Political Parties

in Southern Africa:

The State of Parties and their Role in Democratization

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Preface

Strong and sustainable democracy is dependent on the existence of well-functioning political parties. Political parties are crucial actors in bringing together diverse interests, recruiting and presenting candidates, and developing competing policy proposals that provide people with a choice. In a democracy there is no substitute for open competition between political parties in elections. Throughout the world, however, political parties find themselves in crisis, unpopular and increasingly distrusted. They are suffering from declining membership, internal management practices that are often weak and not sufficiently democratic, and party system regulations that often set far-reaching limits to the way in which parties are allowed to operate. In Africa, political parties face challenges similar to those faced elsewhere in the world, challenges that are further exacerbated by diverse and complex political and developmental challenges.

By building systematic, comparative knowledge on political parties, International IDEA aims to support the strengthening of institutional arrangements that make parties more effective players in the political system. International IDEA's series of reports on political parties in Africa is based on research and dialogue with political parties in thirty African countries. In Southern Africa the study covered twelve countries—Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In West Africa, the study was conducted in thirteen countries—Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. In East Africa, five countries were covered—Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

The research was conducted using three approaches. The first was to examine the socio-political and economic environment in which the parties function, and study

the margins within parties are allowed to carry out their political and electoral activities in the respective countries. The second dealt with the legal provisions that regulate parties. The provisions include those covering the founding of parties, their registration and internal functioning, the rules and regulations for contesting elections, the conduct of election campaigns and the agencies that monitor the conduct of parties. The third approach constituted an in-depth analysis of the organizational structures of the parties and the way in which they actually function.

The series of reports is expected to address a serious gap in existing knowledge regarding the external political party regulatory environment; party structures and internal organization; and policy and programmes development. The reports provide a unique overview of the challenges to and opportunities for strengthening political parties and party systems within the framework of democratic consolidation and development. International IDEA hopes that the findings and recommendations presented here will contribute to the building of sustainable multiparty democracy in Africa.

Vidar Helgesen
Secretary General
International IDEA

Foreword

This regional report on the state of political parties in Southern Africa is a summary of the results of research undertaken jointly by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), as part of its global Programme of Research and Dialogue on Political Parties, and the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) as International IDEA's regional partner for Southern Africa. At the heart of this project is the conviction that sustainable democracy is heavily dependent upon vibrant and well-functioning political parties. Without the existence of political parties as one of the indicators of political pluralism, a political system cannot be classified as democratic. In a nutshell, the notion of a no-party democracy (as Uganda has been held up to be) is not only a farce but a contradiction in terms, for two main reasons. First, democracy cannot exist where open competition for ideas and state power tends to be constricted by deliberate state policies. Second, democracy cannot exist in a situation where the participation and political choice of citizens in the democratic process are curtailed either by force or by fiat. Political parties broaden citizen participation and facilitate choice by articulating and aggregating citizens' interests and presenting these interests in a cohesive and coherent manner through programmes and manifestos. In a representative democracy, citizens are governed by their representatives who are subjected to periodic review through general (and local government) elections which either renew the mandate of the representatives or change such leadership through the ballot and not the bullet. Political parties are the heart of politics in a representative democracy. Putting it in a slightly different way, most forms of governance without political parties tend to be either benign authoritarianism, as in President Yoweri Museveni's Uganda, or malign authoritarianism, as in King Mswati's Swaziland.

It is, however, worth reiterating the argument that, while parties are a vital political asset to a vibrant, thriving democracy, they also have great potential to become a political

liability to democracy. Whether political parties prove to be an asset or a liability depends crucially, among other things, on the context within which they operate, their mode of internal governance and how they respond to external political stimuli. This problem is compounded if the tendency for patronage politics takes centre stage in the management of parties. This triple tragedy is the result of three features: (a) an autocratic bureaucracy; (b) an oligarchic personality cult; and (c) pork-barrel politics.

Parties ought to play their rightful role in the democratization process. Given this, it is extremely important that political parties are well organized, sufficiently institutionalized, and able to provide visionary leadership for their countries.

The robustness of any working democracy depends primarily on the dominant political culture as well as the institutions upon which it has to be firmly anchored. Thus, political parties become key institutions for anchoring a working democracy and inculcating a democratic culture in society.

While the democratic transition from one-party to multiparty democratic systems in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region since the 1990s is to be celebrated, we are still a long way from being able to celebrate an institutionalized culture of intra-party democracy. In other words, the challenge facing the SADC and its member countries today is to nurture and consolidate democracy at the national level and strive to establish and institutionalize intra-party democracy.

Evidently, multiparty democracy has become increasingly entrenched in Southern Africa since the onset of the third wave of democratization (to borrow Samuel Huntington's phrase) in the early 1990s. The majority of the Southern African states that form the SADC have liberalized their political systems, allowing space for political competition over state power through periodic elections that have become a norm throughout the region. Leading the league of SADC countries which have enduring liberal democratic traditions that have seen political parties play a key role in the democratic process are Botswana, Mauritius and South Africa. Only very few countries are yet to undergo democratic transition and allow open multiparty competition for state power. These include Angola and Swaziland, which are lagging behind on the democratization wave. Some countries (such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, DRC) are still in the throes of a transition process and their democratic institutions are yet to take root and consolidate, while others (such as Zimbabwe) have institutionalized a de facto one-party regime even under conditions in which parties other than the ruling party are, in theory, allowed to exist and operate. All other things being equal, to imagine that the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) will win the forthcoming general election in 2010 and thus displace the dominant Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF)

may be tantamount to imagining the tail wagging the dog, not only because of its internal faction-fighting but also because of the entrenched and draconian hold of ZANU-PF over Zimbabwe's political landscape. It is therefore important to study and understand the state of political parties in Southern Africa today and examine the extent to which each country has undergone the democratic transition and what role parties play in the process of nurturing and consolidating democracy.

This study provides a regional overview of the role and effectiveness of political parties in the processes both of transition and of the institutionalization of democratic governance in Southern Africa. The research for it has given us comprehensive comparative data for analysing trends in the democratization process and identifying the distinctive role of political parties. It has also provided rich raw material in the form of country case studies regarding political parties' role and effectiveness in the democratization process in Southern Africa.

The specific objectives of this regional programme, which was implemented by International IDEA and EISA, were to:

- assess the general political and socio-economic context of each country and its possible impact on political parties;

- investigate the external regulatory and legislative environment in each country and its impact on the role and functioning of political parties; and

- examine the internal functioning and structure of political parties and the impact of this on their institutional effectiveness.

The political and socio-economic context is important in our understanding of the state of political parties, given that parties are influenced greatly by the context in which they operate. Besides the political and socio-economic context, which is often outside the control of parties, these institutions also operate within the context of the external regulatory and legislative environment put in place by governments. Equally importantly, parties have their own structures and rules, regulations and laws that govern their operations, and these may either enhance or inhibit their capacity to contribute to democracy.

The project involved primarily desk research and interviews with political party leaderships covering 12 SADC countries—Angola, Botswana, the DRC, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.[1] We are grateful to the network of researchers who undertook the work

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1 Tanzania is included in the International IDEA report on political parties in East Africa but also in some of the discussion here.

and compiled well-researched Country Reports. Table 1 lists the researchers who made this project possible.

Table 1: The Southern African regional research team

Country	Researcher(s)	Institutional affiliation
Angola	Augusto Santana	EISA-Angola
Botswana	Dr Gloria Somolekae	Kellogg Foundation
DRC	Dr Hubert Kabungulu Ngoy-Kangoy	University of Kinshasa
Lesotho	Dr Khabele Matlosa and Caleb Sello	EISA and independent consultant
Malawi	Dr Nandini Patel	University of Malawi
Mauritius	Dr Sheila Bunwaree and Dr Roukaya Kasenally	University of Mauritius
Mozambique	Eduardo Sitoe, Amilcar Pereira and Zefanias Matsimbe	Eduardo Mondlane University and EISA-Mozambique
Namibia	Victor Tonchi and Albertina Shifotoka	University of Namibia
South Africa	Prof. Tom Lodge and Ursula Scheidegger	University of the Witwatersrand
Swaziland	Dr Joshua Mzizi	University of Swaziland
Zambia	Prof. Jotham Momba	University of Zambia
Zimbabwe	Prof. Lloyd Sachikonye	University of Zimbabwe

The regional coordinator of the project was Dr Khabele Matlosa, who is the Research Director at EISA. In undertaking his tasks, he liaised closely with the Africa Regional Office of International IDEA under the leadership of Abdalla Hamdok and with Denis Kadima, EISA Executive Director. The contribution made by Abdalla Hamdok and Denis Kadima in the execution of this project was inestimable. Many other International IDEA staff based in Stockholm made invaluable contributions to the successful implementation of the project: Julie Ballington (then Programme Officer); Roger Hällhag (then head of the Political Parties Programme); Per Nordlund (Senior Programme Officer); and Francesca Binda (then Senior Advisor on Political Parties). Many other colleagues at EISA assisted in various ways in making this project a success. They include Claude Kabemba (then Programme Manager, Research), Jackie Kalley (Publications Officer), Grant Masterson (Research Fellow), Victor Shale (Research Fellow), Sydney Letsholo (Research Assistant), Maureen Moloi
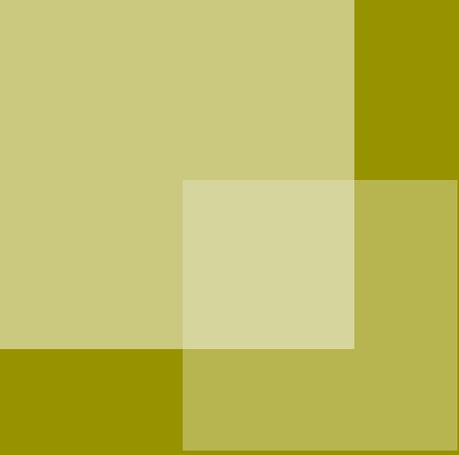
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Methodology

Chapter 1

Methodology

This project used different methodologies. First, the project began with a regional methodology workshop held in July 2004 in Pretoria, South Africa. The main purpose of the workshop was to introduce the project to the regional network of researchers and develop a common understanding of the research tools and how they were supposed to be used during the research process. Second, desk research was used to gather secondary data in the form of written material on political parties generally and in each country. The desk research was guided by a country context questionnaire which was made available to all the researchers.

Third, data were compiled through primary and secondary research, through a combination of structured interviews and desk research using two additional questionnaires. The external regulation and environment questionnaire, on the national regulation of political parties, was sent to, among others, such institutions as the electoral management bodies (EMBs) and those responsible for registration and de-registration of parties. The internal regulation and structure questionnaire was sent to a selected group of parties in each country—between three and six in number, including the ruling party and the main opposition party. In each party, researchers interviewed at least five officials, and the resulting data are unique primary data on the internal functioning of political parties in Southern Africa.

Fourth, data collection was followed by data analysis in the form of preparation of the Country Reports, which were then submitted to the regional coordinator. Fifth, as the Country Reports were being prepared, two regional workshops, involving researchers and representatives of political parties, were organized jointly by the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) and the Africa Regional Office of International IDEA in 2004 and 2005 in order to allow a regional dialogue on

the state of political parties in Southern Africa. These workshops proved so useful that many representatives made special requests that similar workshops be held in each Southern African Development Community (SADC) member state. While we appreciated the value of this request, unfortunately resources did not allow us to respond positively.

Finally, the methodology included the publishing of the Country Reports for purposes of information dissemination, with the aim of influencing trends in the democratization process and highlighting the significance of political parties in a democracy.

In all, 43 political parties in ten SADC countries were the subject of this research and took part in the project activities, including regional workshops and conferences. They are listed in table 2.

Table 2: Political parties interviewed during the project

Country	Ruling party	Opposition parties/organizations	No. of parties
Angola	No data received	No data received	. .
Botswana	No data received	No data received	. .
DRC	PPRD	MLC, RCD, UDPS	4
Lesotho	LCD	BNP, LPC, NIP, BAC, PFD	6
Malawi	UDF	MCP, AFORD, PPM, MDP	5
Mauritius	MSM	LP, MMM	3
Mozambique	Frelimo	Renamo, PIMO	3
Namibia	SWAPO	COD, DTA, NUDO, MAG	5
South Africa	ANC	DA, ACDP, UDM, IFP	5
Swaziland	. .	NNLC, PUDEMO, SS	3
Zambia	MMD	UPND, UNIP, FDD	4
Zimbabwe	ZANU-PF	MDC, ZANU-Ndonga, DP, NAGG	5
Total no. of parties			43
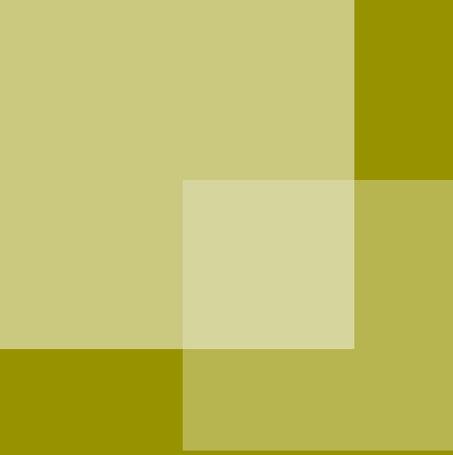
Chapter 2

Why Political Parties Are Essential for Democracy: Conceptual Issues
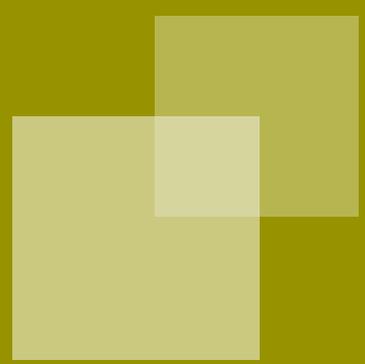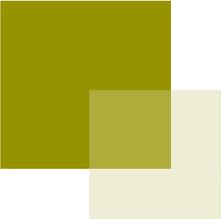
Chapter 2

Why Political Parties Are Essential for Democracy: Conceptual Issues

Political parties have to be understood within the overall theory and practice of democracy. While democracy has proved a fairly nebulous term to grasp, there is a fair amount of consensus in the literature in respect of what political parties are and of their role in a democratic system.

Democracy can be defined (or should I say explained?) in three different ways. First, a *minimal* definition (explanation) of democracy locates the theory and practice of democracy around two principles or values—political competition or contestation, and participation. The notion of contestation 'captures the uncertain peaceful competition necessary for democratic rule, a principle which presumes the legitimacy of some opposition, the right to challenge the incumbents… the existence of free and fair elections and a consolidated party system' (Landman 2005: 20). Participation presupposes political control of the citizens over the people who govern on their behalf. This notion 'captures the idea of popular sovereignty which presumes the protection of the right to vote as well as the existence of universal suffrage' (Landman 2005: 20). This is what is often referred to as *procedural democracy*. Second, the *liberal notion of democracy* extends its essence beyond just contestation and participation to include the positive protection and promotion of political rights and civil liberties. It includes other institutional dimensions (guarantees) such as accountability, transparency, constraints upon leaders, the representation of citizens, the rule of law, and property and minority rights. This is what liberal democracy is all about. Third, the *structuralist definition of democracy* extends the theory and practice of democracy beyond the procedural and institutional dimensions found in the first two definitions and introduces the socio-economic dimensions. This is the defining feature of social, or developmental, democracy.

In all the above definitions of democracy, it is evident that a democratic system has, of necessity, to be characterized by political pluralism. One of the measures of the degree of pluralism in a political system is the existence and operations of political parties. This is so because political parties compete for ideas and political power and promote citizen participation in the political process; they play a crucial role in ensuring that the institutional foundations of democracy are firmly grounded; and they espouse the promotion of a better socio-economic dispensation for the electorate. In essence, therefore, the existence of political parties is the hallmark of representative democracy (whether it is a procedural democracy, liberal democracy or social democracy). What then are political parties? What is their significance for democratic governance?

Political parties are organized groups that are formed with the sole purpose of articulating and aggregating the interests of the group, contesting control over state power and government, and directing a country's development process in line with their own ideological orientations and their policy frameworks. Hess perceives political parties as 'groups of people who have joined forces to pursue their common political and social goals. Parties have been formed in all societies and states where the population actively participates in the political process. They enable the people thus organised—the party members—to articulate their political will and strive for the realisation of their political aims as a group' (Hess 1994: 15). According to Maliyamkono and Kanyangolo, 'a political party is an organised association of people working together to compete for political office and promote agreed-upon policies' (Maliyamkono and Kanyangolo 2003: 41). According to Heywood, a political party is a group of people that is organized for the purpose of winning government power, by electoral or other means. Parties are often confused with 'interest groups' (Heywood 2002: 248). Heywood identifies four characteristics that distinguish parties from other organized groups. Political parties:

- aim to exercise government power by winning political office (small parties may use elections more to gain a platform than to win power);

- are organized bodies with a formal 'card-carrying' membership. This distinguishes them from broader and more diffuse social movements;

- typically adopt a broad issue focus, addressing each of the major areas of government policy (small parties, however, may have a single-issue focus, thus resembling interest groups); and

- are united to varying degrees by shared political preferences and a general ideological identity (Heywood 2002: 248).

Without political parties or in situations where parties are weak and ineffective, politics is reduced to unbridled opportunism and the overt self-serving interest of individual politicians who may derail the nation-building process and the democracy project. Cited in Kellman, Doherty posits that 'without strong political parties and political institutions that are accountable and effective, that can negotiate and articulate compromises to respond to conflicting demands, the door is effectively open to those populist leaders who will seek to bypass the institutions of government, especially a system of checks and balances, and the rule of law' (Kellman 2004: 15).

Sachikonye notes that 'historically, political parties have played a pivotal role in founding and consolidating systems of governance. Parties aggregate diverse demands into coherent political programmes. They then translate these programmes into effective collective action through elections and legitimated control of political office' (Sachikonye 2005: 2). The primary reason for the existence of parties is to contest and capture state power (ideally through peaceful means). These peaceful means involve parties' contestation of power through regular multiparty elections. Mohamed Salih and Per Nordlund remind us that 'although they are part of the informal constitution of society, once they have contested legally sanctioned elections, political parties obtain power and formally, under the jurisdiction and formal "constitution" of the state, obtain legitimacy and control the personnel and resources of the state' (Mohamed Salih and Nordlund 2007:20).

From the conceptual discussion above it is evident that political parties are among the most important organizations in modern democracies; 'students of political parties have commonly associated them with democracy itself. Democracy, it is argued, is a system of competitive political parties. The competitive electoral context, in which several political parties organise the alternatives that face voters, is what identifies contemporary democracy' (*Encyclopaedia of Democracy*: 924). To a great extent, political parties, in theory, ought to advance political pluralism, enhance citizen participation in the political process, broaden the representation of different political opinions and ideologies in the governance process, ensure the peaceful and democratic transfer of political power at both national and local/community levels, enhance the accountability of governments, and give the necessary legitimacy to both the government of the day and the political system as a whole. Citing Randall (1988), Mohamed Salih isolates four major functions of political parties.

- They endow regimes with legitimacy by providing ideologies, leadership or opportunities for political participation, or a combination of all the three.

- They act as a medium for political recruitment, thus creating opportunities for upward social mobility.

- They provide opportunities for the formation of coalitions of powerful political interests to sustain government (interest aggregation), have major influence on policies as a result of devising programmes, supervise policy implementation, and promote the political socialization or mobilization of people to undertake self-help activities.

- They provide political stability in societies that are able to absorb increasing levels of political participation by the new social forces generated by modernization (Mohamed Salih 2001: 34; 2003: 4).

Mohamed Salih further reinforces the political significance of political parties to democracy by observing that in competitive political systems parties provide 'the connection between the party system and government on the one hand, and between government and society on the other' (Mohamed Salih 2003: 7). Thus, given that parties are an essential component of a representative democracy that ensure political competition and advance citizen participation, today 'the debate is no longer whether there should be parties, but whether the party system should be pluralist or not' (Doorenspleet 2003: 169).

It is important, though, to highlight from the outset that, while political parties do play a crucial role in a vibrant and thriving democracy, they can also become an obstacle to both democratic transition and democratic consolidation. In a recent fascinating study on political parties in Kenya, Alycia Kellman makes a plausible argument that 'the study of political parties and the institutional structures that support them is inherently related to the study of democracy. Political parties serve as the primary link between government and society. As such, they have a unique role in fostering democratic governance and ensuring that it is responsive to societal needs. If they fail in this role, true democracy has little chance of surviving' (Kellman 2004: 10). She then comes to the logical conclusion that 'political parties must be conceptualised as instruments that can either work for, or against, democratic forces. Ideally, political parties "help turn citizen interests and demands into policies and laws" . . . However, if they fail in this mission, the whole democratic experiment can disintegrate' (Kellman 2004: 14–15).

It is abundantly evident from the extant literature that political parties are central to both democratization and democratic consolidation (see also Mohamed Salih 2003; Kadima 2006; Kadima, Matlosa and Shale 2006; Mohamed Salih and Nordlund 2007). Be that as it may, historically and in contemporary times, in many developed and developing countries, parties tend to fail to play a political role that enhances their intrinsic institutional and functional value to democratization and democratic consolidation. Not only does this tendency compound the fragility of democratic

experiments, especially in Africa; it also erodes the significance and popularity of parties as primary links between governments and citizens in a society. Hence, Kellman poignantly observes that 'while it is recognised that they can be crucial in the promotion of democracy, they can equally be a hindrance to its attainment as well' (Kellman 2004: 13). Citing Doherty, Kellman further contends that 'in emerging democracies worldwide, political parties are either weak, too personalistic, too constrained by oppressive governments, or too corrupt and out of touch to earn the respect of the public' (Kellman 2004: 13).

Evidence abounds to suggest that on a global scale in both developed and developing democracies there is a glaring and systematic decline of public confidence in political parties and that in general mass parties are increasingly becoming obsolete. Part of the explanation for this trend is that political parties worldwide seem to experiencing declining public trust. As table 3 illustrates, in terms of public trust and confidence, political parties are increasingly becoming an endangered species globally—the more so in Latin America and the new European democracies, although less so in East Asian and African democracies.

Table 3: Degree of public trust in political parties in emerging democracies

Region	Percentage
Latin America	11
East Asian democracies	26
New European democracies	11
15 African democracies Ruling parties Opposition parties	46 23

Source: <http://www.globalbarometer.net>.

Thus, in all the emerging democracies, public trust in political parties is below 50 per cent. However, in Africa there seems to be more public trust in ruling parties (46 per cent) than in opposition parties (23 per cent). This could be attributable to the politics of patronage, which is more effectively dispensed to the public or targeted clients by ruling parties, and in turn to the weakening and fragmentation of opposition parties, which often lack effective strategies for presenting viable alternative policy frameworks. Table 4 illustrates the degree of public trust in political parties in eight SADC member states out of the 15 African countries in which Afrobarometer undertook its 2004 opinion survey, the results of which were

published in March 2004. From these data it is abundantly evident that ruling parties enjoy more support, confidence and trust than opposition parties. The table illustrates the opinions of respondents to the question 'How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say?'

Table 4: Degree of public trust in political parties in eight SADC countries, 2002–2003

Figures are percentages of respondents.

		Bots.	Les.	Mwi	Moz.	Nam.	RSA	Tan.	Zam.
Trust in ruling parties	A lot/A very great deal	43	55	45	64	59	32	66	31
	A little/Not at all	55	40	52	28	40	60	33	66
Trust in opposition parties	A lot/A very great deal	14	19	34	24	15	12	36	15
	A little/Not at all	81	73	61	64	83	76	62	81

Source: Bratton, M., Logan, C., Wonbin Cho and Bauer, P., 'Afrobarometer Round 2: Compendium of Comparative Results from a 15-Country Survey', Afrobarometer Working Paper no. 34, 2004, p. 35.

Evidently the popularity of ruling parties is much greater in Mozambique, Namibia and Tanzania than in Botswana, South Africa and Zambia. Interestingly, in South Africa the popularity of the ruling and opposition parties do not seem to correlate with the electoral performance of the parties. The electoral outcomes in South Africa since 1994 and up to 2004 seem to suggest that the ruling party enjoys much more popularity than the Afrobarometer data would suggest. The popularity of the ruling party would probably rank close to levels such as those seen in Mozambique and Namibia given not only these two countries' similarity as dominant-party systems but also the common tradition of liberation movements that the three countries share.

The more unpopular parties become in the eyes of the public, the more their mandate as agents of democracies is likely to fail. Part of the explanation as to why parties tend to fail to become drivers of the democratic process, and also fail to democratize within themselves, is precisely that, as Kellman rightly points out, they tend to have inevitable and inherent 'oligarchic tendencies and are thus inherently undemocratic' (Kellman 2004: 14). One of the major problems confronting political parties in their quest to become democratizers themselves is the embedded internal culture of the bureaucratic–oligarchic syndrome (BOS), to coin a phrase that captures the main Achilles' heel of political parties.

The way in which the BOS manifests itself proves to be a fairly complex process.

First, in a Weberian sense, parties develop into modern bureaucratic organizations with defined structures and a clear hierarchy that informs the flow of information and decisions up and down. This hyper-bureaucratization, in turn, defines subtle ways in which the party machinery in a sense, although this may seem contradictory, also becomes both inclusive and exclusionary at the same time. The inclusion and exclusion dynamic within parties then centralizes power in the hands of a small coterie of the party apparatchiks in control of the organization. Second, the centralization of power not only marginalizes the rank and file and support base of the party; it also breeds a personality cult whereby the party leader becomes synonymous with the party and vice versa. The party leader becomes the oligarch who is vested with enormous powers to determine the party's policy, its ideological direction and its overall governance processes. Third, the two tendencies (hyper-bureaucratization and oligarchic politics) combine into a myriad of symptoms of the larger problem that we define as the BOS.

Thus, once a party has developed into a fully-fledged bureaucratic–rational organization, power centralizes systematically, and thus the personality cult becomes deeply engrained. This is the heart of the matter in our understanding of the systematic failure and decline of parties in Africa as whole and in Southern Africa in particular. Kellman sums it up in a simpler but perceptive observation: 'once a leadership position is attained, due to the amount of power, money and status over which the party is in control of, it inevitably develops oligarchic tendencies' (Kellman 2004: 14). Within the framework of the bureaucratic–oligarchic syndrome, patron–client relations tend to develop between the party leadership and the rank-and-file membership, and this politics of patronage worsens the autocratic tendencies within parties. Mohamed Salih reminds us that:

> the client–patron relationship is fundamentally a relationship of exchange in which a superior (or patron) provides security for an inferior (or client), and the client in turn provides support for the patron . . . . This relationship . . . has two major drawbacks: 1) it is founded in the premise of inequality between patrons and clients, and the benefits accruing to each of them from the exchange may be very uneven indeed; 2) it may serve to intensify ethnic conflicts, though it is equally capable of adaptation so that each group gets a slice of the cake (Mohamed Salih 2003: 7).

In a nutshell, we argue that, besides the historical context that has tended to influence the nature and character of parties (see chapter 3), three other related features tend to characterize their operations—(a) autocratic hyper-bureaucratization, (b) an oligarchic personality cult and (c) patronage politics.

The following chapters turn the spotlight on political party systems and democratization in Southern Africa. It will become clear that party systems in Southern Africa have been in a state of flux over the past four decades since political independence, experiencing a brief period of multi-partyism, then abandoning multi-partyism and adopting a one-party system, until recent efforts began towards multiparty democratic systems as part of the global wave of democratization that began in the early 1990s.

The conceptual discussion above is relevant to our understanding of political parties in Southern Africa, as will become evident shortly. Political parties in Southern Africa are crucial for anchoring the ongoing democratization process. However, they also face enormous challenges, as will be demonstrated. For now, it is worth emphasizing that some of the major challenges rotate around the bureaucratic–oligarchic syndrome.

- Political parties in the region exhibit autocratic hyper-bureaucratization and are imbued with a culture of secrecy as if they were secret societies. This was clearly evident during the interviews conducted for this study, especially when parties were required to reveal such information as membership figures or their financial status. This is inimical to the parties' external image as well as to their internal governance arrangements.

- Political parties in the region also exhibit an oligarchic personality cult. Many of them are so inextricably tied to the personality of their leaders (often their founders) that the party tends to be reduced to the leader, and vice versa. As with hyper-bureaucratization, this situation also works against internal democracy within parties in three important ways: (a) the succession of leaders becomes extremely difficult and highly conflict-ridden; (b) decentralization of power to party branches at local levels is severely impaired as this is dependent upon the discretion of the 'omnipotent' leader; and (c) given that these founding leaders are often men, the empowerment of women and their participation in party politics suffer.

- The third tendency of parties in Southern Africa is that towards patronage politics. In a majority of countries in the SADC region, political parties tend to be influenced overwhelmingly by identity politics, be it ethnicity, as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), race and ethnicity, as in South Africa, or religion, as in Lesotho. Political parties engage in patronage politics on the basis of these cleavages in order to keep their identity-based constituencies, which are essentially a political asset, especially during elections. And, given their access to state resources, ruling parties are far better placed than opposition parties in playing patronage politics and gaining political mileage out of this type of extractive politics.
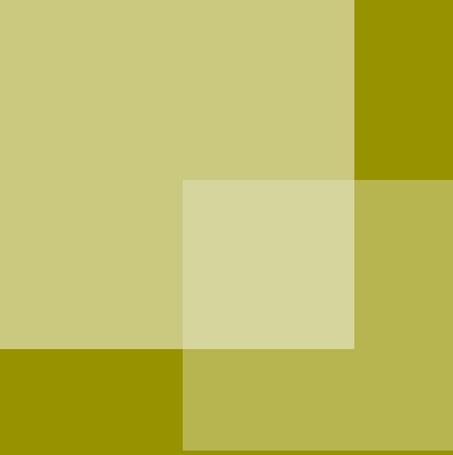
Chapter 3

From Multiparty to One-party Systems and Back: An Overview of Historical and Contemporary Trends
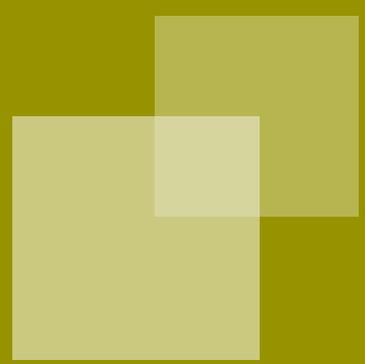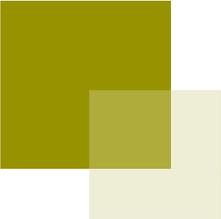
Chapter 3

From Multiparty to One-party Systems and Back: An Overview of Historical and Contemporary Trends

One of the most fascinating political developments in the SADC region since the 1990s has surely been the transition from a one-party to a multiparty political dispensation. This transition has had a profound bearing on both the democracy project broadly speaking and the party systems and party organization specifically. Today more parties are taking part in political activities and the governance processes of SADC countries and are thus able to contest state power through regular elections. This observation is validated by the party political competition for state power evidenced by the holding of regular multiparty elections in many SADC countries since the 1991 Zambian election, which witnessed the changeover of state power from the United National Independence Party (UNIP) of Kenneth Kaunda to Fredrick Chiluba's Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD).

Party organization in the majority of the SADC states has also been opened up to greater public scrutiny, even if almost all the parties still face the critical challenge of democratizing their internal management and their operational, systemic and institutional arrangements. Whereas the political systems in the region had been marked by centralization through the adoption of one-party rule and an authoritarian political culture since the 1960s, major transformations are currently opening up the political marketplace to broader contestation over state power, the increased participation of the citizens in the political process, and the empowerment of disadvantaged social groups.

3.1 The one-party era: from the 1960s to the 1980s

To a great extent, the development of political parties in Southern Africa, as elsewhere in the world, has been shaped and influenced by the particular historical

circumstances in which parties emerged and evolved. Of paramount significance here is the colonial context within which they emerged. Undoubtedly that historical circumstance has tended to put its own imprint on the nature and character of parties and party systems. Mohamed Salih captures this point quite poignantly when he argues that political parties in Africa 'emerged during colonial rule which was neither democratic nor legitimate. Essentially, African political parties emerged in a non-democratic setting, which to a large extent informed their practice during independence' (Mohamed Salih 2003: 2). The point needs to be made that immediately after political independence in the 1960s the SADC countries adopted a relatively stable multiparty system, ushered in by independence elections. Ironically, a number of these states then made a U-turn around the mid-1960s, abandoned the multiparty framework and adopted the one-party system on the grounds of (a) the need to focus attention on economic development, (b) the need to prioritize the imperatives of nation building and reconciliation following the decolonization process, and (c) the need to reduce the intensity of politics, which was perceived as divisive and thus inimical to the achievement of the two first objectives.

In a majority of the countries where the mono-party tradition held sway, it was argued that this was the political system best suited to the region, while Western-type multiparty liberal democracy was generally perceived as antithetical to the challenges of development, nation building and reconciliation. Whatever the merits of the arguments in favour of the one-party rule of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, to all intents and purposes this trend was part and parcel of the early institutionalization of authoritarian rule of various sorts in the region. It is worth noting that the most consistent and vehement proponent of the one-party political tradition was the late Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, who argued strongly that 'where there is one party and that party is identified with the nation as a whole, the foundations of democracy are firmer than they can ever be when you have two or more parties each representing only a section of the community' (cited in Wanyande 2000: 108). The single party would not only exercise unfettered political hegemony over the state and society; it would also subsume organs of civil society such as trade unions and farmers' associations under its hegemonic political wing (see Matlosa 2003b).

It is worth emphasizing, though, that the one-party regimes in the SADC region assumed two distinctive forms—*de facto one-party rule* and *de jure one-party rule*. With the exception of Swaziland, whose dominant political/dynastic elite has imposed authoritarian absolute monarchy, the majority of the independent SADC states embraced de jure one-party rule between the mid-1960s and the early 1990s. These included Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zaire (the present-day DRC), Zambia and Zimbabwe. Botswana and Mauritius have managed since independence to embrace and uphold a political culture of pluralism and political

tolerance anchored in a relatively stable multiparty political system predicated upon liberal democracy. Political developments in Lesotho since independence (following a brief experiment with multi-partyism between 1966 and 1970) have been marked by de facto one-party rule (1970–86) or military dictatorship (1986–93). Only in the early 1990s did Lesotho experience a democratic transition which has helped the country re-institutionalize multiparty democracy (1993 to date). In two other SADC member states, Namibia and South Africa, the governance regimes and party organization have been of a rather different order due to the institutionalization of apartheid and the liberation struggles that ensued over the years until the political transitions of 1990 and 1994, respectively.

It is also worth noting that the liberation movement tradition in Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe, has had a considerable impact in terms of how political parties operate and behave today as they steer the governance process (see Nordlund 1996; Mohamed Salih 2003; Baregu 2004; Suttner 2004). The main import of the contributions by Baregu and Suttner in this debate about the transition from liberation movements to political parties is basically not only to interrogate the political transformation in white-settler colonial settings in the SADC region, which, in turn, brought about a democratic dispensation, but to go further and investigate the challenges facing former liberation movements as they undertake the complex process of transformation into political (ruling) parties. For his part, Mohamed Salih posits that the liberation movements which transformed themselves into political parties 'behave like one-party systems, often blurring the distinction between party and the state. They continue to be an embodiment of nationalist/populist politics in which the person of the president and the liberation struggle are constant reminders for voters to stay the course. This has in many instances created a situation whereby the opposition forces, the media and even genuine critics were either silenced or forced to defect to the opposition' (Mohamed Salih 2003: 18).

This said, it is worth noting that the one-party system of the 1960s–1980s had its own distinctive influence upon the party organization in a majority of the states, and in particular on the extent to which parties embraced intra-party democracy. First and foremost, given the all-pervasive political culture of centralization within the framework of one party, political parties were also highly centralized. This trend of hyper-bureaucratization still remains today under the multiparty systems that prevail in many Southern African states. Second, this centralization also inculcated and fuelled a personality cult politics whereby a party was often equated with the leader, and vice versa. Thus, the party leader tended to be perceived as the institution itself, just as the institution tended to be personified in the image of the leader. This is the defining characteristic of the oligarchic tendencies within parties today. Third, both the centralization and the personality cult tendencies in the management of parties

during the one-party era led to some form of authoritarian administration of parties, and in most instances it even became difficult to change the top leadership of the party. Often elections for the party leadership became simple ceremonies for the crowning of founding fathers (there were hardly any mothers) and did not present an occasion for a democratic contest for top positions within the party. Fourth, although most of the parties argued that they were able to allow internal debate and free flow of divergent ideas, in practice political tolerance within parties became non-existent at worst and almost impossible at best. Fifth, although the parties had their own women's wings, their structures did not exhibit gender equality at all as the women's wings were not really meant for that purpose. The women's wings were used within the framework of the patriarchal ideology mainly to mobilize women behind a predominantly male agenda. All these five factors reinforce the prevailing bureaucratic–oligarchic syndrome within parties which is their major Achilles' heel.

3.2 The multiparty era: from the 1990s to date

Following the end of both the cold war, on a world scale, and apartheid, on a regional scale, we are now living in a new political era in the SADC region, as elsewhere in the African continent. Authoritarian rule, which had pervaded the region, assuming various forms such as one-party rule, one-person rule and military rule, has been increasingly replaced by political liberalization and a political culture of pluralism (Matlosa 2004a) due largely to internal and external pressures.

The demise of apartheid in South Africa was a crucial factor for the transformation of the whole region away from authoritarian rule (a centralist and hegemonic political culture) towards multiparty political pluralism (a decentralized and pluralist political culture). The apartheid-driven regional destabilization of the 1970s and 1980s led to the militarization of politics and provided part of the justification for one-party rule which was linked to the nation-building project by the ruling elite. The one party, it was argued, would forge the national unity that was required to face up to the external threat of apartheid aggression. The ending of apartheid thus helped facilitate the process of political liberalization. This phenomenal development, which led, among other things, to majority rule in both Namibia (in 1990) and South Africa (in 1994), as well as the sustainable peace in Mozambique (1994), was also accompanied by internal political pressure in a majority of the Southern African states, mounted by civil society organizations, for democratic rule and democratization. Despite its weaknesses and disjointed organization, civil society 'in the form of trade unions, women's organisations, churches, civil and human rights groups, media associations, lawyers' associations and other professional and non-professional groups' (*SADC Regional Human Development Report* 1998: 95) has contributed to the emergence

of multiparty political pluralism in the region (see Matlosa 2003b). Thus it can be argued today with certainty that a majority of SADC states, with the exception of Angola, Swaziland and Zimbabwe, have formally embraced the multiparty politics of a liberal democratic model. The three basic elements of liberal democracy are:

- meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and organized groups (especially political parties) for all effective positions of government power, at regular intervals and excluding the use of force;

- a highly inclusive level of participation in the selection of leaders and policies, at least through regular and fair elections, such that no major (adult) social group is excluded; and

- a high level of civil and political liberties—freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom to form and join organizations—sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation (Sørensen 1993: 13).

However, while many countries in the region would claim to be liberal democracies, several of them fall far short of realizing the basic requirements of this type of democracy as outlined above. Although the current debate in the region recognizes the positive political advances that have come with the liberal democratic model for the nurturing of democratic governance, questions are now being posed as to its adequacy for the further entrenchment and consolidation of democracy. This is because liberal democracy tends to emphasize political rights almost at the expense of the socio-economic rights of citizens.

Despite the liberal democratic model in the region, almost all the countries in Southern Africa are characterized by what in political science is termed a 'dominant-party system' (see Giliomee and Simkins 1999). The longest-enduring dominant-party system (and the longest-enduring stable liberal democracy in Africa) is found in Botswana, where the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) has won all elections and governed the country since 1966, as table 5 shows.

Table 5: Election outcomes in Botswana, 1965–2004

(a) Number of seats won

Party	1965	1969	1974	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999	2004
BDP	28	24	27	29	29	31	27	33	44
BNF	–	3	2	2	4	3	13	6	12
BPP	3	3	2	1	1	0	0	–	0
BIP	0	1	1	0	0	0	–	–	–
BAM	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0	0
BCP	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
MELS	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0	0
NDF	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0
Total no. of seats	31	31	32	32	34	34	40	40	57

(b) Percentage of seats won

Party	1965	1969	1974	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999	2004
BDP	90	77	84.4	91	85	91	67.5	82.5	77
BNF	–	10	6.3	6	12	9	32.5	15	21
BPP	10	10	6.3	3	3	0	0	–	–
BIP	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	–	–
BAM	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0
BCP	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2.5	2
MELS	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0	0
NDF	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Molomo, M., 'In Search of an Alternative Electoral System in Botswana', *Pula*, 14/1 (2000); Sebudubudu, D. and Osei-Hwedi, B., 'Democratic Consolidation in SADC: Botswana's 2004 Elections', EISA Research Report no. 11, 2004; and Maundeni, Z., *40 Years of Democracy in Botswana, 1965–2005* (Gaborone: Mmegi Publishing House, 2005).

The trend towards a dominant-party system is not, however, confined to Botswana's long-lasting liberal democracy. In almost all the SADC countries, a dominant-party system assumes the following forms: (a) electoral dominance for an uninterrupted and prolonged period (as in Botswana); (b) dominance in the formation of governments, (e.g. in the legislature: see table 6); and (c) dominance in determining the public agenda (Giliomee and Simkins 1999: xxi). The dominant-party system in Southern Africa is also symptomatic of the weakness, fragmentation and disorganization of opposition parties (Olukoshi 1998; Karume 2004; Brooks 2004; Matlosa 2005; Chiroro 2006).

However, it is evident that, while at the macro level of a nation state various SADC member states have made considerable progress with regard to political liberalization and democratization, this is not the case when one considers the political development at the micro level of such political institutions as political parties. This observation resonates throughout the whole continent. Mohamed Salih aptly captures the dilemma (or contradiction) facing these institutions when he observes that 'it is obvious that while the form of multiparty politics is sustainable in most African countries due to external pressures and development aid conditionality, the democratic content of African political parties is not' (Mohamed Salih 2003: 355).
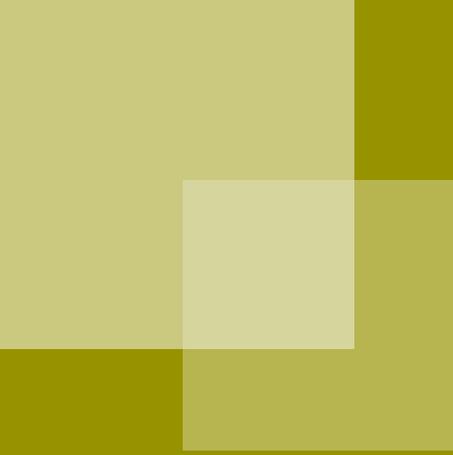
Chapter 4

The Research Findings
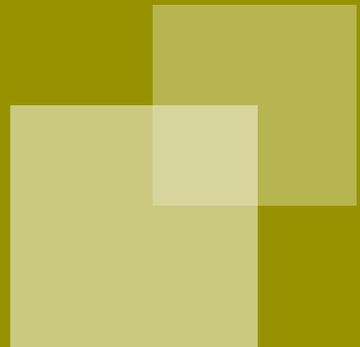
Chapter 4

The Research Findings

This section is divided into three subsections covering the external environment (systemic factors), external regulation and the environment for political parties, and the internal functioning and structure of political parties.

4.1 The external environment: systemic factors

This study has established that the specific roles and effectiveness of political parties in a democracy are essentially determined by, inter alia,

- the nature of the party system in place in a country;

- the nature of the electoral system in place in a country; and

- equally important, the effectiveness of the legislature in a given country.

4.1.1 Party systems

A party system is important in determining exactly how political parties play the political game. In between the two extremes of a no-party system, in which political parties are not allowed to operate by law, and a fragmented party system, in which far too many small and ineffective parties have mushroomed and proliferated within a context of an unstable political system, there are basically four known party systems:

- the one-party system (in which only one party is dominant or is allowed legally to exist);

- the two-party system or duopoly (where two parties are dominant);

- the dominant-party system (in which, even if many parties exist, only one is dominant); and

- the multiparty system (in which many parties exist and all enjoy equal chances of assuming power and controlling the state).

Party systems influence greatly the way parties operate and how effective they can be in aggregating the demands and articulating the interests of the electorate. In some countries party systems are profoundly institutionalized and robust, while in others they are less institutionalized and fragmented.

Of the 12 SADC countries under study, only in one, Swaziland, are political parties banned. In all the other countries, parties are allowed to exist and operate. In theory, therefore, with the exception of Swaziland (see Mzizi 2005), all the SADC countries operate a multiparty system. However, upon closer scrutiny, the multiplicity of political parties in many of these countries has not really translated into a genuine and functioning multiparty system, except in Mauritius, where coalition politics has taken root and the culture of alternation of power is entrenched (see Bunwaree and Kasenally 2005; Kadima and Kasenally 2005; Kadima 2006). Between the two extremes (Swaziland and Mauritius) we have an interesting mixed bag in terms of the party systems.

In two countries—Angola (see Santana 2005) and the DRC (see Kabungulu 2005)—party systems are still in the embryonic stage as the transition project is still under way and not yet completed. The party systems in these countries have not yet taken a clearly distinctive form. In Angola, the one-party political culture still remains strong, while in the DRC armed militias seem to continue to call the shots in politics much more than the political parties do.

In four other SADC countries—Botswana (see Somolekae 2005), Mozambique (see Sitoe et al. 2005), Namibia (see Tonchi and Shifotoka 2005) and South Africa (see Lodge and Scheidegger 2005)—despite the existence of a stable multiparty liberal democracy, the party system is marked by the dominant-party syndrome within a context of fragmented, enfeebled and disjointed opposition parties. Within this context, the ruling parties have reproduced themselves as governments over time and seem poised to do so for the foreseeable future, and the prospects of opposition parties posing any serious challenge are bleak (see Matlosa 2006).

In another three countries—Malawi (see Patel 2005), Zambia (see Momba 2005) and Zimbabwe (see Sachikonye 2005)—the party systems are in serious existential

crisis. In both Malawi and Zambia, besides the crisis that has been triggered by the abortive bids by the former heads of state (Bakili Muluzi and Fredrick Chiluba, respectively) for a third term in office, thus adversely affecting the ruling parties (the United Democratic Front (UDF) and MMD, respectively), the ruling parties were catapulted into power on the basis of a minority of the vote (25 per cent and 29 per cent of total votes in Zambia and Malawi, respectively). This not only brought about a serious legitimacy crisis for the ruling parties/regimes, but the ruling parties embarked upon a crusade of poaching of opposition party members of Parliament (MPs), further denuding the opposition's strength. In this way, pork-barrel politics is used to reinforce the political hegemony of ruling parties and regimes, in the process whittling away at the strength of opposition parties. In Zimbabwe, not only is pork-barrel politics at work in entrenching the hegemony of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), and in the process weakening and disorganizing the opposition parties, especially the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), but politics has become so militarized that even the regular presidential, parliamentary and local government elections have been reduced to ceremonial events that are meant to give the entrenched authoritarian regime some democratic veneer. Within the Southern Africa region, Zimbabwe represents a classic electoral authoritarian regime—a regime which holds regular multiparty elections but in which opposition parties are persecuted and their prospects of wresting power from the hegemonic ZANU-PF are poor.

In Lesotho, politics is an acrimonious game; parties relate to each other as enemies and thus inter-party relations tend to be marked by mutual suspicion, especially between the ruling and opposition parties. Often this mutual acrimony also marks internal relations within parties, resulting in internal infighting, factionalism and party splits. It should be noted that both intra-party relations and inter-party relations tend to become even more acrimonious during elections (both parliamentary and local government elections). Part of the explanation for this profoundly adversarial attitude of politicians towards their competitors (especially ruling parties towards opposition parties) is lack of economic resources and a tendency among politicians, therefore, to consider politics as an employment and political parties as a ladder to accessing the resources of the state, which are used by the ruling elites for accumulation purposes. As a consequence, accumulation by the political elite revolves around the exploitation of the public resources that come with control of state power—all the more so given the bleak prospects for accumulation in the private sector in resource-poor Lesotho. It is these state resources, then, that are the bone of contention when parties contest elections for the control of state power. Party fragmentation is the order of the day in Lesotho (see Matlosa and Sello 2005). This is a feature of all parties, whether ruling or opposition. The continuous fragmentation, splits, floor-crossing in Parliament and so on are the defining characteristics of the Lesotho party system (see Matlosa and

Shale 2006). Historically, Lesotho has had a de facto one-party system (between 1970 and 1986) followed by a no-party system (1986–93) and currently has a fragile and fragmented multiparty system with some characteristics of a dominant-party syndrome as well.

4.1.2 The electoral system and its impact on the party system

The electoral system sets the boundaries for parties' electoral contest for the control of state power by setting out the institutional framework for elections and defining formulae for translating numbers of votes into numbers of seats in parliament. Evidence now abounds suggesting that the two dominant electoral systems in Southern Africa—the British-style, plurality/majority First Past The Post (FPTP) and proportional representation (PR)—have their own distinctive impact on the nature of party organization and party political representation in the legislature (see Matlosa 2003a).

The electoral systems in the SADC region were inherited from colonialism as part of the institutional arrangements left behind by colonial administrations. As with various other colonially imposed institutional arrangements, these electoral systems have over time exhibited serious deficiencies and inadequacies, in particular in respect of the three main variables that are key to the democratization project—accountability, representation and political stability. It is abundantly evident today that almost all those countries operating the FPTP electoral system have experienced various types of political problem to which FPTP itself has contributed. It is also arguable that quite a number of those states operating PR have experienced a fairly positive political development, in particular in respect of representation and stability, even though issues around accountability still remain contested. Thus, unlike FPTP, PR has contributed substantially to broad representation of different political forces, including women and minority groups, and has added value to the legitimacy of rule and the stability of the political system. Lesotho in 1998 reviewed its electoral system and switched from FPTP to the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) electoral system precisely because FPTP had not helped the country much in terms of relieving perennial and protracted conflict, and had not provided broadly-based representation. Mauritius has also reformed its electoral system in the same direction but for different reasons: it has changed from the FPTP–Block Vote plurality/majority system to MMP, mainly (although not solely) to ensure much broader representation in the legislature. Recent efforts towards electoral reforms in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi have shown some inclination towards a popular preference for a change of the FPTP system towards injecting plurality/majority systems with an element of proportionality.

An electoral system is principally an institutional arrangement for the conduct of an election, be it a local government, national assembly or presidential election. Putting it differently, an electoral system encompasses procedures, laws, rules and regulations for the electorate to exercise their democratic right to choose their leaders and translate those ballots into actual representation in the national parliament. It determines the manner in which the votes cast in an election are turned effectively into seats in, for instance, the national assembly. The key variables are the electoral formula used (i.e. whether the system is majoritarian or proportional, and what mathematical formula is used to calculate the seat allocation) and the district magnitude (not how many voters live in an electoral district, but how many MPs that district elects). The countries that use the FPTP electoral system include the United Kingdom, the United States of America, India, Canada and most former British colonies.

Essentially, an electoral system performs three main functions in a representative democracy. First, it acts as a conduit through which the electorate is able to hold its representatives in the legislature accountable. Second, it makes it easy for the national legislature to be constituted either through a proportionally determined vote count or through a simple plurality of the votes. Third, different electoral systems bring out public opinion in the form of an electoral outcome by according a particular political party or a coalition of parties control of state power, and thus give incentives to those competing for power to couch their appeals to the electorate in distinct ways. In deeply divided societies, for example, particular electoral systems can reward candidates and parties who act in a cooperative, accommodative manner to rival groups; or they can instead reward those who appeal only to their own ethnic group.

To be sure, there are many electoral systems throughout the world and there is little consensus as to which is best for democratic governance and political stability. What is interesting to note, though, is that, despite the centrality of an electoral system to the choice of a government, countries hardly ever make deliberate decisions to select a system that best suits their particular conditions and contexts. 'Often the choice was essentially accidental, the result of an unusual combination of circumstances, of a passing trend, or of a quirk of history, with the impact of colonialism and the effect of influential neighbours often especially strong' (Reynolds, Reilly and Ellis 2005: 1). Each political system offers certain benefits and disadvantages in terms of the representation of different groups in society. States of the world should endeavour to review and deliberately design electoral systems that suit their own conditions with a view to deepening democratic governance. In doing so, it is advisable that nine key criteria are used to guide the process:

- ensuring a representative parliament;

- making elections accessible and meaningful;

- providing incentives for conciliation;

- facilitating stable and efficient government;

- holding the government and representatives accountable;

- holding individual representatives accountable;

- encouraging 'cross-cutting' political parties;

- promoting legislative opposition and oversight;

- making the electoral process sustainable; and

- taking into account 'international standards' (Reynolds, Reilly and Ellis 2005: 9–14).

4.1.3 The nature and form of legislatures

Having contested elections, parties then undertake much of their political work in parliament; thus the effectiveness of any parliament also depends overwhelmingly upon the vibrancy of political parties. The electoral systems in place and some features of the composition of the legislatures in the SADC region are illustrated in table 6.

Table 6: The dominance of ruling parties in the legislatures in the SADC region, 2004

Country	Ruling party	Nature of the legislature	Size of legislature	No. of seats held by the ruling party	No. of seats held by the opposition	Percentage of seats held by the ruling party	No. of appointed seats	Electoral system
Angola	MPLA	Unicameral	220	129	98	53.7	0	PR
Botswana	BDP	Bicameral	57	45	12	78.9	7	FPTP
DRC	Transitional government	Unicameral	210	–	–	–	–	FPTP
Lesotho	LCD	Bicameral	120	79	41	65.8	0	MMP
Malawi	UDF	Unicameral	192	49	143	25.5	0	FPTP
Mauritius		Unicameral	66	54	8	51.7	4	FPTP/Best Loser
Mozambique	Frelimo	Unicameral	250	133	117	48.5	0	PR
Namibia	SWAPO	Bicameral	104	55	17	76.1	6	PR

Country	Ruling party	Nature of the legislature	Size of legislature	No. of seats held by the ruling party	No. of seats held by the opposition	Percentage of seats held by the ruling party	No. of appointed seats	Electoral system
South Africa	ANC	Bicameral	400	279	121	69.7	0	PR
Swaziland	Executive monarchy	Bicameral	85	–	–	–	30	FPTP
Tanzania	CCM	Unicameral	274	244	24	89.1	42	FPTP
Zambia	MMD	Unicameral	158	127	20	60.8	8	FPTP
Zimbabwe	ZANU-PF	Bicameral	150	63	57	53	30	FPTP

– = Not available.

Source: Matlosa, K., 'Political Parties and Democratisation in the Southern African Development Community Region: The Weakest Link', EISA Research Report no. 15, 2005.

It is evident from table 6 that ruling parties exercise political hegemony in many legislatures in the SADC region. Besides winning large numbers of parliamentary seats, the ruling parties also use the system of appointed seats to further entrench their political dominance of the legislatures. The usual result is parliaments that are dominated by ruling party MPs and with few opposition MPs, and this has an adverse effect on the watchdog role of legislatures. Legislatures in effect become an extension of the executive, and this tendency works against the principle of the separation of powers and checks and balances which is so crucial to the entrenchment and sustainability of a vibrant democracy.

4.1.4 Systemic factors: a summary

To sum up, this study established, in regard to systemic factors, that the electoral system in place in each of the SADC countries not only sets the stage for the electoral contest, and hence electoral outcomes which allow legislatures to be formed, but also influences the form and substance of the party system. Plurality/majority systems are reputed to promote two-party systems in general, while PR systems are noted for promoting multiparty systems.

It has also been established above that, while a multiplicity of parties exist in a majority of SADC countries, in practice the SADC region as a whole is marked by largely dominant-party systems, irrespective of the variation of electoral systems. For instance, Botswana is a long-enduring dominant-party system with the FPTP electoral system, while South Africa is also a dominant-party system in a country that has PR.

The study also found that the nature and form of the legislature, combined with the nature of the party system and the electoral system, have both indirect and direct impact on the way parties operate and their effectiveness as key actors in the democratic process. Some countries have a unicameral parliament and others a bicameral parliament. Of particular note is the extent to which parties play their rightful role within the legislature in terms of law-making—constructive criticism of the government (the executive branch), ensuring financial accountability and combating corruption. Equally importantly, it is worth noting that the system prevalent in the SADC region whereby the head of state or government appoints a certain number of people to parliament recasts parliamentary representation largely in favour of the ruling party. The numbers of specially appointed seats in parliament range from four in Mauritius to 42 in Tanzania.

4.2 External regulation, political party funding and the environment for political parties

Political parties operate within a context of external regulations and an external environment that either enhance or inhibit their effectiveness. This regional project identified two particular elements of the external regulatory environment that affect parties.

The first is the *requirements for the registration and de-registration of parties*. These vary among the countries studied. While many countries require political parties to be registered, others (notably Mauritius and Zimbabwe) do not require formal registration. In many countries that require formal registration of parties, this is usually done under the Societies Act or through the office of the registrar of political parties. However, while parties are required to register in order for their existence to be legal, they are also required to register with the EMB for purposes of contesting periodic elections. In all the SADC countries, while information existed and was readily available regarding the registration of political parties, information regarding de-registration was scanty and not readily available. In the same context, when political parties prepare for elections their conduct is governed by the electoral law and the electoral code of conduct, which govern the nomination of candidates and the election campaign. However, in between elections parties' internal operations are not governed by any specific item of law or legislation: party constitutions and internal rules and regulations apply.

Second, one of the most contentious external factors for political parties' operations relates to their *funding*. Membership dues do not amount to enough to sustain parties' operations. Consequently, they find themselves reliant on private donations

and in some instances public/state funding too. Private funding is not regulated, and this creates a problem of the undue influence of money in politics, and especially the influence of government policy exerted by powerful economic interests by means of financial support to ruling parties. Where public funding exists, opposition parties have raised concerns that this tends to benefit the ruling party much more than other parties, especially given the reality that ruling parties tend to exploit the advantages of incumbency, particularly through the abuse of state resources, both during and in between elections.

Previous research has shown that public funding for campaign purposes during elections is a crucial condition for democratic consolidation (Lodge 2001; Lodge 2003; International IDEA 2003). The significance of public funding presumably has led a majority of SADC countries to endorse and constitutionalize public funding for (represented) political parties (Matlosa 2004b). It goes without saying that, unless all parties have access to resources, 'efficiently and expensively administered elections' can be a 'one-party show' that can hugely undermine any meaningful participation of electorates (Lodge 2001: 1). For other compelling reasons as well—for example, ailing economies in the SADC region which limits political parties' income from membership dues, and the unsustainability of external funding—public funding has become a burning issue. By implication, not to address the issue of public funding seriously would undermine democratic consolidation in the region. As Lodge seems to suggest, the issue of public funding must be tackled in the SADC countries. Lodge shows that there are five sources of funding, which include 'governments, foreign donors, business, political party's own business operations . . . and their membership and mass support' (Lodge 2001: 1).

The present regional survey of the state of political parties in Southern Africa investigated, among other things, the sources of party funding; levels of funding; levels of income and expenditure; the role of parties' national executive committees and local branches in the fund-raising process; a comparison of funding levels during and in between elections; funding for women's and youth wings; the nature of fund-raising strategies; parties' asset bases; and parties' financial reporting and accountability. When all is said and done, the challenge for political parties is to ensure that public funds are used for the benefit of the citizenry in a transparent, accountable and responsive manner.

While public funding for political parties still remains problematic, an even bigger problem relates to private funding. The main problems here relate to the following factors.

• Donations often come with strings attached.

- Donations are never (or are hardly ever) publicly disclosed.

- Donations are not (or are hardly ever) regulated in the same way as public funding.

- In utilizing private donations, parties are not accountable to either the EMB or the registration authority.

- Private donations to parties present a risk of undue influence of money on politics and the democratic process.

While there is no regulation of private funding for parties in the SADC region, some countries provide public funding while others do not. The SADC countries that do provide public funding to political parties represented in the national assembly include Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. The formula governing the distribution of state funds to parties represented in parliaments in these countries differs from one country to another. In Zimbabwe, for instance, a party qualifies for state funding if it secured 5 per cent of the popular vote in the previous election. In South Africa, the formula used is governed by two principles, namely proportionality and equity in terms of the share of parliamentary seats each party holds. Lesotho does not provide public funding for the institutional development of parties, but it does provide a small amount to political parties purely for election campaign purposes. Other countries do not have any form of public financing for political parties at all. These are Botswana, the DRC, Mauritius, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zambia. The striking feature of this list is that it includes two long-enduring liberal democracies—Botswana and Mauritius. This is testimony to the way in which political parties have historically been disregarded and continue to be disregarded in the evolution of democratic systems in our region.

In brief, with regard to the external environment and external regulation, the challenges facing political parties in Southern Africa revolve primarily around:

- registration and de-registration;

- election campaigns;

- party funding;

- the state of democratic governance;

- the nature of party systems;

- incumbency and use of state resources (including the public media);

- the nature of electoral systems and electoral performance;

- the nature and form of the legislature;
- the international relations of parties; and
- inter-party relations, coalitions and alliances.

4.3 The internal functioning and structure of political parties

By and large, the five major challenges for internal functioning of parties concern

(a) party leadership;

(b) intra-party conflicts and lack of intra-party democracy;

(c) poor relations between political parties—mutual suspicion and conflict;

(e) policy/programme development; and

(d) the management and administration of the internal affairs of the party.

We elaborate on each of these below. They are to a great extent interlinked.

4.3.1 Leadership

The leadership of political parties is as political an issue as the organizations themselves. Undoubtedly, the effectiveness and vibrancy of any political party in respect of its contribution to a functioning democracy depends heavily upon its leadership. Thus, a party's performance during and in between general and local government elections is determined, among other things, by how visionary its leadership is. A party can rise or fall on the basis of the nature of its leadership cadre. In a majority of the SADC countries the leadership issue still remains problematic.

The study of leadership issues by this EISA–International IDEA programme of research revealed, among other things, the challenges facing parties in electing/selecting their leadership; their internal structures, hierarchy and accountability mechanisms; ethical codes of conduct for both the leadership and the party rank and file; programme/policy development; international and regional networking among parties; the formation of national coalitions among parties; party relations with the EMB and civil society organizations; and parties' communications strategies. Data from the individual country studies suggest that political parties face daunting challenges in institutionalizing accountable, transparent and visionary leadership that is capable of

inculcating a democratic culture and practice both within the party and in the nation at large. In other words, democracy at both the macro level of the nation and the micro level of the parties requires democrats, and it is thus imperative that party leaderships embrace a democratic culture and practice. Section 4.5 below elaborates on the problems of leadership succession that are particular to the Southern Africa region.

4.3.2 Intra-party conflict and lack of intra-party democracy

Intra-party conflicts are a generalized trend in the SADC region. These conflicts may be covert or overt, violent or non-violent, prolonged or short-lived depending on the specific political context of each country. Some of the adverse effects of the infighting within parties are the all-pervasive phenomenon of party splits, the proliferation of parties and the prevalent trend in many countries today towards the appearance of independent candidates. In its general election of May 2004, Malawi had a large number of independent candidates and in fact these candidates, taken together, polled more votes than the political parties did and captured more parliamentary seats (see Matlosa and Patel 2006).

Intra-party conflicts, especially violent ones, are a result of a lack of intra-party democracy. If dissent is prohibited within parties, members may find themselves resorting to unconstitutional means of expressing their dissatisfaction about the way parties are governed. Conflict within parties may be prolonged and protracted or may intensify around election time in relation to the selection of party leaders and the nomination of election candidates. Lesotho's 2007 general election was preceded by enormous intra-party tension, fragmentation, splits and floor-crossing in the Parliament. Almost all the major political parties in Lesotho—the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP), the Basotho National Party (BNP), the Marema-Tlou Freedom Party (MFP) and the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD)—entered the general election of 17 February 2007 having suffered internal faction-fighting and splits. The ruling party split because of the floor-crossing (see Matlosa and Shale 2006), leading to the emergence of the new opposition party, the All Basotho Convention (ABC).

The challenges that confront political parties in terms of entrenching intra-party democracy are many and varied. Camay and Gordon argue persuasively that 'political competition is also severely limited when internal democracy is constrained. Many African political parties—especially dominant ones—engage in internal "dissent management" leading to autocracy. They restrict voices within the party and discipline MPs and other members who disagree with leadership positions. They exercise strict control over the selection of party officials and candidates for public office' (Camay and Gordon 2004: 6).

Primary elections are an important litmus test of the extent and degree of democracy within political parties. Often, the process of nominating party candidates for purposes of contestation of state power during elections tends to be fraught with controversy and conflict as a result of the way in which it is carried out by the party leadership. This EISA–International IDEA programme investigated the following issues around primary elections: the eligibility criteria for candidacy; election processes and the procedures for securing nomination as a party's candidate; and the type of electoral system used to s/elect party candidates. Problems around primary elections revolve, inter alia, around whether the process emphasizes centralized leadership control or allows the party rank and file to influence the selection process. These problems are rife in almost all the SADC countries irrespective of the electoral system. However, it is much more glaring in those countries that operate FPTP, which easily allows candidates to contest elections in an independent capacity.

The challenge centres on the degree of openness when nominations for candidates are made. Parties need to open up to their rank-and-file membership for the collective ownership of nominations and party lists. In fact, it is desirable for an independent and impartial body to be engaged and involved during party nomination processes and the drawing up of party lists. This would ensure that the process is monitored and observed by an external impartial body, as is the case with the party list development process in South Africa, which is facilitated and observed by EISA for various political parties.

4.3.3 Poor relations between political parties

Evidence abounds suggesting that inter-party relations are often marked by mutual suspicion and conflict of various types. Political parties are not good at relating to each other and developing mutually beneficial pacts at the national level premised upon a common ideology and policy frameworks. At the national level, while the relationships between the ruling party and opposition parties often tend to be marked by mutual suspicion at best and outright hatred at worst, opposition parties themselves hardly ever relate to each other in a harmonious way. In the recent second round of the DRC presidential election, the two main contestants, Joseph Kabila and Jean-Pierre Bemba, could not campaign themselves ahead of the highly-charged poll but delegated this responsibility to their wives, who criss-crossed the length and breadth of that big country, simply because the political atmosphere was tense and the two candidates cited security reasons for this 'innovative' campaigning approach. We hardly ever hear of regular national dialogue between ruling parties and opposition parties both during and in between elections. Leaders of ruling parties are known for refusing to engage opposition party leaders in national policy issues.

More glaringly, some leaders of ruling parties would even refuse to hold national debates with opposition leaders during election campaign.

Party alliances and coalitions influence the operations of parties. Evidence abounds suggesting that political parties exhibit serious weaknesses in terms of forming alliances and coalitions at the national level, with the exception of a few countries in the region. The exceptions include Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique and South Africa (see Kadima 2006). In other SADC countries, experiences with party alliances or coalitions at the national level have tended to be poor, and they are often attempted only during elections; after the election the alliances or coalitions tend to die. Only recently we have witnessed some efforts in this direction of forming more sustainable party coalitions in countries such as Lesotho, Botswana and Zambia. But these new efforts will have to be tested during general elections in these three countries—scheduled for 2007, 2009 and 2006, respectively—before we can see how sustainable they are in the long run. The fact is that political parties have a particular weakness in relating to each other and developing mutually beneficial pacts at the national level. This weakness extends to a lack of sustainable international and regional linkages with other like-minded parties and/or foundations.

Finally, political parties do not seem to embrace a culture of *cross-border linkages* with like-minded parties and foundations regionally, continentally and globally. Either these linkages do not exist at all or, where they do exist, they are weak and confined to mere fund-raising strategies. Political parties in the SADC region have a poor track record in establishing and sustaining harmonious inter-party relations at the national level, regional/continental level and international level.

4.3.4 The management of internal party affairs

The management of parties' internal affairs is an important yardstick for the extent to which intra-party democracy is deepening in most of the SADC countries. In one sense this issue is inextricably linked to that of party leadership, but it is also dependent upon the ideological clarity and distinctiveness of each party, as well as the relevance of its manifesto and programme. The management of internal party affairs involves their day-to-day running, the building of national, provincial, district, community and village branches of parties, and the management of party resources, both movable and immovable. It also includes the development of manifestos and programmes as well as the organization of regular meetings and conferences. In those countries where the leadership of the political parties is rather autocratic, clearly, the management of parties tends to be less transparent and accountable to the party rank and file. In those countries where the leadership is more open and fairly democratic,

the management of parties tends to be more transparent and accountable. It is imperative, therefore, that parties strive for efficient, transparent and accountable management of party affairs if intra-party democracy is to be established and institutionalized. Furthermore, effective and efficient management systems have to be put in place from the village/community branches up to the national structures of parties if their management is to be adequately improved.

4.3.5 Policy and programme development

Policy and programme development determines the effectiveness of parties, especially when it comes to the mobilization of a support base and contestation for state power. We found that parties experience difficulties in developing policies and programmes. Consequently, the political parties within each one of the SADC countries exhibit commonalities in ideological outlook, and this presents the electorate with little choice during elections (see Mohamed Salih and Nordlund 2007).

It has been observed that political parties in Southern Africa tend to lack *ideological clarity* and distinctiveness. As a result, they look much the same to each other and they tend to raise similar campaign issues. Their programmes often lack policy substance and are generally a shopping list of promises which are hardly ever fulfilled after elections. A recent study undertaken by EISA on public outreach programmes of political parties observed that parties often develop four instruments of outreach: (a) policy or political programme; (b) party manifestos; (c) voter education; and (d) civic education (Kadima, Matlosa and Shale 2006). The study observed that often these instruments are hardly used systematically, given that in many instances individual leaders tend to loom larger than parties and as a result the personality cult tends to take over the institutional life of political parties. Election campaigns tend to revolve around individuals rather than being predicated upon well-defined and ideologically delineated policy positions/proposals. Consequently, even voters choose parties and candidates not so much on the basis of their policy proposals as on the basis of the personalities involved, patronage politics and ethnic/tribal/racial affinities. The first -ever democratic multiparty election after 40 years held in the DRC is the most recent illustration of this stark reality. The election campaign in the DRC ahead of the presidential and parliamentary elections of 30 July 2006 showed that vote-buying was a general trend, and this was exacerbated by the entrenched poverty and an entrenched culture of patronage or pork-barrel politics. This trend further fuels political corruption within political parties, which becomes even more rampant during elections. The challenge here is for parties in the SADC region to become ideologically differentiated and be in a position to present clearly differentiated policy proposals as they campaign for elections so that the electorate

can choose their candidates on the basis of policies as opposed to individuals and other considerations, such as patronage, identity politics and so on.

4.3.6 Internal factors: a summary

To summarize, this study concluded that with regard to their internal functioning parties in Southern Africa are confronted with various challenges, including:

- leadership selection and succession;

- candidate nominations and primary elections;

- party structure and internal governance;

- party ideology and election manifestos;

- policy development;

- party relations with civil society organization and social movements;

- party relations with EMBs;

- gender parity within parties;

- mobilization (especially targeting young people);

- membership recruitment and the management of the membership register;

- public outreach and media liaison; and

- civic and voter education.

4.4 Women's political participation

Gender equality is surely an imperative principle for the entrenchment and institutionalization of intra-party democracy. The Southern African experience in respect of women's empowerment in both quantitative and qualitative terms is a mixed bag (Molokomme 2000). The SADC member states took a positive step when they signed the Declaration on Gender and Development in Blantyre, Malawi, in 1997. They committed themselves individually and collectively to the following policy measures, among others:

- the achievement of equal gender representation in all key organs of the state and at least 30 per cent target of women in the key political and decision-making structures by 2005;

- the promotion of women's full access to and control over productive resources to reduce the level of poverty among women;

- the repeal and reform of all laws, constitutions and social practices which still subject women to discrimination; and

- urgent measures to prevent and deal with the increasing levels of violence against women and children (Molokomme 2002: 42).

Table 7: The representation of women in the national legislatures of the SADC region

Rank	Country	Electoral system	Seats	No. of women	Percentage of women
1	Mozambique	PR	250	90	*34.8*
2	South Africa	PR	400	131	*32.8*
3	Tanzania	FPTP	307	97	*30.0*
4	Namibia	PR	104	19	*26.4*
5	Mauritius	FPTP-Block	70	12	*17.0*
6	Angola	PR	220	34	*15.5*
7	Malawi	FPTP	193	27	*14.4*
8	Lesotho	MMP	120	16	*13.3*
9	Botswana	FPTP	57	7	*12.3*
10	Zambia	FPTP	158	19	*12.0*
11	DRC	FPTP	500	57	*11.4*
12	Zimbabwe	FPTP	150	15	*10.0*
13	Swaziland	FPTP	65	5	3.1

Source: Lowe-Morna, C., *Gender in Southern Politics: Ringing Up the Changes* (Johannesburg: Gender Links, 2004), p. 14 (updated by the author).

Table 7 illustrates the extent of women's representation in legislatures in the SADC region. On the basis of the data above, a plausible argument can be made that an electoral system can either facilitate or inhibit greater women's participation in governance. Evidently, PR seems to be more amenable and conducive to enhancing gender equality in politics and increasing the participation of women; and the converse is true for the

FPTP system. In table 7, the top two countries in terms of women's representation in Parliament are Mozambique (with 35 per cent) and South Africa (with 33 per cent), both of which operate the List PR system. The bottom two countries are Zimbabwe (with 10.0 per cent) and Swaziland (with 3.1 per cent), both of which operate the FPTP (plurality) system. However, PR often needs to be complemented by deliberate gender quota systems, as the South African and Mozambican experiences demonstrate. This in part explains why Tanzania ranks number three in table 7 in terms of gender representation (with 30 per cent representation of women in the legislature) despite its FPTP electoral system. This is due mainly to its high quota for women (around 35 per cent). Moreover, while in and of itself it is not a sufficient guarantor of increased women's participation in the legislature, PR is surely a catalyst for gender equality in the political governance arena.

A political culture that is embedded in the ideology of patriarchy is partly responsible for the poor performance of a number of SADC countries in terms of women's representation, but the nature of the electoral system in place in each of them is equally important.

This research programme investigated the following gender dimensions of party organization: formal internal quotas or special measures for women in the leadership structures of the parties; and quotas or special measures for women seeking nomination as party candidates. One of our findings is that in countries where women participate actively in party politics their participation in legislatures tends to be higher. The converse is also true: in countries where women's participation in party politics is low, their participation in legislatures tends to be correspondingly low. The challenge therefore is for parties to ensure greater inclusiveness in their higher echelons by bringing more women into leadership positions. Generally, both ruling parties and major opposition parties in the region are led by men, and parties' executive committees are also dominated by men. We have yet to see women become leaders of ruling and opposition parties and not just cheerleaders. To this end, SADC member states should strive to achieve the benchmarks of the 1997 SADC Declaration on Gender and Development.

4.5 Key challenges facing political parties: issues specific to the region

We have discussed the problem of the dominant-party syndrome as one of the challenges facing multiparty democracy in Southern Africa. Linked to the dominant-party syndrome in the region is a new trend of outgoing state presidents who, in a veiled Machiavellian fashion, manage to retain the presidency of ruling parties

while handing over the reins of state power to the secretaries general of the same ruling parties (see Southall and Melber 2006). This so-called Nyerere Model, first experienced in Tanzania, has gained currency today. The former president of Zambia, Fredrick Chiluba, attempted this strategy in 2001, but it later foundered as his chosen successor, Levy Mwanawasa, did not toe the line. The former president of Malawi, Bakili Muluzi, also tried the same strategy after appointing Bingu Wa Mutharika as the UDF candidate in the presidential election of May 2004 (Khembo 2005).

Muluzi retained his presidency of the UDF in an attempt to continue governing the country by remote control. Less than a year after the 2004 election, however, bitter conflict had already ensued between him and the current president, Mutharika (see Matlosa and Patel 2006). Mutharika was elected president on the UDF election ticket. The UDF, however, failed to gain a majority of the parliamentary seats and Mutharika excluded senior members of the UDF from his cabinet in order to form a coalition government with two of Malawi's opposition parties, the Republican Party (RP) and the Movement for Genuine Democracy (MGODE). One of the proximate causes of the political tug of war within the ruling party in Malawi was the election result that delivered a minority government: the party that won the parliamentary election—the UDF—won only 39 per cent of the valid votes cast and only 49 out of a total of 193 seats (25 per cent of the total number of seats). That the new Malawian Government was a minority government par excellence was further reinforced by the outcome of the presidential race, in which no single candidate won more than 50 per cent of the vote. Mutharika himself won the presidential election with just 36 per cent of the vote. Thus, in terms of both the parliamentary and presidential election outcomes, the Malawi general elections of May 2004 produced a minority government, and this did not strengthen the hand of the new president in governing the ruling party and the country.

In this situation, political tension has marked inter-party relations in Malawi since the beginning of the conflict between Muluzi and Mutharika. The latter's ultimate resignation from the UDF appears to have been a pre-emptive strike against the party that had catapulted him into power, in order to avoid the ignominy of expulsion. In fact, Mutharika ultimately established a new party called the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which has automatically become a ruling party without recourse to a fresh election. It left Malawi in the unusual position of having a president who was not part of the ruling party.

In Malawi, the constitutional position of the president after he has resigned from his party is not clear, and the situation there in some ways reflects a second challenge for political parties in Southern Africa, which is reflected in the experience of Lesotho in 1997. That political episode is an interesting one for both political scientists and

constitutional lawyers. The then ruling BCP experienced a split in Parliament which led to the emergence of the LCD, resulting in the latter becoming the ruling party without recourse to a fresh election and the former becoming an opposition party despite having won the 1993 election overwhelmingly.

As in Lesotho in 1997, legally Mutharika remains the president of Malawi under the leadership of a new party established in Parliament, despite the fact that he has resigned from the party whose ticket steamrolled him into the presidency. There is no doubt that this new development presents Malawi with a constitutional crisis, which Mutharika has spent much of his time in office trying to manage.

The neighbouring countries in the SADC region ought to learn important lessons from Malawi in respect of the dynamics of political succession and the dilemmas of dual power centres in governance whereby the leadership of the ruling party is separated from the presidency of that same party. Clearly, this results in a bifurcation of the governance process which inevitably leads to various types of tension and conflict between the party in power and the presidency.

Since the 2004 elections in Namibia, former President Sam Nujoma has retained the leadership of his party, the South-West African People's Organization (SWAPO), while Hefikepunye Pohamba, the party secretary general, is the country's current president. So far, no major political problems have been experienced as a result of this arrangement.

A similar situation nearly happened in Mozambique, where former President Joachim Chissano initially intended to retain the leadership of the ruling party—the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique, Frelimo)—while relinquishing the state presidency in favour of Armando Guebuza, the former Frelimo secretary general. Mozambique went through the parliamentary and presidential elections in December 2004 with Chissano as party president and Guebuza as the candidate for the presidency. Following intense debate within the Frelimo 'politburo', Chissano resigned his position as president of the party on 4 March 2005, thereby enabling Guebuza to assume both the party presidency and the state presidency. Consequently, Mozambique has avoided a possible constitutional/political crisis triggered by a bifurcation of power between party and state—a development that has triggered political instability in Malawi and Zambia today. The Central Committee of the party met on 7 March and elected Guebuza as party president. According to the Mozambican News Agency, 'Chissano made it clear that he was standing down in favour of Guebuza, who was elected President of Mozambique in December's general elections. Thus, Frelimo maintains its tradition, established at independence in 1975, that the posts of President of the Republic

and president of the party should be held by the same person' (Mozambican News Agency March 2005: 2). Under the circumstances, Chissano is likely to be appointed honorary president of Frelimo at the party's next Congress in 2007.

Although instability has not marked the current political situation in Namibia following the 2004 election, that the bifurcation of power between the party in power and the state presidency is not good democratic practice admits of no controversy.

Equally importantly, debate is raging around possible scenarios for South Africa after the second term of the current president, Thabo Mbeki, expires in 2009. While it is generally accepted that Mbeki will not attempt to manipulate the constitution in such as way as to make a third term possible, as his counterparts in Zambia and Malawi did, it is not yet clear whether he would want to remain the leader/president of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) while a new state president comes into office. Southall, Simutanyi and Daniel aptly opine that 'there are musings within the African National Congress that he (Mbeki) could or should retain the party leadership when he is constitutionally compelled to step down from the presidency in 2009. Such a duality of authority between the party and government could well prove a prescription for factional struggles and threaten South Africa's newly acquired reputation for political stability' (Southall, Simutanyi and Daniel 2006: 15).

To summarize, a new trend is unfolding in the SADC region whereby former state presidents hang on to the top leadership of ruling parties and parties' secretaries general (or handpicked favourites of these former presidents) take over the reins of state power. This tendency has the potential to strangulate the governance process and paralyse governments when there are disagreements and conflicts between the party president and the state president, as the cases of Zambia and Malawi clearly demonstrate. While this new trend has not triggered a major political upheaval in Namibia since 2004, it is not desirable that Thabo Mbeki of South Africa should follow this route when his second term of office as the country's president expires in 2009, despite calls for him to retain the presidency of the party.
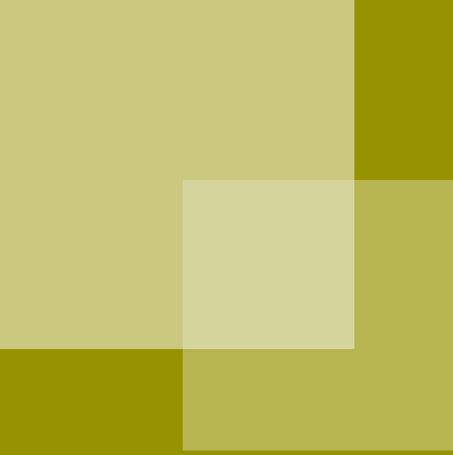
Chapter 5

Overview and Analysis of the Individual Countries
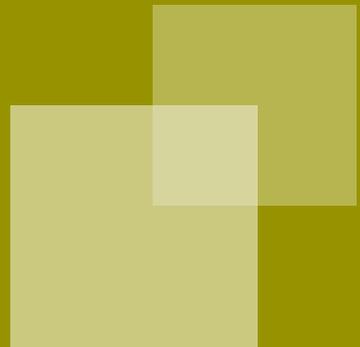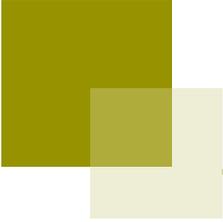
Chapter 5

Overview and Analysis of
the Individual Countries

5.1 Angola

Angola is one of the SADC countries that have not yet undergone a democratic transition. Thus, the challenges for peace, stability and democracy there remain daunting. Given the long history of a one-party system, the new-found multiparty framework in Angola still remains weak. The political landscape is still heavily dominated by the ruling Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (Movimento Popular de Liberaçao de Angola, MPLA), while the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola, UNITA) represents the main opposition and a potential challenge to the political hegemony of the MPLA. The war that ravaged Angola over the past three decades, in particular following the abortive 1992 election, wreaked havoc not only on the country's socio-economic well-being but also on its political development, including the institutionalization of political parties. The institutional capacity of the parties is severely constrained and many of them have not tested their political strength through an election.

This is so because, with the exception of the MPLA and UNITA, Angola's 127 political parties were established following the abortive 1992 elections. They have yet to establish their political credentials in the forthcoming elections. Elections have not taken place since 1992. The next parliamentary elections are planned for 2008 while presidential elections are scheduled for 2009. Given the dominance of the ruling MPLA and the fragmentation of opposition, any electoral contest in Angola is most likely to be won by the ruling party. As Hodges aptly points out,

> in any new electoral contest, the MPLA would be in a strong position to capitalize on the disarray in UNITA and lack of a credible "third way" civilian opposition.

> UNITA was widely discredited by its return to war after the election of 1992 and its failure to engage seriously in the post-Lusaka peace process in 1994–98. Although there were attempts to restore unity within the fractured, demoralized party after Savimbi's death and the end of the war, it is unlikely to pose a serious electoral threat to the MPLA in the foreseeable future (Hodges 2004: 66).

While the ruling party enjoys access to state resources, the problem of resource constraints is profound within the opposition parties. All things being equal, the PR electoral system in Angola is supposed not only to facilitate a broadly-based multiparty government of national unity through a power-sharing arrangement, but also to make the country's party system more robust. But this may not be realized until a sustainable peace is achieved, a democratic transition is realized and the institutionalization of democratic governance begins to take root.

5.2 Botswana

Botswana is the longest-enduring and most stable liberal democracy in Southern Africa. It also has the longest-enduring dominant-party system. Although the country has allowed the existence of many political parties that have contested state power through regular elections since independence in 1966, only one party—the BDP—has enjoyed the monopoly of state power. The dominance of the BDP has been reproduced over time by the political advantage it enjoys as the ruling party, including its access to state resources, which are used shrewdly by the ruling elite to help the party gain political advantage, especially during elections. The main opposition party, the Botswana National Front (BNF), has hardly presented a political threat to the BDP's continued grip on the state and dominance of the political system. As Molomo puts it, 'weak opposition characterises Botswana's democratic system. Nevertheless, a strong opposition is an indispensable part of a democracy. It keeps government in check and accountable to the people' (Molomo 2003: 297).

With a view to presenting a serious political challenge to the BDP's hegemony, opposition parties have attempted to unite through alliances, but these attempts have often failed dismally (Somolekae 2005). In part because of the enfeeblement of the opposition parties and their continued failure to unite, it appears that the main threat to the BDP hegemony may not be the opposition parties, but rather possible opposition from within as a result of internal factional fighting. While Molomo recognizes this problem, he also observes that factional fighting is worse within the opposition parties than within the ruling BDP; but he notes that 'yet, unlike the opposition parties, which remain divided, the BDP, notwithstanding its own factionalism, remains a united party' (Molomo 2003: 297). The FPTP electoral

system does not help the country much in nurturing and consolidating its liberal democracy and institutionalizing its party system. In order to redress the deleterious effects of the FPTP system on parties and the party system, Botswana may have to review its electoral system and undertake necessary reforms. Botswana may be better served by the MMP system than by its current system.

5.3 The Democratic Republic of the Congo

After decades of protracted violent conflict and entrenched authoritarian rule, the DRC is currently undergoing a democratic transition. For the first time in 40 years, the country held its first democratic elections in July and October 2006. Following the peace agreement and the establishment of a transitional government, political parties have become a feature of the DRC political landscape. As in Angola, political parties are still in their infancy and are yet to be institutionalized and operational, provided the democratic transition following the 2006 elections is successful.

The parliamentary and presidential elections of July and October 2006 took place within the context of a country that is in the process of healing its wounds following a long war that claimed many lives, ravaged the socio-economic fabric and laid a foundation for authoritarian rule. The elections were therefore historic in three fundamental ways. They were meant to usher in a democratic dispensation after four decades of undemocratic governance; to bring about sustainable peace after decades of violent conflict; and to be transitional elections that would lay a firm foundation for democracy and peace. With a total of about 250 political parties, the party system in the DRC is still in a state of formation.

5.4 Lesotho

Since independence, Lesotho has experienced political instability marked by various types of violent conflict, especially involving the political parties. For instance, almost all elections since 1965 have involved some kind of conflict among parties relating to the election outcome. The worst conflicts were before, during and after the 1970 elections. This was in fact the watershed political development in the country, for it marked a transition from what seemed a relatively stable emergent multiparty democracy towards authoritarianism that would last for more than a decade. Thus, following the abortive 1970 elections, not only did Lesotho's political instability intensify through the escalation of violence, but it essentially became a de facto one-party state.

The one-party autocracy since 1970 was replaced by military authoritarianism in 1986. The military regime that replaced the BNP government banned all political activity and political parties in Lesotho. While the one-party regime had stymied party political activity substantially between 1970 and 1986, the military regime 'killed' political parties between 1986 and 1993. Political parties were only 'resurrected' with the transition from military rule to a multiparty dispensation in 1993. It is worth noting that overall inter-party relations have improved enormously since the reintroduction of multiparty system. Be that as it may, the country experienced a violent conflict following the 1998 election, which was won by the newly formed LCD. An amalgam of opposition parties joined forces to challenge the election results and attempted to enlist the support of the monarchy by camping in the palace grounds/premises.

The 1998 violent conflict was followed by numerous political reforms, including the replacement of the FPTP electoral system with MMP. While this system was able to ensure that general elections produce a fairly broadly-based representation of parties in the legislature, it also assisted in allowing party political contestation to be shifted away from the streets, where it easily becomes violent. Party political contestation now takes place in Parliament on the basis of agreed rules, regulations and procedures given that most of the parties (ten of them at the time of writing) are now represented in Parliament. All the six political parties selected for interviews as part of this study expressed satisfaction with the political effects of the new electoral system so far, especially in bringing about relative peace and stability. In order to nurture and consolidate the country's new-found peace and stability, currently the Parliament is undergoing important reforms aimed at aligning the parliamentary system with the newly adopted electoral system.

However, even if inter-party relations seem to have improved quite considerably since 1993, the political parties still face numerous internal problems before they can become effective drivers of democratic practice and culture in the country. These revolve around (a) factionalism and splits; (b) a lack of external regulations governing internal party activities; (c) leadership and management bottlenecks; (d) a lack of capacity for policy development; (e) problems of membership mobilization and the maintenance of membership registers; (f) a lack of a culture of party coalitions and external relations with like-minded parties and/or foundations; (g) problems in the selection of leaders and nomination of candidates; (h) a lack of institutionalized internal mechanisms for conflict management; (i) a lack of or the ineffectiveness of party outreach programmes; (j) problems with mobilizing resources and party funding; and (k) a lack of deliberate strategies for the empowerment of marginalized groups such as women, young people and people with disabilities within the power structures of parties.

5.5 Malawi

Malawi underwent its democratic transition in 1994. Since then a multiparty political dispensation has been under way following decades of one-party authoritarian rule. The country held its first free parliamentary elections in 1961. After that, until 1994, it was under the one-party rule of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). According to Patel,

> the country changed to a multiparty political dispensation after a national referendum in 1993. The first multiparty democratic elections were held in 1994 and a new republican Constitution was adopted by the National Assembly in 1995. The Constitution establishes a presidential form of government based on the principles of separation of powers. The term of office of the president is five years and a president can seek re-election for another term. The Constitution limits the Presidential Tenure of office to two terms only. There was an attempt to amend the Constitution to extend the term of office of the president which was successfully thwarted (Patel 2005: 5).

It is worth noting that Malawi's party system cannot be easily classified as either a one-party or a multiparty system; yet it is neither a two-party system nor a dominant-party system. Like Lesotho's, Malawi's is a fragmented and volatile party system marked by continuous splits of both ruling and opposition parties, which tends to destabilize the political system. The country has the FPTP electoral system, which further aggravates the fragmentation of the party system (see Matlosa and Patel 2006). A recent study undertaken by the same authors jointly recommended that Malawi should redesign its electoral system and adopt MMP for parliamentary elections and the Two-Round System (TRS) for presidential elections (Matlosa and Patel 2006). In this way, Malawi would embark on transformation of its electoral system away from the single-member electoral district and a majority/plurality system towards proportionality. This would be done by retaining a proportion of parliamentary seats that are elected in single-member electoral districts but having the remaining seats elected through the List PR system. The guiding principle would be to ensure the accountability of MPs to their electoral districts while also broadening representation within elected public institutions. The List PR component could help Malawi redress the fragmentation of the party system.

5.6 Mauritius

Like Botswana, Mauritius is reputed for its long-enduring and stable liberal democracy (Darga 2004; Bunwaree and Kasenally 2005; Kadima and Kasenally 2005; Bunwaree 2006). This established tradition has been accompanied by a rich political culture of party coalitions resulting in coalition governments over time. But, while it is accepted

that Mauritius is the only country in the SADC region that operates a multiparty system perfectly well, and the external regulations and environment within which parties operate seem conducive to the institutionalization of a robust party system, it is worth noting that numerous challenges still confront the parties in that country.

First, it is evident that internal party democracy is a major challenge for Mauritian democracy. It is thus imperative that political parties strive to improve their intra-party democratic structures and procedures. Second, the relationship between parties and society still remains problematic, despite Mauritius' world-acclaimed stable liberal democracy. It is strongly recommended that the political parties engage in systematic and well-coordinated civic and voter education programnmes both during and in between elections. Third, the funding of political parties remains a thorny issue. It is incontrovertible that without resources political parties are bound to be ineffective. Mauritius has yet to find the right formula for the regulation of the funding of political parties following the 2004 report of a select committee of Parliament on this issue. Such a framework will have to state clear procedures and regulations regarding both public and private funding for political parties. Fourth, a code of conduct for political parties needs to be developed in order not only to regulate inter-party relations but also to deal with the abusive language and violence that tend to mark election campaigns. Fifth, specific legislation should be worked out to prevent the ease with which floor-crossing takes place and in the processes weakens parties in Parliament. Sixth, parties should ensure that their efforts to build internal democracy include a firm commitment from the top leadership and the rank and file to gender equality (see Bunwaree and Kasenally 2005; Bunwaree 2006).

It is evident that Mauritius' electoral system (FPTP + Best Loser system) has not been very useful in facilitating the institutionalization of a robust party system. Partly as a result of the realization of this and other shortcomings of the system, a reform process was initiated in 2002 through a three-person commission headed by Justice Albie Sachs, a judge of the South African Constitutional Court. For instance, one of the factors that prompted the electoral reform was the need to address issues around religious and/or ethnic political parties and the funding of parties. Although the Sachs Commission recommended that Mauritius should reform its electoral system by adopting MMP, the political elite in Mauritius has not moved on the reform agenda, which remains in limbo (see Darga 2004).

5.7 Mozambique

Following its independence from Portuguese colonial administration, Mozambique adopted a de jure one-party system between the 1970s and the late 1980s. Since the

early 1990s, the country has adopted a multiparty system that allows the existence of many parties within the framework of a liberal democratic dispensation. In essence, however, the country's political landscape is marked by a dominant-party system in which the ruling Frelimo remains dominant. The main opposition party, the Mozambican National Resistance (Resistência Nacional Moçambicana, Renamo) is represented in Parliament and controls some municipalities throughout the country, but it remains too weak to pose a serious threat to Frelimo's hold on power. Like its counterparts in Namibia and South Africa, Frelimo also exploits not only the advantage of access to state resources, but also the allure of the liberation movement tradition, which adds to its political credentials, in contrast to opposition parties, whose historical record tends to cast a political shadow in the eyes of the electorate. Be that as it may, the PR system has helped to ensure a stable and broadly representative power-sharing government. This has been critical for the sustainability of the peace process and the nurturing and consolidation of democratic governance.

5.8 Namibia

Namibia experienced a negotiated settlement of its protracted liberation struggle, led by SWAPO, in 1990. This transition ushered in relative peace and the multiparty democracy that has endured since then. Although many parties exist and are able to contest elections every five years, the dominance of SWAPO has marked the political landscape since the democratic transition of 1990. This has been made possible and sustainable in the medium-to-long term due in large measure to the advantages that come with incumbency, the liberation tradition, and the weakness, disjointedness and fragmentation of opposition parties. Hence Tonchi and Shifotoka conclude that 'although 13 parties are registered in the country, the fact that only seven are represented in parliament indicates that there needs to be concern for the survival of political parties' (Tonchi and Shifotoka 2005: 35). As in Mozambique and South Africa, the PR system operational in Namibia has facilitated an inclusive government that allows for a broadly-based Parliament such that almost all key political parties participate in the law-making process.

5.9 South Africa

There are 37 registered political parties in South Africa. Ten of them contested all national and provincial elections in 2004. Those that contested elections at the national level only were Keep it Straight and Simple (KISS), the Employment Movement for South Africa (EMSA), The Organisation Party (TOP) and the United Front (UF). Others put forward candidates only at the national level and

in a few provinces, while some did so only in the provinces. Those that contested all the national and provincial seats were the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), the ANC, the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO), the Democratic Alliance (DA), the Independent Democrats (ID), the New National Party (NNP), the Pan-African Congress (PAC) of Azania, the United Christian Democratic Party (UCDP), the United Democratic Movement (UDM) and the Vryheidfront Plus (VF Plus). Parties contesting national elections were required by law to pay a deposit of 150,000 rand (ZAR—*c*. 25,000 US dollars (USD) at the exchange rate prevailing in 2004) and those contesting provincial elections 30,000 ZAR. Thus, the parties that contested all the national and provincial elections mentioned each paid a total of 420,000 ZAR to the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). This money is reimbursed if a party is able to secure seats in the legislature.

The PR electoral system that South Africa has used since 1994 has, by all indications, served the country fairly well. First, it has certainly helped to ensure broad representation of key political forces in the legislature. Second, and linked to this, it has been a catalyst of increased gender balance, or increased women's participation, in both Parliament and the executive branch of government, since 1994. Third, it has facilitated reconciliation and peace following a protracted violent conflict, thereby acting not only as a conflict management instrument but also as a guarantee of political stability. Fourth, it has enhanced the participation of the electorate in the political process, especially elections, by eliminating 'wasted' votes, as all valid votes cast count towards the calculation of election results, and parties thus earn their seats in the legislature in proportion to their electoral strength. All these positive attributes of PR notwithstanding, there has been a good deal of questioning of the PR system which South Africa has applied since 1994, particularly since 1999 following the country's second democratic election.

5.10 Swaziland

Swaziland gained its independence from the United Kingdom on a multiparty platform in 1968, thanks to a Westminster-type constitution and parliamentary democracy. The Swazi king had been advised to form his own party. Reluctantly, he established the Imbokodvo National Movement (INM), which was to prove invincible, mainly because of the presence of the king and those closest to royalty. The INM ruled without opposition for the first five years of independence, and there was no talk among officialdom of abolishing party politics during this time. However, the 1972 election ushered in what could be called the death of democracy in the Swazi state. The Ngwane National Liberatory Congress (NNLC) won three seats in the eastern sugar-belt electoral district. Unfortunately the INM could not

accept the prospect of an opposition in Parliament; it regarded this victory as an affront to the king's authority and image. To weaken the opposition in Parliament, the INM challenged the citizenship of one of the NNLC members (Bhekindlela Ngwenya) in the courts. When this failed, the last resort was to repeal the independence constitution and ban all political party activity in Swaziland. The independence constitution was eventually repealed on 12 April 1973 in what could be best described as a royal coup on the Swazi Parliament. The king gave himself all legislative, executive and judicial powers.

Taking 1973 as the watershed year where political party democracy is concerned in Swaziland, our research has traced the basis of the dominant discourse that seeks to create an absolute monarchy system on terms dictated by Swazi law and custom. We have found that, despite the 1973 ban, Swaziland has an underground political movement whose operations are pronounced, unpredictable, and probably an unnecessary nuisance to the state. In the post-1973 era more parties were founded, indicating in most part that there is a popular rejection of the royal indictment of the independence constitution in 1973. Our study focused on two of these parties, the People's United Democratic Movement (PUDEMO) and the NNLC. A third organization, Sive Siyinqaba, Sibanhle Sinje, is a cultural organization that vowed upon its launch in 1996 that it would talk political matters. Whereas PUDEMO and the NNLC espouse socialist and pan-African ideologies, respectively, Sive Siyinqaba is more sympathetic to Swaziland's cultural heritage and, as such, protective of the Swazi monarchy. In one sense it poses as a neo-INM with a rather open mind to 'changes thereto where such are necessary' to some aspects of the Swazi heritage. In another sense, this cultural organization has its eyes focused more on political power and influence than on mere cultural practices. Members of Sive Siyinqaba are by design found in both houses of Parliament, where they provide effective checks and balances to the operations of government. Sive Siyinqaba declared in 2003 that it wants to occupy all the seats of Parliament in the next election. There are enough indicators to suggest that it is a political-party-in-waiting.

The Swazi ruling aristocracy, by various means and methods, seems to have succeeded in demonizing party politics over the years. The method used has been to contrast parties with the majesty of the king, as though the two could not exist in the same political environment. Faced with a choice between them, the majority of Swazis would opt for the monarchy. The question that this study raises is for how long the Swazi state will pretend that political parties do not exist in Swaziland. A related concern alluded to in the conclusion of the study is what further efforts the underground political movement should make and what strategies it should employ to make a stronger case for its version of democracy and eventually cause a change in the kingdom's political landscape.

5.11 Zambia

Zambia attained its political independence in 1964. According to Neo Simutanyi, 'Zambia has a brief history of multiparty politics. During the first parliamentary period (1964–1968), there were three political parties represented in the National Assembly' (Simutanyi 2005: 4). Following a brief period with a multiparty system, Zambia adopted a de jure one-party system in 1972. While the one-party system was not publicly resisted, and in fact seemed to enjoy some degree of political legitimacy for a long time, it was never a democratic system (see Momba 2003; Momba 2005; Simutanyi 2005). Although general elections would be held regularly, only members of UNIP would contest elections. These were not multiparty elections. UNIP became effectively the only party in existence, exercising unfettered hegemony over state power and the entire political system.

The return to multiparty politics following the constitutional amendment of 1990 and the 1991 elections resulted in the re-emergence of many political parties, and Zambian civil society became very active. Currently there are 28 registered political parties in the country but only the MMD, the United Party for National Development (UPND), UNIP and the Forum for Democracy and Development (FDD) are serious contenders for power, as the elections of September 2006 clearly demonstrated. Since the transition from a mono-party system to a multiparty dispensation, the political landscape in Zambia has been dominated by the MMD. This clearly puts Zambia in the group of SADC member states that are characterized by a dominant-party system.

The FPTP system that Zambia adopted and has used in all its elections has not helped the institutionalization of a robust party system. Only recently has Zambia embarked on an electoral system reform programme. In 2004, a presidential commission, the Electoral Reform Technical Committee (ERTC), was established to review the 'electoral process and make recommendations aimed at ensuring that the electoral process is acceptable to the stakeholders. This, it is hoped, will instil public confidence so that future election results are generally acceptable' (Zambia, ERTC Report, August 2005: 144). Headed by Advocate Mwangala Zaloumis, the ERTC completed its electoral reform exercise in July 2005. In its final report, submitted to the government, the ERTC made the following recommendations, among others:

- replacement of the FPTP electoral system by MMP for both parliamentary and local government elections;

- an increase in the size of the Parliament to 200 seats, of which 160 should be filled using the FPTP system, and 30 using the PR system, while the remaining

ten should be reserved for presidential nominations aimed at the inclusion of special-interest groups, especially women;

• presidential election results should be determined on the basis of a majoritarian system whereby the winner has to secure 50 per cent plus one of total votes cast;

• election tribunals should be established for the constructive management of election-related disputes;

• the independence and autonomy of the Electoral Commission of Zambia should be enhanced; and

• public funding for political parties should be introduced in order to level the playing field.

It is worth noting that, although the ERTC completed its work and submitted its final report to the government through the minister of justice, the government has shown little enthusiasm about putting the reform measures in place. The proposed electoral reform measures had not been implemented before the September 2006 elections.

5.12 Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe attained its political independence leading to majority rule in 1980. This development was followed by a vibrant democratic process marked by a multiparty system. However, within the new multiparty democratic dispensation that emerged, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), which had won the independence elections, began to dominate the political scene. Gradually, this trend led to the de facto one-party rule that has been entrenched in the country, particularly since 1987. This trend has entailed, inter alia, a culture of centralization of power and the curtailment of diversity of opinion and political tolerance. Although the one-party era is obviously over and has been replaced by a multiparty political regime and regular elections since the 1990s, the vestiges of the old order still linger on and, as the English aphorism goes, 'old habits die hard'. It is thus no surprise that the behaviour of the ruling ZANU-PF towards both opposition parties, especially the MDC, and other non-state political actors such as civil society organizations bears all the hallmarks of a one-party political culture where criticism of or political challenges to officialdom are considered heretical at best and treasonous at worst. This political culture tends to survive by means of coercion and the 'conspiracy of silencing' rather than persuasion and public dialogue. One of the net effects of political coercion and

silencing has obviously been the entrenched and all-pervasive polarization of the Zimbabwe polity, especially since the 1999 constitutional referendum and the 2000 parliamentary election.

However, it should also be noted that the opposition parties in Zimbabwe, as elsewhere in the SADC region, are weak, fragmented and reactive to the ruling party, and this has not always worked in their favour (Sachikonye 2005). The MDC is the main opposition party and the official opposition in the legislature. Thus, much was expected of the MDC as it prepared for and entered the 2005 parliamentary election race. When Zimbabwe held its Senate election of 26 November 2005, the main opposition experienced an internal split with one faction opting to put up candidates and another opting to boycott the election (Chiroro 2005). That split still afflicts the MDC today.

The nature of the party system in Zimbabwe is also heavily influenced by the FPTP electoral system. A civil society-initiated process of electoral system reform, spearheaded by EISA jointly with the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), took place in 2003–2004. The final report emanating from this process made wide-ranging recommendations, including:

- the establishment of an independent electoral commission;

- adoption of the MMP system;

- the establishment of the Senate;

- the institutionalization of deliberate measures for the inclusion of minorities and marginalized groups in governance, including women and young people;

- electoral law reforms;

- reforms of electoral procedures; and

- the establishment of electoral tribunals, an Electoral Court and party liaison committees for the management of election-related disputes, etc. (Zimbabwe Election Support Network 2004).

However, the Zimbabwean Government did not buy into the civil society-driven electoral reform agenda. Instead, in late 2004, the government initiated its own reform process, selectively implementing some of the measures that had been proposed by the ZESN and EISA in advance of the March 2005 parliamentary election but without touching the electoral system itself. Thus, the government reform measures amounted to no more than tinkering with the FPTP system while retaining its
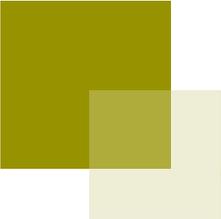
essential elements. In the end, the change was one more of form than of substance. Since 2005, Zimbabwe's downward spiral of political, economic and social decay has continued with increased speed. Today, Zimbabwe is an authoritarian state under an increasingly repressive ZANU-PF government.

Overview and Analysis
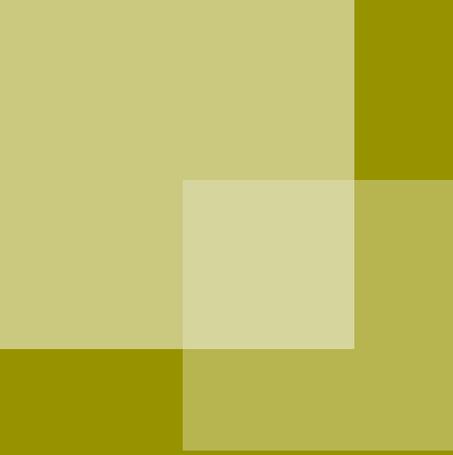
Chapter 6

Overall Conclusion
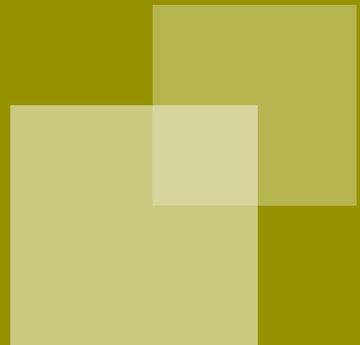
Chapter 6

Overall Conclusion

Examination of the country-specific and regional contexts in Southern Africa generally points to a trend by which the authoritarian politics of yesteryear has transformed profoundly away from mono-partyism or military or no-party rule towards political liberalization marked by a multiparty political dispensation. This is part of a global political wave that has ushered in democratization following the end of the cold war and accompanying the spread of globalization since the 1990s. Thus, within Southern Africa as a whole, only two countries—Botswana and Mauritius—can be classified as long-enduring stable liberal democracies. Two others, Angola and Swaziland, have not undergone a democratic transition and have therefore not yet embraced a political culture of multi-partyism. The DRC is still in the throes of a democratic transition and this resource-rich country could either witness a historic moment for sustainable democratic transformation or regress further into the abyss of a protracted violent conflict. In yet another country, Zimbabwe, while progress was made towards institutionalizing a multiparty democracy following independence in 1980, there has been a marked regression towards centralized politics since the mid-1990s, leading up to the current situation of a de facto one-party system in which, even if opposition parties exist, the ruling party exercises unfettered political hegemony bolstered further by its political control and influence of other key state institutions, including the security establishment. This environment has led to many scholars classifying Zimbabwe as an electoral authoritarian regime or liberalized autocracy (Schedler 2002; Bratton et al. 2005).

The picture is also varied in the remaining countries. Since the early 1990s, South Africa, Namibia and Mozambique have joined Botswana and Mauritius in the league of relatively stable liberal democracies and have institutionalized multiparty political systems. However, in all these three countries, while a multiparty system

exists and is increasingly being institutionalized, it is constrained by the dominant-party syndrome which continuously entrenches the hegemony of the ruling parties. Opposition parties are enfeebled and fragmented. This situation is exacerbated by the entrenched culture of liberation politics: the ruling parties in South Africa, Namibia and Mozambique are all former liberation movements and have only recently transformed into modern parties (and ruling parties). The implications of this fact for a democratic dispensation are immense. This observation does not in any way mean that a dominant-party syndrome and liberation politics per se are inimical to democratic multiparty systems. It simply means that these two elements place some limits to the extent of liberal democracy as it is known and practised in advanced democracies in Western Europe and North America.

The other four SADC countries—Lesotho, Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia—have all undergone a democratic transition from military rule (Lesotho) and de jure one-party regimes (Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia) to a multiparty political dispensation since the early 1990s. This situation has allowed multiparty politics to germinate and take root in these countries, although the kind of political transition that is under way in these states has been of such a nature that largely formal rather than substantive democracy seems to exist, and in this scheme of things democracy is seen and defined as though it were synonymous with mere multiparty elections per se. We classify these countries as 'electoral democratic regimes'.

The varying trajectories of the democratic transition in Southern Africa and the varying degrees or 'democraticness' of the countries notwithstanding, at least in a majority of the states a multiplicity of parties exist and are able to operate. This is testimony to the reality that political parties play a critical role in the democratization process in Southern Africa today. But the mere existence of a multiplicity of parties is one thing; the levelling of the playing field to ensure that parties contribute to democratization freely and fairly is quite another. This observation refers, in particular, to the often tense relationships between ruling and opposition parties and to the use/abuse of state resources by ruling parties at the expense of opposition parties—both common features of the Southern African political landscape.

We have also discovered that, while democratization in many countries is fairly advanced at the macro level of the nation state, internal democracy within parties remains a major challenge. In other words, many SADC countries have made considerable strides in advancing democracy, while the key actors in the democracy process—political parties—have lagged behind in inculcating an internal democratic ethos, practices and procedures. This, in part, explains the declining public trust in political parties in most of the SADC countries. This declining public trust could also be linked to the nature of (external) environment political parties find themselves operating in.

Despite these challenges facing political parties, they remain a critical pillar for democratic governance in Southern Africa. Where parties do not exist, democracy is well-nigh impossible. Thus, in order to ensure the effectiveness of parties, the external and internal challenges will need to be addressed by governments and parties themselves.

Overall Conclusion
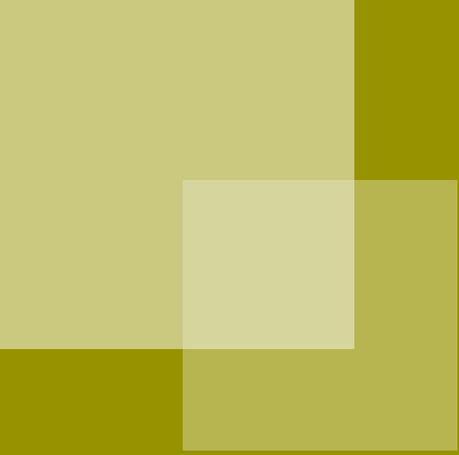
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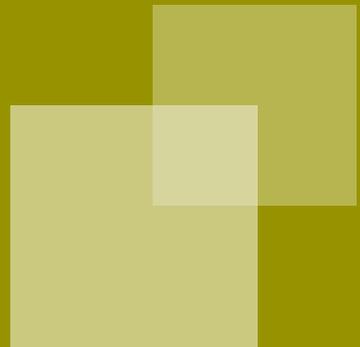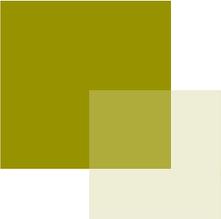
Recommendations

Chapter 7

Recommendations

In this section some policy recommendations are proposed with a view to ensuring that political parties become effective institutions anchoring democratic governance in the SADC region.

1. The SADC countries should open up the political space for political parties to operate and function optimally. While many countries have opened up the political marketplace for parties to contest state power, others have not yet successfully done so. These countries include Angola, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

2. Party laws and regulations need to be stringently enforced, and breaches of those laws and regulations need to be met with appropriate sanctions. It is evident that in a majority of countries these laws and regulations either do not exist or are not stringently enforced in order to bring parties into line. Consequently, parties depend primarily on their constitutions and internal regulations.

3. The SADC countries need to continuously review (and reform where appropriate) their electoral systems, party systems and parliamentary systems as these aspects of the political process have a direct bearing on political parties and their functioning.

4. The management of the internal affairs of political parties should be steered in such a way as to redress the bureaucratic–oligarchic syndrome marked by the triple burden of (a) hyper-bureaucratization, (b) the personality cult and (c) patronage politics. To redress this trend will require serious efforts aimed at institutionalizing internal democracy within the political parties.

Finally, political parties still face a major challenge in terms of the empowerment of women and the achievement of gender parity in leadership positions. It is remarkable that even in those SADC countries where the regional benchmark of 30 per cent women's representation in parliament has been achieved, and the agenda is now to achieve 50 per cent parity, the situation within political parties is totally different. The patriarchal ideology is still dominant in political parties and this adversely affects the participation of women in politics and their representation in the top echelons of parties, and by extension in parliament and the executive organs of state.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABC	All Basotho Convention
ACDP	African Christian Democratic Party (South Africa)
AFORD	Alliance for Democracy (Malawi)
ANV	African National Congress (South Africa)
BAC	Basutoland African Congress (Lesotho)
BAM	Botswana Alliance Movement
BCP	Botswana Congress Party
BCP	Basutoland Congress Party (Lesotho)
BDP	Botswana Democratic Party
BIP	Botswana Independence Party
BNF	Botswana National Front
BNP	Basotho National Party (Lesotho)
BOS	bureaucratic–oligarchic syndrome
BPP	Botswana People's Party
COD	Congress of Democrats (Namibia)
CONU	Congress for National Unity (Malawi)
DA	Democratic Alliance (South Africa)
DP	Democratic Party (Zimbabwe)
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party (Malawi)
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DTA	Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (Namibia)
EISA	Electoral Institute of Southern Africa
EMB	electoral management body
ERTC	Electoral Reform Technical Committee (Zambia)
FDD	Forum for Democracy and Development (Zambia)
FPTP	First Past The Post (electoral system)
Frelimo	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique)
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party (South Africa)
INM	Imbokodvo National Movement (Swaziland)
LCD	Lesotho Congress for Democracy
LP	Labour Party (Mauritius)
LPC	Lesotho People's Congress
MAFUNDE	Malawi Forum for Unity and Development
MAG	Monitoring Action Group (Namibia)

MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change (Zimbabwe)
MDP	Malawi Democratic Party
MELS	Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin Movement (Botswana)
MFP	Marema-Tlou Freedom Party (Lesotho)
MGODE	Movement for Genuine Democracy (Malawi)
MLC	Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo (Movement for the Liberation of Congo) (DRC)
MMD	Movement for Multiparty Democracy (Zambia)
MMM	Mouvement Militant Mauricien (Mauritian Militant Movement)
MMP	Mixed Member Proportional (electoral system)
MP	member of parliament
MPLA	Movimento Popular de Liberaçao de Angola (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola)
MSM	Mouvement Socialiste Mauricien (Mauritian Socialist Movement)
NAGG	National Alliance for Good Governance (Zimbabwe)
NCD	New Congress for Democracy (Malawi)
NDA	National Democratic Alliance (Malawi)
NDF	New Democratic Front (Botswana)
NIP	National Independence Party (Lesotho)
NNLC	Ngwane National Liberatory Congress (Swaziland)
NUDO	National Union of Democratic Organisations (Namibia)
NUP	National Unity Party (Malawi)
PETRA	People's Transformation Party (Malawi)
PFD	Popular Front for Democracy
PIMO	Partido Independente de Moçambique (Independence Party of Mozambique)
PPM	People's Progressive Movement (Malawi)
PPRD	Parti du Peuple pour la Reconstruction et la Démocratie (People's Party for Democratic Reconstruction) (DRC)
PR	proportional representation
PUDEMO	People's United Democratic Movement (Swaziland)
RCD for	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (Congolese Rally for Democracy) (DRC)
Renamo	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Mozambican National Resistance)
RP	Republican Party (Malawi)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SS	Sive Siyinqaba Sibahle Sinje (Swaziland)
SWAPO	South-West African People's Organization
TRS	Two-Round System (electoral system)

UDF	United Democratic Front (Malawi)
UDM	United Democratic Movement (South Africa)
UDPS	Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social (Union for Democracy and Social Progress) (DRC)
UNIP	United National Independence Party (Zambia)
UNITA	União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola)
UPND	United Party for National Development (Zambia)
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZANU-Ndonga	Zimbabwe African National Union-Ndonga
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZESN	Zimbabwe Election Support Network

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