a heavy defeat at the hands of Masisi during the election). For that reason we will not dwell much on Butale's manifesto, except to point out that it was clearly in response to the favourable reception that Ntaune's issues-based programme enjoyed. For the first time, there was a degree of competition around policy-based platforms within the BDP. With regard to Butale, Mosikare (2015) noted that 'Some of the reforms he intends to introduce are the introduction of indigenous languages in schools and indigenous radio and television stations'. Advocacy for the country's indigenous or ethnic 'minority' languages through the school system and community radio stations had been strongly opposed by the BDP leadership, on the grounds that it would somehow promote tribal bigotry in the country. The BCP, on the other hand, strongly advocated the promotion of the marginalised indigenous languages, while Ntuane (2015) condemned BCP's advocacy as tribalism in his manifesto and other fora. Although there were

allegations of tribalism in the campaign trail, whereby some delegates were purportedly advised not to vote for a Kalanga (Butale's ethnic group), this does not seem to have been a factor given that Ntuane is also of Kalanga stock and won handsomely.

Butale, who doubled as a church minister, noted that 'the BDP government needs to set up a leadership and good governance centre of excellence that will service the country and the rest of the continent' (Mosikare 2015). He concluded his manifesto with a passage from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*:

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat;
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.

However, it should be pointed out that Butale's manifesto appeared only in late June, just a week or so before the election in Mmadinare.

Just like Ntuane, other contestants (including Masisi) were reported to have avoided the tradition of faction lobby lists. However, as election day approached there were media reports that 'While a public impression has been created including selling it to sympathetic media houses that vice president Mokgweetsi Masisi does not have a campaign lobby list, it has since emerged that behind the scenes that list exists and it has widely been circulated to key delegates that will be attending the Botswana Democratic Party Congress in Mmadinare' (*Sunday Standard* 2015). It seems likely that the lack of a manifesto forced Masisi to resort to the tried and tested custom of faction lobby lists.

REJECTION OF NTUANE AND HIS REFORM AGENDA

There was informed pessimism about the applicability and potential success of Ntuane's proposed reforms even before the central committee elections in Mmadinare. Possibly the sharpest and most telling was by *Sunday Standard's* deputy editor, Spencer Mogapi, who doubted whether the ultra-conservative and proud BDP hierarchy had the stomach for Ntuane's suggested reforms. Mogapi noted that:

In his treatise – perhaps out of sheer optimism – Ntuane falls prey to exaggerating the BDP's eagerness to reform. Quite rightly he posits

that 'only an open, critical and honest conversation can usher changes that will constitute a Reform Agenda for retaining power in the next polls'. But does the BDP current posture show any appetite for such a far-reaching conversation? Existing signals are not so encouraging. Until recently, the BDP chief rainmaker, President Ian Khama, even refused to accept that the party had suffered any major setback at the polls. President Khama took unkindly to those BDP members who even vaguely made emphasis of popular vote over constituency margins. That on its own is telling; there is a deep reluctance to even start accepting that there are problems. And how do reforms happen when those at the helm do not accept that there is anything wrong in the first instance?

(Mogapi 2015)

Mogapi was disappointed by what he considered to be Ntuane's deliberate avoidance of mentioning that the party had become a 'captured agency' under the current central committee, which he felt was too elitist and materialistic. Mogapi also argued that the current leadership was detached from the rural poor who had for decades been the bedrock of the party's support and electoral success. 'Until the party is rescued from this cartel, even the mouth-watering plethora of reforms suggested by Ntuane will at best seem cosmetic' (Mogapi 2015). He was also of the opinion that Ntuane glossed over the issue of elite corruption. Ntuane did in fact emphasise the need to tackle real and putative corruption, and that may have greatly displeased those in control of the BDP and the state resources that enabled self-enrichment and patronage. Before the 2014 elections, a BDP parliamentarian, Robert Masitara, had waged a spirited campaign against corruption in government-owned enterprises and was rebuffed for 'talking too much' by some elements in the BDP (Manual Workers Union 2014). Masitara was eventually marginalised and lost his Bonnington North constituency in Gaborone to the UDC President in the 2014 elections.

Mogapi's take was that the rural poor had been short-changed by tenderpreneurs in the BDP leadership, as were the party's intellectuals. 'Over the last few years the BDP has become a party of personalities where strongmen outshine institutions. As a result, intellectual capital is one commodity that has significantly lost its premium in the BDP under President Khama. This casts people like Ntuane into a specter of being endangered species. They exist somewhere in the periphery' (Mogapi 2015). The latter point is particularly critical, given what became of Ntuane's reform agenda. Indeed, Mogapi noted presciently that:

By insisting that the coming Congress should be premised on ideas, Ntuane might, not for the first time, be unwittingly placing him[self]

at odds with the strongmen that run the party today. Ntuane says 'the party must lead government and not be subordinate as is the case presently'. Is this a possibility under the current leadership? Is this not a kind of thinking we have heard all over before that once led to some people like Ntuane bolting out of the BDP to form the BMD?

(Mogapi 2015)

In fact, Ntuane's manifesto ideas were not adopted because they were brought forth and promoted by an individual, rather than a faction or a group within the party. Fears clearly emerged that adopting his ideas might overshadow and undermine the position of the party chairman and vice president of the country (i.e. Masisi) who was readying himself to become president by April 2018. This may also explain the bad blood that seemed to exist between the secretary general and the chairman, and the marginalisation of the former. By introducing ideas into the intraparty competition, Ntuane unwittingly threatened to derail the planned smooth transition from Khama to Masisi, and therefore had to be stopped by the BDP leadership. Consequently, there were reports that 'The party fired some of its secretariat staff members, which observers said were given the boot because they were pro-Botsalo Ntuane's reforms' (Dube 2016a). It also appears that both Masisi and Khama had personal antipathy towards Ntuane and were not ready to bury the hatchet because of the key role he played in the split that conceived the BMD in 2010.

However, unlike Masisi, Ian Khama did not display his anti-Ntuane attitude publicly. The obviously deteriorating relationship between Masisi and Ntuane made the adoption and implementation of the reform agenda impossible as personality-driven politics triumphed. This saw the party chairman increasingly marginalising Ntuane, particularly in media briefings where the BDP welcomed defectors from the opposition. When the BCP finally decided to join the UDC, some of its members, who were against the decision, became disgruntled and Masisi personally led their recruitment into the BDP. When these were paraded before the media, Masisi hogged the limelight with Ntuane cutting a lonely figure. His role as secretary general was increasingly performed by a junior party official, further marginalising Ntuane. When asked about this state of affairs Ntuane diplomatically, but unconvincingly, claimed that all was well between him and Masisi. Nevertheless, the rift between the two BDP politicians became irreparable and their lack of cooperation undermined the running of party business. Reported efforts by Ian Khama for conciliation and cooperation, whether genuine or not, proved futile.

In late 2016, the country's constitution was amended to raise the number of specially elected members of parliament (handpicked by the president) from

four to six. Some BDP MPs strongly argued for Ntuane's inclusion, since as their party's secretary general he would also become part of government and possibly influence the implementation of his 'activist central committee' idea. However, under pressure from President Khama, he lost the vote to another BDP member, in fact a defector from the BNF. This development seemed to have sealed his fate in terms of progression in the party and government.

For the political observer Anthony Morima (in an interview with journalist Chakalisa Dube), rivalries and jostling for positions in the post-Khama era might have worked against Ntuane: 'We know that he (Ntuane) has strong political ambitions and there is talk that some within the party leadership, particularly those who are reportedly aligned to the Vice President and party chairperson Mokgweetsi Masisi, fear that if his (Ntuane) reforms are a success he may turn into a star post the Khama era' (Dube 2016b). This lends credence to the conclusion that had the 22 *Discussion Points* been a group or factional platform it would not have been so blatantly and brutally ignored.

RETURN TO ISSUELESS AND FACTION-RIDDLED CENTRAL COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

The build-up to the July 2017 central committee election in Tonota was a return to the quintessential faction fighting of the BDP, with issues or ideas playing no role whatsoever. The contest was between Masisi's faction and another led by cabinet minister Nonofho Molefhi. The two factions called themselves *Basisibetsi* and *Banonofhi* to reflect the names of their commanders-in-chief, Masisi and Molefhi respectively (Mmegi 2017). Initial media reports indicated that Molefhi, who was not campaigning on any platform or noticeable ideas, was surging ahead of Masisi in the contest for chairmanship of the party. This particular central committee election was critical because it was linked to the succession to the presidency. Ian Khama's term was ending on 31 March 2018 with the inauguration of his successor scheduled for the following day, 1 April 2018. Masisi was reported to have exploited his incumbency as vice president to compete against Molefhi. Entrepreneurs, whose businesses are dependent on government projects, fund the ruling party and its senior office holders; supporting rivals could face a backlash of lost business. Molefhi's supporters subsequently complained that 'Indian businessmen hide when they see Molefhi' (Lute 2017). Kesitegile Gobotswang (2017), BCP vice president, described the BDP funding by some sections of the Indian business community as 'The Guptarisation of the BDP' after the Indian Gupta family's infamous influence of top South African government and business personalities during the presidency of Jacob Zuma (Myburgh 2017). A University of Botswana-based political critic, Kenneth Dipholo (2015), asserted that 'The BDP is a dyed-in-the-wool mafia organization'.

The 2017 campaign was expensive and Molefhi's faction could not match Masisi's outfit financially, as indicated by a headline in the *WeekendPost* (2017) reading 'Now Molefhi Needs Money'. This only exacerbated the bad blood between the two factions:

The race for the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) chairmanship position is said to be getting uglier each passing day as the two camps are jostling for votes and financiers. The race has pitted the incumbent Vice President Mokgweetsi Masisi and Minister of Infrastructure and Housing Development Nonofho Molefhi. Recently there was scuffle at the Francistown region elections which, according to those who witnessed the events, resulted with members supporting Molefhi's faction beating Masisi's supporters who reported the matter to the police. Masisi, who is alleged to be close to the Director of Directorate of Intelligence Security Services (DISS) Isaac Kgosi, is said to be using the connection to spy on Molefhi. In an interview recently, an MP belonging to Molefhi's camp revealed in confidence that the DISS are tailing their candidate. 'We know that they are now using security agents to spy on our camp and this will not deter us', said the outspoken MP who preferred anonymity. He said one of the reasons that Molefhi and some of his lobby group members are under surveillance is to establish who their financiers are. It was recently revealed that Masisi has the financial backing of the Asian community who have already donated more than P10 million to him. The MP said they have also advised Molefhi to resign from cabinet as they might start sending him to international assignments as way of derailing his campaign.

(Mmeso 2017)

The campaign did, however, have some interesting twists and turns. Ntuane was competing to retain his position as secretary general, but this time he had no discussion points for reform nor any political platform. Like the other candidates he ran an issueless campaign, again standing as an independent after briefly considering joining Molefhi's faction. 'Apparently Ntuane assessed the people that support his man for the chairpersonship of the party, minister Nonofho Molefhi, and came to the conclusion that most are losers', alleged *Mmegi* journalist Tsaona Basimanebotlhe (2017). She continued, 'Some of Molefhi's supporters include the vocal Tebelelo Seretse, assistant minister Biggie Butale and Dikgakgamatso Seretse. The trio stood for the chairpersonship in Mmadinare three years ago and were humiliated by Vice President Masisi. They still have a bone to grind against Masisi and it is believed that Ntuane felt that with the terrible losers in the slate, Molefhi's team is "very weak".'

Veteran factionalist Jacob Nkate joined Masisi's slate as secretary general aspirant, following his stint as Botswana's ambassador to Japan. An interesting twist came when Nkate failed to keep his real motives to himself and declared that he intended to challenge Masisi for the presidency of the BDP in the 2019 central committee election. This careless disclosure led to Masisi instantly dropping him from his list. Traditionally, in the BDP an open expression of ambition for the presidency leads to marginalisation (Makgala 2006). Masisi then replaced Nkate with Mpho Balopi for secretary general, a position he had held before being replaced by Ntuane in 2015. Balopi had become infamous for saying 'it's our turn to eat' when some concerned citizen enquired as to why government tenders were monopolised by BDP-linked businesspeople. This phrase had gained widespread notoriety in Kenya, and indicated pervasive and systemic corruption (Wrong 2014).

Ntuane and Nkate thus became independent candidates without manifestos. It was not long before Ntuane tried preaching unity and peace between Masisi and Molefhe by offering to step down as secretary general and pave the way for Molefhe to succeed him, and thus allow Masisi free passage to the chairmanship. Ntuane's gesture was an exercise in futility as Molefhe focussed only on the chairmanship and nothing less. Although media projections indicated that Ntuane would have a fairly easy victory in Tonota, this was not the case as Masisi and the rest of his faction won easily. As indicated above, the historic BDP presidential election in April 2019 was totally devoid of any articulation of new ideas through manifestos or any other medium. In fact, Masisi's speech was so unoriginal that part of it was plagiarised from a speech once given by Barack Obama, something for which Masisi later apologised.

THE 2019 GENERAL ELECTION

After becoming president in April 2018 Masisi did away with a few of Ian Khama's unpopular programmes, policies and repressive measures, and also started a strong rhetoric against the corruption said to have taken root during Khama's presidency (2008–2018). Masisi also dismissed and ordered the dramatic arrest of the feared DIS director general, Isaac Kgosi, much to the delight and satisfaction of many citizens. It was also claimed that Masisi had reneged on a condition for accepting the vice presidency, that on becoming president he would appoint as his deputy Khama's younger brother and cabinet minister, Tshekedi Khama, ostensibly to perpetuate the Khama's stranglehold on the country's political leadership. These developments brought a sharp rift and bitter public animosity between Khama and Masisi with the former quitting the BDP in May 2019 to campaign for the opposition, and also helped form Botswana Patriotic Front (BFP). The latter drew its support from Khama's tribal territory of Central District

where he is the chief. These developments made some in the private media and independent observers conclude that the 2019 general elections were for the UDC to lose. The UDC's election manifesto was also said to be the most appealing of the main parties.

Nevertheless, the landscape was changing. Khama's dogged determination to undermine and topple Masisi's government, sometimes with the assistance of foreign power brokers or 'mercenaries', coupled with influential international media led to widespread public hostility towards Khama and sympathy for Masisi. Furthermore, Masisi's reforms – his consultative approach, salary increase for members of the armed forces, promise to reinstate some of the medical workers dismissed during BOFEPUSU's 2011 strike, as well as increasing salaries and improving service conditions for lowly-paid government workers just before the elections – endeared him to the trade unions and the affected workers

By contrast, UDC President Duma Boko's ill-advised marginalisation of BOFEPUSU from the UDC worked against the party. He also made a grave strategic error when he defied some party activists and embraced the now loathed Ian Khama, and Isaac Kgosi whom he had previously threatened to arrest for massive corruption and abuse of human rights, if the UDC won state power. This included moving a futile motion of no confidence against Masisi in Parliament, believed to be sponsored by Khama. However, at the time it was not apparent that embracing Khama and having him informally in the UDC campaign trail would backfire. In fact, relentless defections from BDP to BPF and huge crowds which Khama's rallies attracted seemed to make Masisi panic. In late August he openly appealed for Khama to return to the BDP saying that he was loved there while the UDC was merely using him (Mokwena 2019).

Moreover, Boko's crass arrogance, disparaging of opponents (including Masisi) during the country's first televised presidential debate leading to the elections got the better of him and turned many against his party in support of Masisi's BDP. Furthermore, his much-publicised association with international financiers (portrayed by the BDP and media as a mafia whose only interest was siphoning off the country's natural resources) led to a loss of confidence and respect in Boko by some voters. However, to be fair to Boko, the refusal by the BDP government to introduce state funding for political parties would inevitably tempt the opposition to find financial support from any international operator. This concern was also noted by SADC election observers for the 23 October 2019 elections, as compromising Botswana's national sovereignty and security (SADC 2019).

However, Boko's miscalculations and Masisi's popularity led to the BDP retaining power by winning 38 of the 57 parliamentary seats, mostly in the southern part of the country where the UDC had made significant gains in the

2014 elections. UDC won only 15 seats, BFP managed just three while the Alliance for Progressives (BMD's splinter party) salvaged just one seat. The BDP had some 53% of the popular vote while the combined opposition received 47% with the UDC registering 36%.

CONCLUSION

The fact that none of Ntuane's recommendations were either adopted or implemented was not only a blow to him but also an affront to the many BDP members or delegates who voted for him, convinced by the ideas he had sold to them during the campaign trail. However, eschewing factions, understandably because of their long history of mutual hostility and instability in the party, seems with hindsight to have been a strategic blunder. Ntuane appears to have unwittingly crossed some influential figures within the BDP through his clarion call against elite corruption. His advocacy of an activist central committee had the potential to disrupt entrenched patronage networks that served sectarian and personal interests. An issues-based campaign as proposed by Ntuane was a challenge to those incumbents who profited from the system and who had no wish for new policies that might threaten this cosy arrangement.

The eschewal of factions could in the future lead to many individuals competing for different central committee positions, each having his or her own manifesto and all no doubt based on populist issues such as anti-corruption, employment creation, etc. The experience of Ntuane showed that this would not be tolerated by the BDP leadership. Ntuane's otherwise well-meaning blueprint demonstrated the clear limitations to Africa's 'senior democracy' and revealed that factional personality-driven politics continues to dominate the party culture of the BDP. Rather than address actual issues, the BDP seems content to be mired in factional activities, which in turn perpetuates the system of patronage and even corruption for those in control. The resistance to a manifesto that putatively challenged this state of affairs displayed the entrenched, if not complacent nature of the BDP after fifty years of governing Botswana.

The BDP's triumph in the 2019 elections was in no small measure a result of poor judgement and strategic blunders by Duma Boko of the UDC.

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– OPINION –

THE WORLD ROBERT MUGABE LEFT BEHIND

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Being in Harare, Zimbabwe, as the news came through that Robert Mugabe had died, was in many ways a welcome and anti-climactic experience. If that was my personal sense – as a Commonwealth official who supervised the observation of the independence elections from January to March 1980 when he came to power, and who has visited Zimbabwe almost 70 times since – it seemed also to be the mood of the city. Harare remained quiet. The news came at night, too late for the newspapers that had already gone to press. Not everyone has wi-fi access, many of those who do face constant electricity cuts and cannot recharge their cell phones or computers, so the news spread to a large extent by word of mouth. If there was one intangible sense that hung in the air, it was a sense that this was about time. Mugabe had hung around too long. And even though he had been ousted from power in 2017, his shadow had clung to Zimbabwe.

Yet the shadow of what had been a liberation leader did not fade away in Zimbabwe but in a hospital bed in Singapore, where he had been receiving treatment for some months. Years of visiting specialist facilities there and receiving, according to unsubstantiated reports, experimental treatments involving total blood transfusions, had probably exhausted his body as much as had age. But it is the securitised and militarised political party he headed that still runs Zimbabwe today; so the death of Mugabe, no matter how anti-climactic, is not a relief for citizens immersed in economic degradation and who are beaten and shot if they protest a little too loudly.

In the end it was his own military who finally turned against him – although Harare, ever a rumour mill, spread the account that it was originally a police coup. Further, that the military intervention was a counter-coup that decided finally to take power for itself with a civilian head in Emerson Mnangagwa, and an enforcer not quite behind the scenes in General Constantino Chiwenga. Chiwenga is in fact very much on the scene as a powerful vice president to Mnangagwa.

The whole 'transformation' of Zimbabwe was meant to be confirmed and validated in the 2018 elections. Observer groups were invited from Europe, the US, and the Commonwealth. Though there had been many irregularities, particularly in the voters' roll, these groups were probably on the verge of accepting the results, grudgingly and conditionally, as at least credible.

But even before the results were fully announced, military forces attacked protesters outside the electoral commission, causing fatalities before the astonished eyes of observers and foreign journalists alike. The next day, riot police with tear gas launchers tried to storm the hotel where many of the same observers and journalists were staying – with the cameras of the journalists broadcasting it all in real time. I myself was in the midst of this. The astonishing ineptitude spoke volumes about an unreformed and brazenly securitised, if divided, government. Even then it was thought that this was the hand of Chiwenga, unable or unwilling to imagine what was required for the new Mnangagwa doctrine of openness. As a result, no observer group validated the elections. President Mnangagwa's plea that a new Zimbabwe was 'open for business' resulted in a tiny trickle, not the hoped-for flood of new investment.

At the time of writing in September 2019 (a little more than a year after those elections) the upshot is an official inflation rate of 176%, second in the world only to Venezuela's; but the real rate is more likely in the region of 800%. A new Zimbabwean dollar, introduced in June 2019, is now at 7.6 to US\$1 on the official exchange, but between 10 to 15 to US\$1 on the black market. Its value is likely to decline further as Zimbabwe faces an increasingly huge imports bill. This is the result of local productivity having stalled dramatically and being unable to regenerate itself in the face of shortages of materials and electricity outages of up to 18 hours a day. Water is also subject to long cuts each day. The health sector is near collapse with a grave shortage of medicines and strikes by medical personnel, all amidst the spectacle of oligarchs journeying overseas for treatment – Mugabe having been the prime exemplar. Children whose families cannot afford school fees simply do not go to school. Roads are unpaved, and cars wait in long queues for petrol. But the fundamental difficulty for the future of any economic uplift is the country's huge external debt. Since Mugabe's farm invasions from 2000 onwards, and the consequent crushing of an agricultural export sector, Zimbabwe has existed on borrowed monies, and now no one – not even the Chinese – wishes to continue lending.

The Zimbabwean debt is probably about US\$30 billion, though even the Zimbabwean government may be unsure about that as borrowing by different agencies and ministries seems to have been uncoordinated. The same applies to the terms and conditions of different elements of that debt. One figure does seem to be certain, that US\$9 billion is due for repayment in the very near future.

Repayment appears to be impossible at this moment, and even restructuring or rolling over the debt seems extremely difficult without some form of IMF approval, as the debt is owed to multilateral lending agencies such as the IMF, the African Development Bank, and also to the Paris Club and G7 nations. A preliminary IMF programme, designed to achieve some form of fiscal responsibility, prudence and transparency, may or may not be satisfactorily achieved. Even if it is, a more substantive IMF programme to follow may be even more difficult to achieve, but would be essential for any appreciable liquidity to flow into the country. The outlook of the Minister of Finance, Mthuli Ncube, is to satisfy the IMF so he can borrow more in order to repay what is already owed to those from whom the country had previously borrowed. There is no substantial or substantive discussion on how to make the economy productive and able to earn income in its own right. The opposition seems not to have any substantive economic programme of its own, nor any details as to what any such programme might entail. Both government and opposition talk generalities and forms of ungrounded hopefulness.

The opposition MDC party is itself in a divided and largely parlous condition. Its leader, Nelson Chamisa, a former student firebrand, performed very well in the 2018 presidential elections almost forcing Mnangagwa into a run-off (the victor required 50% plus 1 of the votes cast, so Chamisa almost prevented Mnangagwa from achieving this, but did not necessarily garner enough votes himself to be assured of victory in a run-off). But his party trailed the government by a wide margin in the parliamentary polls. It is clear that the electorate saw Chamisa as a more attractive, and honest, figure than his party – which, when not divided, had quickly learned the methodologies of corruption and self-service. Chamisa has several rivals for his leadership role, many watching in case he stumbles. While suggesting he is open to dialogue, Mnangagwa is assiduously working towards forcing Chamisa to stumble.

However, the governing Zanu-PF also has divisions within. Chief among these seems to be the radical differences between Mnangagwa and the man who instigated the coup to protect him, his own now vice president, General Constantino Chiwenga. The heavy-handed suppression of dissent in the streets is attributed by many in the Harare rumour mill to Chiwenga, a man portrayed as unwilling or unable to countenance change except within the parameters of a fierce discipline which he seeks to enforce. That sense of discipline has the nation falling into line like good soldiers. But Chiwenga is also now unwell. His long periods at overseas medical facilities (India and China) suggest, in Mugabe fashion, a trek for cure or extension that cannot be achieved in the decayed medical structures at home.

Finance Minister Ncube seeks to instill fiscal discipline that might placate if not satisfy the IMF. This, however, has the general population, especially those already poor, bearing the brunt of austerity. Equipped public hospitals are now a rarity. The oligarchs, many enriched by ill-gotten gains, are not being asked to take – in fiscal parlance – a ‘haircut’, a trimming of their resources for the public good. Those who seized diamond fields when alluvial deposits were found, have conspicuously not paid taxes on their diamond incomes into the national treasury. There is no tax on non-productive second (or third) properties above a designated threshold value, or on exorbitantly purchased first properties, on fourth and fifth cars and the like.

Away from the mansions, everyday life is thinner; this includes even newspapers like the government newspaper, *The Herald*. The commemorative issues rushed into print a day after Mugabe’s death were slender. The explosion in electronic media has limited effect because wi-fi and electricity are unreliable.

Those most literate, the graduates of 17 public universities and a growing number of private universities, have little by way of reliable employment and career prospects.

Against all this, the neighbouring SADC countries offer a limited if clear solidarity, basically premised on the notion that the country must be given a chance. This is held up in contradistinction to much Western reluctance to conclude the process of abandoning sanctions, and to encourage re-engagement and, above all, re-investment. A bankrupt Zimbabwe does little to help SADC in what was meant to be a zone of economic and integrated cooperation. The question is whether, if that chance is accorded, there is the operational policy to achieve anything.

The legacy of Mugabe

What then is the legacy of Mugabe? Away from the close-quarter consequences of unplanned policy, described above, the general rubric of nationalism which has at its core ownership of land continues to echo in many parts of Africa, South Africa included. The image of the liberator-hero might have become in some ways a mere trope, but it is a powerful and resonant one. The Mugabe who is dead will carry forward this resonance in many ways more effectively than the sickly Mugabe who was barely alive.

In Zimbabwe itself, the death of Mugabe is like welcome rain to the Zanu-PF of Mnangagwa. After a decent interval of public mourning, his government will have a target of blame in a man who cannot answer back and who cannot reward any allies or defenders. A strange twin-track allocation of blame outwards (the West, its sanctions, its uncooperative refusal to invest vast sums in a decayed

economy) and blame inwards (the father who lost touch) will help cloak Finance Minister Ncube's increasing measures of austerity as he labours to convince the IMF – and through the IMF, the West and China – to turn on some financial taps. It will never be enough. The eventual flow of liquidity will not restore an economy that needs restructuring, and the development from scratch of measurable and coordinated national productivity. That a country became so economically ruined is an inescapable and haunting background shadow to all the tropes of heroism. The legacy of Mugabe is not necessarily an indictment of the concepts behind his policies. It is a total indictment that says that if planning, operational capacity, and the marriage of macro and micro economic benefit are missing, any policy of nationalism and heroism becomes dissolute.

The next elections

There will be no national elections until 2023, and neither major party is contemplating them at this moment. Political speculation is built around a 'national dialogue', and both parties are sparring over how to command the terms and conditions of such a dialogue. Civil society and church groups ponder aloud the need to include the army in such a dialogue; but that effectively recognises the need for a constitutional space for the army and formalises the sense of a securocratic state.

But, come 2023, the elections will be fought around whether or not Zanu-PF has been successful in stabilising the economy. In a sense, much hangs on the Minister of Finance and whether he can satisfy the international lending community. No faction in either party has an alternative financial plan or platform. Both parties will probably remain divided, although health and mortality, as with the death of Mugabe himself, could change the complexion of the ruling party. In a very real sense, the 2018 elections may have been the last fought by the 'liberation' generation. Whether Nelson Chamisa can make the attractions of youthful leadership more obvious is different question.

The key feature of the 2018 elections was the presence of several observer groups, even though they were adversely impressed by the rough handling they witnessed and received. The US, European and Commonwealth groups cannot be disinvited in 2023. The state of the economy will be a real issue. The shadow of Mugabe having been lifted may mean a different psychological backdrop. It may simply mean a lack of ruling direction, as Mugabe's residual nationalism fades into a more-or-less naked oligarchic monopoly of assets. Angola becomes the template where rhetoric and the purging of old foes simply means the continuation of sharp cleavages in economic life.

Perhaps the observer groups will bring greater technological capacity – including the capacity to interrogate possible algorithmic variations or fluctuations in the counting process. Or both the elections and the observation may be more of the same. The question is whether Zimbabweans are tired of voting that leads to no change, or whether they are tired of a Zanu-PF government that has, not once, but twice delivered the country into terrible economic straits. However, towards the end of 2019 talk of elections is curiously wearisome and seemingly out of place in Zimbabwean discourse. The sad truth is that there has been no progress, except downwards, since the 2018 elections.

REVIEWS

How to Rig an Election by Nic Cheeseman and Brian Klaas, Yale University Press, London & New Haven, 2018, 310 pp.

Certain ways of rigging elections are as old as democracy itself and indeed continue to affect ballots in the historic cradles of republican politics. For instance, gerrymandering, the manipulation of electoral boundaries, is still routine in the United States. Nic Cheeseman and Brian Klaas suggest that in Africa, politically-biased electoral district delimitations have been especially decisive in affecting electoral outcomes in Kenya, Malawi and Zambia. In Zimbabwe, reconfiguration of constituencies in 2008 was intended to favour the incumbent administration but nonetheless failed to prevent the opposition from obtaining a majority in the parliamentary contest.

Other ways incumbent administrations try to win elections even before campaigning starts is through ensuring that the wrong kinds of voters find it difficult or impossible to register. Again, the authors suggest that this practice is not confined to newer 'counterfeit' democracies, and they cite recent American evidence to underline the point. A cruder and more obvious tactic is to prevent opposition candidates from registering, as in the Rajaonarivelo case in Madagascar in 2006. In general, though, as election management becomes more sophisticated and professional, determined riggers will do most of the necessary work well in advance.

Treating voters at rallies is another classic tactic, today used mostly in Africa, where, the authors maintain, 67% of elections between 2012 and 2016 featured gift-giving (Cheeseman & Klaas 2018, p. 65). It is inefficient, though most effective when systematic clientelism is undertaken by members of parliament between elections. Violence directed at rival parties and their supporters was evident in 38% of recent African polls (p. 96) but when this happens during the campaigning season it can discredit victors among observer groups. As Cheeseman and Klaas note, the 'holy grail' sought by more sophisticated riggers is to fix an election *and* have it endorsed by reputable external assessors (p. 195). Better to confine the violence to between elections. Indeed, memories of decades-old exemplary violence can be refreshed with more recent low-key bullying and threatening rhetoric, preferably delivered in languages foreigners are unlikely to understand.

Using social media and big data profiling to deliver individually tailored 'fake news' articles might sway voters unfairly, as recent evidence from the United States has indicated. Such efforts may have shaped the recent Kenyan contests

in 2013 and 2017 (p. 133), though large-scale lying is not normally perceived as a rigging tactic because it is common enough in many elections normally considered to be free and fair.

Cheeseman and Klaas raise the possibility of hackers altering computerised voter rolls, voting machines and results tabulation, but cite no evidence of this being done successfully. Rigging on election day and during the count, they argue, is the last resort for amateurs or dictators who simply don't care about appearances, as in the case of Paul Kagame whose re-election in 2017 was with an implausible 99% of the vote. Kagame is one of those leaders who either because of their strategic importance, or as in his case, developmental efficiency, receive a 'free pass' from Northern European allies who are generally rather more fussy about democratic protocols. Cheeseman and Klaas include a useful chapter about why even reputable monitors 'pull their punch' as in the case of Uganda in 2016 (p. 192). Western monitors have rejected the outcomes of only a fifth of elections, a much smaller proportion than the real share of rigged contests.

Except for would-be dictators, for whom this is surely a must-have guide, Cheeseman and Klaas's volume is a disheartening read. This is especially the case because their recommendations on how to stall or prevent rigging are quite perfunctory and on the whole unsupported by the vivid anecdotes that make their litany of misbehaviour so enthralling. The statistics that appear in the tables at the end appear to confirm a global setting in which 'the world is becoming less democratic' (p. 1) and more 'elections are being rigged' (p. 3).

How valid are these generalisations with respect to Africa? Is the trend pointing in the direction of democratic recession? The statistical evidence Cheeseman and Klaas cite is unclear about long term trends, and the arguments about whether post-1990 democracies are generally in recession is contested. Levitsky and Way, for example, have argued that the baseline number of democracies from the mid-1990s is too often inflated by the inclusion of what Cheeseman and Klaas would call dominant and competitive authoritarian regimes. If we confine the analysis of trends to the record of more authentic new electoral polities the record is more ambiguous, with few cases of democratic breakdown (Levitsky & Way 2015). The evidence emerging from some of the most recent African electoral contests is not quite as discouraging as the degenerate procedures depicted in this study by Cheeseman and Klaas. The crudest and most recent example of rigging in the SADC region, the outcome of the presidential and parliamentary elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was clumsy and blatant because that was the only way it could be fixed, after what had been by most accounts a fairly well-conducted contest.

These elections (in the DRC) were held on 30 December 2018. This was after extensive delays which did enable the Commission to undertake what seems to

have been a genuine and effective effort to create a new voters' roll. Polling station results were posted and a parallel vote tabulation (PVT) was conducted by the Catholic Episcopal Commission. Pre-election opinion polling was undertaken. There were widespread discrepancies between polling station results collected by the 29 000 observers and tallies posted at the Local Centres for the Compilation of Results. The overall results were announced on 10 January 2019, awarding victory to Felix Tshisekedi, one of the two opposition coalitions' candidates. The electoral commission did not release disaggregated results at any stage. Results indicated an unlikely difference between parliamentary and presidential outcomes. The presidential outcome contradicted earlier opinion polling and the PVT, both of which favoured a win with a big majority by Martin Fayulu. The coalition that supported the incumbent president won the largest share of national assembly seats despite their candidate running third in the presidential contest. The Constitutional Court upheld the result without supplying any kind of reasoning based on forensic analysis. The PVT findings correlated with the spreadsheet of the Electoral Commission's electronically fed results from local centres leaked from the commission's data base, and obtained by a supporter of the losing presidential candidate Martin Fayulu. Statistical analysis of the data from this source and from the PVT suggest accurate reporting (Englebert 2019; Wilson et al. 2019). Domestic and external perceptions persist of a deal between the ruling party and one of the two main opposition presidential candidates who was accorded victory. So the fix was a last-minute affair after an election that was, by and large, honestly conducted.

Fayulu's calls for protests against Tshisekedi's 'electoral coup' elicited only modest responses. Public acquiescence to the outcome was probably a reflection of a generalised perception, common in societies traumatised by civil war, that 'peace is more important than free and fair elections' (Cheeseman & Klaas 2018, p. 258). For foreign governments any change would have been perceived as a welcome outcome. After all, another (sort of) electoral turnover could be added to the growing list of African countries with this experience. For any real future progress, though, a re-organisation of the Constitutional Court so that it becomes less susceptible to political pressure would be a crucial reform. This is likely to be resisted by supporters of the old regime who now hold key portfolios in Tshisekedi's cabinet, including the ministry of justice. In June, the Court ruled on 23 parliamentary election disputes, invalidating the victories of 23 of Fayulu's supporters and awarding the seats to members of the former ruling group. The political prospects for Congo's Democratic Republic looked pretty bleak then, though optimists might find consolation in the technical proficiency of the poll, and of course, the fact that Kabila's placeman did not win. In these respects it was an improvement on previous contests.

What about Africa's largest democracy, Nigeria? Cheeseman and Klaas cite the introduction of biometric voter registration as a key measure in ensuring 'better quality elections' that led to 'a transfer of power' in 2015. Was the 2019 poll even better? Probably not, according to the European Union's observer mission, which published its full report five months after the election. Very low voter participation in the presidential poll (34%) was probably a consequence of very late openings of polling stations as well as the discouraging effects of violence – 150 people died during the campaigning. Turnout was lower than in 2015 when 42% of the registered electorate voted, and the 2019 death-toll was three times higher (Orji 2015; Mahmud 2015). The one-week-long postponement of elections probably helped to reduce participation. Another explanation for the turnout decline was that the voter register was more inflated than in 2015 as a consequence of a growing number of deceased voters whose names had not been removed from the register – possibly as many as eight million. EU monitors witnessed plenty of efforts at vote-buying. In addition, state-owned broadcasting tended to favour incumbents, and many of the procedural shortcomings of election day and in the tabulation routines were also evident in 2015. However, a well-organised parallel vote tabulation indicated that the presidential results were in line with its own calculations. Whether these abuses and organisational inefficiencies resulted in a different outcome than would have been the case in a more efficiently managed and more civil competition is uncertain. The Electoral Commission attracted hostility (and physical attacks) from both sides, a telling indication of its political autonomy. Certainly, this was a poll flawed by what the EUEOM (2019) called systemic shortcomings, but the evidence does not suggest decisive centralised rigging.

A poll-by-poll analysis of Africa's electoral record in the last two decades might well present a similarly messy overall picture in which it is easy to identify shortcomings but less simple to discern the long-term trends identified by authors Nic Cheeseman and Brian Klaas. As a handbook, however, *How to Rig an Election* is compelling, accessible and helpful, essential reading for all electoral observers. Its arguments are at their most persuasive when they are illustrated with often darkly comical anecdotal evidence.

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Election 2019: Change and Stability in South Africa's Democracy

edited by Collette Schulz-Herzenberg and Roger Southall, Jacana Media, Auckland Park, 2019, 350 pp.

The South African national and provincial election of May 2019 was a watershed in South Africa's ongoing process of democratisation. It was also the most analysed election in the democratic era before the actual voting took place. Numerous attempts to predict the result demonstrate how high the stakes were and still are for all the parties and citizens, rich and poor, in South Africa. As is to be expected, the pollsters and their instruments failed to capture the dynamics of voting and the actual result. Of interest were alternative approaches to predicting the outcome. These entailed examining party performance in past elections (national, provincial and local as well as local by-elections) based on voting station and ward data. I dare say that these approaches got close to being accurate.

While an ANC national victory was never in doubt, the question was the extent of its loss of support based on the Zuma years of state capture and corruption. On the other hand, the DA was under pressure to perform, based on resource allocation, and to break out of the Western Cape while growing black township votes. Internal DA turmoil cast doubt on whether the ambitious targets set could ever be met. The EFF, still riding the crest of the wave of its previous electoral successes, extrapolated that it would receive four times the support it won in 2014. The involvement of the EFF in the VBS scandals emerged in full detail only much later, enabling the EFF to fight the election on a relatively scandal-free ticket. The IFP entered this election as an enigma. After dropping support in 2014 to the NFP, there were signs that it was rebuilding and consolidating support at the expense of the latter. In addition, there were numerous smaller provincial parties hoping to win a seat or two in the national and provincial legislatures.

After the dust had settled and the results were in, interest in the outcome and analysis of these elections waned. Many analysts were exhausted and either boasted about their accuracy and how they got it right, or provided ad hoc modifications to their polling to show how they were actually correct even though this was not so. In this immediate post-election climate of guesswork, thumb-sucking and opinion polls, there was a need for careful analysis of the results to draw out the implications of May 2019 based on real data. Thankfully, Schulz-Herzenberg and Southall have gathered together a team of writers who focussed on parties and cross-cutting themes in the elections. This collection is, therefore, the definitive analysis of the 2019 election and is indispensable reading for professional and amateur psephologists and political analysts alike.

It is a book crammed full of useful data and election tables that will serve as a reference point for many years to come, and the editors and authors deserve

praise for the consolidation of such complex data in an accessible yet meaningful way. A sign of the value of the text is that party performance comes after important preliminary analysis of national context and election management through the IEC. With the ANC entering the campaign on the back foot through its own internal divisions, there were concerns that the IEC would not perform its tasks to the letter of the law because high officials were politically aligned. Early concerns indicated that these fears were justified, as the absence or lack of ballots in certain voting stations coupled with the ink controversy made it possible for some to wash the marking off and then vote again. A statistical analysis of flagged voting stations was undertaken to establish whether such events materially undermined the final result. They did not, but the flaws in the system remain and require serious attention. Voter participation and turnout also receives attention in the early part of the book and this review will return to these matters later.

The ANC campaign and performance are succinctly discussed and analysed in the first chapter, getting to grips with the politics of the election. Besides ANC relief at achieving a 65% national victory and retaining its Gauteng majority by the closest of margins, there is valuable insight into how the campaign played out for the divided ANC. Clearly, keeping the ANC comfortably in the 60% area provided a power boost for ANC President Ramaphosa in trying to keep the ANC together while nudging it towards reform. More data here would have provided specific insights into how Gauteng was held, demonstrating the effectiveness of power brokers in the eastern part of Gauteng winning back many of the faithful. This success has resulted in power plays and new powerbases for groupings not clearly aligned to President Ramaphosa. At the same time, the loss of support in parts of KZN may also contribute to an understanding of future ANC internal dynamics. The implications of this will come through in the 2021 local government election and the ANC's 2022 National General Council.

The chapter on the DA uses the data to show where and how the voting base of the party declined and is prescient on the implications this would have for the party. In October this year the DA leader, Mmusi Maimane, resigned and there is a restructuring and reorientation of the DA currently underway. The analysis here provides a clear understanding of how and why this happened. While the ANC's 3% in support was, ironically seen as a victory, the DA's 2% decline was perceived as a disaster and heads did end up rolling. At the same time, the data shows that the DA failed to break out of the Western Cape and Gauteng, its bulk voting bases, and consolidate support in other provinces.

The only major party to grow support was the indefatigable EFF which nearly doubled their 2014 vote share of 6.4%, achieving an impressive 10.8%. A breakdown of the EFF voting base requires more analysis; the provincial weighting of its support is clear and it lacks a meaningful presence in the south and east of South

Africa. What the EFF appears to have done successfully is appeal to the youth, as indicated by its dominance of campus politics. In a way, their success suggests the political failure of former President Zuma's announcement of free higher education in a bid to win back the campuses to the ANC. The question is whether the EFF can continue its growth trajectory now that there is more information in the public domain about the association of some of its leaders with funds allegedly obtained from the now collapsed VBS Mutual Bank. The 2021 local government election will be watched closely to see if this is the case.

Unfortunately, all the other parties are dealt with in a single chapter. This is understandable at one level, as they all received below 5% of the vote. But the regional dynamics of these parties is lost and at the same time competition and ebbs and flows of support amongst and between them are lost. This is not insignificant as the IFP seems to have gained at the NFP's expense while the loss of ANC support in parts of KZN needs to be analysed in relation to these smaller parties. Were they able to pick up votes through the fallout of ANC factional battles? It is important to understand the future prospects of at least these two parties, the IFP and NFP. These regional dynamics and fluctuations in voting are crucial at local level and will inform trade-offs between the ANC and IFP in building future municipal coalitions in different parts of the country. On the other hand, the rapid growth of FF⁺ is nothing more than the defection of white former DA voters in certain parts of the country alienated by the DA's focus on affirmative action. It is unlikely that these voters will return in significant numbers to the DA. The DA's future prospects depend on growing its black voter base significantly, and this is the challenge facing its new leadership.

Other chapters examine social media in the run-up to the election, with fascinating spirographs of bots and other activity. Yet there is no clear evidence of how any of this may have influenced the voting behaviour of citizens, a large portion of whom do not have access to or participate in social media. The chapter on gender presents important data on policy and gender representation across parties as well as in parliament and the provincial legislatures. A general analysis of party voting support includes valuable tables demonstrating the trends and drawing out their implications. The volume concludes with a general overview integrating all the chapters, their argument and analysis.

The results of the 2019 election were largely expected and there were no real surprises. This means that the detailed analysis of parties and their performance, while important, is not the takeaway issue from the election. Rather, and as already suggested, the process issues regarding the management of the election certainly are. More significantly are the related data of voter registration and actual voter turnout. These issues are discussed in a chapter in the early section of the book but they deserve more attention.

While the 2019 election will be declared successful, demonstrating the increasing strength of South Africa's democratic system, there are latent issues that are of great concern and which require that such optimism is qualified. Voter registration is down and 9 million eligible South Africans did not or could not register. This is a challenge for the IEC to go into all parts of South Africa to create registration opportunities. Moreover, if the demographic analysis is valid, then the large number of youths not registering is of particular concern. Is this apathy or is it a perception that mainstream parties don't reflect the needs of marginalised rural and urban youth? If that is the case, then the implications are dire. To survive parties need to find policies that reflect this constituency's needs and keep it within the realm of participatory constitutional democracy.

In addition to a decline in voter registration, voter turnout was also down from 2014 (73.5%) to 2019 (66%). Many analysts assumed a lower turnout than 2014, but the extent caught most by surprise. Many established democracies may only dream of a 66% turnout; but the fact that there was a 7.5% decline in participation is the real take away from this election. It clearly suggests that South African voters are increasingly less convinced that parties really act in their interests, while the performance of public institutions does not benefit them. This loss of public trust in the democratic process and related institutions is the canary in the coal mine. If responsiveness, representation and performance do not improve across the board at national and provincial level, South Africa's great democratic experiment of 1994 may enter a phase of irreversible decline. This is the challenge to all parties and government. More needed to made of this trend in the chapter and these issues deserved greater prominence.

All in all, however, the book is a valuable contribution to understanding South Africa's democracy. It will appeal to novices and experts alike and this is a compliment to the authors and editors. Increasingly, election analysis is moving away from 'will the ANC win' to 'are citizens participating fully in the democratic system'. This collection is one of the first serious analyses to engage with this vexed question and is an indispensable addition to the library of anyone who has an interest in the sustainability of democracy in South Africa.

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