# Democracy and Political Change in the 'Third World'

*Edited by*
Jeff Haynes

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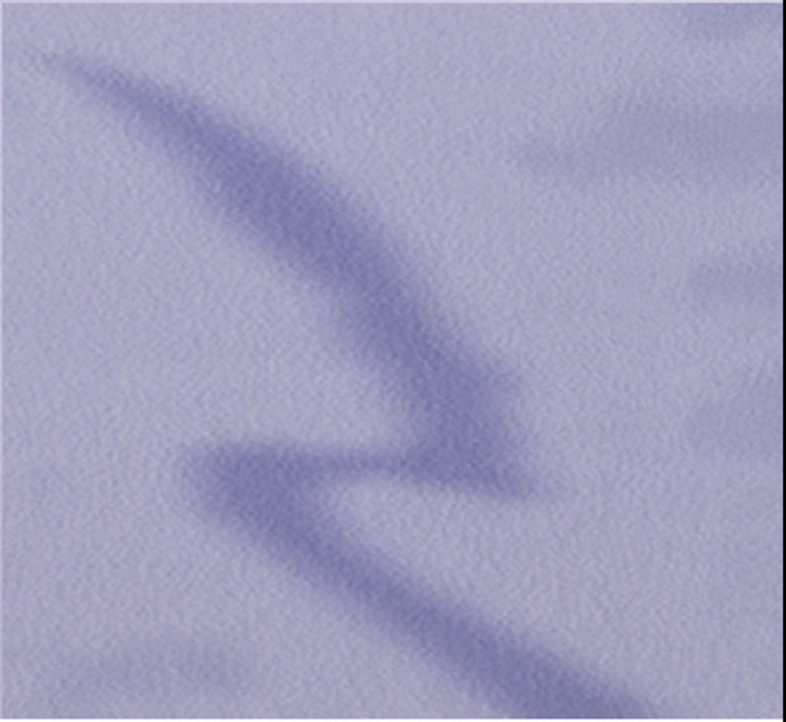

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# Democracy and Political Change in the 'Third World'

This book examines the current position of democracy in the 'Third World'. Its context is set up by a puzzle: after up to two decades of democratisation, why have so few new democracies in the 'Third World' managed to consolidate their democratic status? Many are 'unconsolidated', or 'electoral' democracies—where democracy is not habituated—principally because there is not general consensus among all political actors that democracy is 'the only game in town'.

There are, the book argues, however, reasonably free and fair elections, with a handing over of power to the victorious presidential candidate and/or the parties winning most seats. Few among the new democracies of the 'Third World' have deeper democratic or liberal credentials—when judged against the criteria of organisations, such as Freedom House, or those of Western governments and international organisations, such as the EU. This raises the issue of whether there should be a universal standard of democracy; and this book considers whether political systems in the 'Third World' should be seen as contemporary manifestations of local processes and structures rooted deep in history and cultures, rather than pale approximations of Western forms.

*Democracy and Political Change in the 'Third World'* analyses the recent transitions to, and consolidations of democracy; the overall patchy democratic record among such countries; and the relationship of external and domestic factors to these attempts to democratise. It focuses on four diverse 'Third World' countries: India, Indonesia, Mexico and Zambia. Very few other books on democracy have considered the situation of 'Third World' countries so this book fills an important gap. It will be vital reading for students and researchers in comparative politics, Third World politics, politics—and sociology—of development, and international studies.

**Jeff Haynes** is a Professor of Politics at London Guildhall University. His books include *Religion in Third World Politics, Religion and Politics in Africa, Third World Politics: A Concise Introduction, Democracy and Civil Society in the Third World, Religion in Global Politics* and an edited volume *Religion, Globalisation and Political Culture in the Third World.*

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# Democracy and Political Change in the 'Third World'

## Edited by Jeff Haynes

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# Series editor's preface

Ever since Athens' rise to a brief period of political dominance, the unlikelihood of the emergence and consolidation of democratic decision-making processes has been recognised. Next to the question of how to obtain democracy, the most heated controversies are addressed to the problems and prospects of defending, maturing and expanding democracies. Why would a ruling elite withdraw from the centre of power by non-violent means? Which social, societal and economic conditions facilitate democratic decision-making? Are established political parties a sufficient condition for democracy or a necessary condition only? What alternatives are available to the European/North American conceptualisations? Why would people in new democracies accept a system that promises more than it delivers? What are the prospects for increasing the number of democratic states in the near future?

The rapidly expanding literature in this area used to focus on 'waves'. More than a decade after the revolution in Eastern and Central Europe, we are watching the ebbing of the 'third wave' and discern the paradox that democratisation does not necessarily imply democracy. These problems cannot be understood within the conventional, conceptual borders of democratisation, transition, democracy and consolidation, or by relying on Western European and North American experiences only. What is needed is, first of all, a rethinking of the concepts 'democracy' and 'democratisation', allowing for much more analytical depth and details than the simplistic contrast between democracy on the one hand, and everything else on the other. A number of these conceptualisations are available ('illiberal democracy', 'facade democracy', 'thin democracy', 'full democracy' and the like) and most of them try to avoid the 'fallacy of electoralism' and the old disease of 'imputism'. Second, the scope of research should be broadened considerably, not only to cover conventional 'Western' types of regimes, but to deal also with developments and specific circumstances in Asia, Africa and Latin America. 'Eurocentrism' is hard to cure, since it usually relies on a mixture of latent ideological and historical prejudices as well as on evident analytical shortsightedness.

The contributors to the volume all accepted the challenge to deal with these two requirements simultaneously. They differ clearly in their research interests, study designs, selected material, and the scope of the analyses presented, but they all cope with the chances for (continued) democratic decision-making in so-called 'Third World' countries. Before these specific analyses are presented, Jeff Haynes summarises the major questions and approaches in his introduction to this volume by elaborating the central concepts 'Third World' and the 'third wave of democracy' (Chapter 1). His double conclusion—some degree of democratisation is visible, but the impact of the third wave is patchy—is clearly corroborated by the other authors.

The first four contributions are addressed to general problems of democratisation and comparative research in this area. Bruce Baker proposes a 'democratic audit' in order to perform reliable quality assessments based on a wide variety of indicators (Chapter 2). Jan Engberg and Svante Ersson operationalise the concept 'illiberal democracy' and conclude from a comprehensive empirical analysis of about 100 states in the last decades, that we are dealing with a 'growth industry' (Chapter 3). The pitfalls of restricting democracy to elections only are discussed by Jørgen Elklit (Chapter 4), while the need for established political parties is underlined in the analysis presented by Vicky Randall and Lars Svåsand (Chapter 5).

The next contributions focus on the developments in specific countries. Before we turn to these case studies Armin K.Nolting examines the relationship between the European Union and Malawi, to find out that the pooled experiences of EU-member countries and the European culture of cooperation do not have much impact on democratisation in Africa (Chapter 6). Detailed overviews of the specific developments and the huge problems confronting processes of democratisation and consolidation are discussed by Darren Wallis for Mexico (Chapter 7), by Peter Burnell for Zambia (Chapter 8), by Andrew Wyatt for India (Chapter 8), and by Olle Törnquist for Indonesia (Chapter 10). These chapters provide an impressive amount of thoroughly collected information that enriches our knowledge and offers very interesting opportunities for improving existing approaches. The inherent value of this information is especially illustrated in the last chapter, where Olle Törnquist's astonishing amount of information about Indonesia is luckily not harmed by his irrelevant and ritualistic rudeness against 'internationally reputed scholars of democracy, and so-called friendly governments and organisations'. Finally, Jeff Haynes returns to the major problems and prospects in his concluding chapter by warning against rather naïve expectations about the chances of democracy to develop under clearly different social, economic and cultural conditions (Chapter 11).

The heydays of Athens' dominance and democracy lasted a very short period only. Despite the fact that a tendency towards somewhat more respect for the right of individuals to be free from political oppression and arbitrary abuse of government power can be observed in many former authoritarian regimes, democratic processes are hard to establish—and perhaps even harder to consolidate. Nothing valuable is free of charge. This platitude remains highly relevant for democratic developments in the so-called 'Third World'.

Jan W.van Deth, Series editor
Mannheim

# 1

# Introduction

## The 'Third World' and the third wave of democracy

*Jeff Haynes*

The third wave of democracy started in Southern Europe in the mid-1970s, before spreading in the 1980s to Latin America, Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa (Huntington 1991). Until then there had been very few—less than a dozen—democratically-elected governments in the 'Third World'.[1] Instead, political terrains were filled with various forms of authoritarian regimes, including: military-led, one-party, 'no-party' and personalist dictatorships. The result of the wave of democratisation was that by the end of the 1990s around three-quarters of countries, world-wide, had democratically-elected governments.

As the twenty-first century began, all Latin American countries (with the exception of Cuba) had elected governments. In Asia, many formerly non-democratic polities, including Bangladesh, Nepal, the Philippines, Taiwan, South Korea, Mongolia, and, most recently, Indonesia had become democracies. Africa showed a similar picture, with democratically-elected goverments in, *inter alia,* Benin, Zambia, Ghana, Uganda, Mali and Tanzania. So widespread was the shift to democratically-elected governments that of 'Third World' regions, only the Middle East and Central Asia stood apart. In the former, apart from the reintroduction of democracy to Lebanon in the early 1990s (after nearly twenty years of civil war) and gradually deepening political liberalisation in Jordan, authoritarian regimes were still very common; in the latter, the demise of Soviet rule was not followed smoothly by democratisation.

On the basis of Freedom House ratings, Diamond (1999) calculated that between 1992 (the 'high point for freedom in the world') and the mid-1990s, the number of 'free' states stagnated, declining quite significantly as a proportion of democratic countries.[2] The consequence, he claimed, was that there was growing evidence of a 'reverse wave' back to authoritarianism. However, Karatnycky (1999) argued that there were still clear indications of continuing democratic progress in the 'Third World' at the end of the 1990s. The division between Karatnycky and Diamond reflects a wider controversy in political science: how to explain and account for the progress, or its lack, in new democracies. The debate was initially focused on a concern with democratic transitions—or, 'transitology': the study of shifts from authoritarian to democratically-elected governments. Later, when it became clear that there was not, generally speaking, a smooth shift to clearly democratic regimes in many new democracies, attention shifted to problems of democratic consolidation—or, 'consolidology': the examination of the difficulties of making customary, and deepening, democracy.

This book is concerned, theoretically and empirically, with the issue of democratic consolidation in new democracies in the 'Third World'. Its main focus is a puzzle: while dozens of 'Third World' countries 'went democratic' over the 1980–2000 period, few unequivocally managed to consolidate their democratic status. The reason for this does not seem simply to be one of insufficient time: for example, Southern Europe's 'new' democracies—Greece, Portugal, Spain—are said to have consolidated their democracies within a decade of the demise of authoritarian rule in the mid-1970s (Pridham 1991a).

If it is not primarily a question of time, what are the main factors retarding or facilitating the consolidating of democracy? On this issue, opinion is varied. Some observers argue that outcomes are strongly related to the extent to which power holders have been encouraged by pressure from various external and domestic sources—for example, internationally, from foreign governments and, at home, from civil and political society—to allow citizens greater participation in the political arena. Others suggest that democratic progress is primarily associated with an array of domestic factors affecting political outcomes, including level of economic development, quality of political leadership and political culture.

This book does not aim to offer an opinion as to which view is 'right' or 'wrong'; instead, it aims to explain the overall patchy record of democratic consolidation in new 'Third World' democracies by focusing on both internal and external factors. It seeks to accomplish its objectives through a mix of mostly theoretical and largely empirical contributions. Regarding the former, we do not attempt to devise a general theory of democratic consolidation, not least because contributors would probably agree that such a theory is unachievable. However, as the chapters of the book show, there *are* a large number of cases worthy of investigation, offering examples to show the urgency and relevance of developing middle range theories that can offer guidance to understanding democratic trajectories in the contemporary 'Third World'.

Early chapters discuss, in various ways, two main issues: first, how to measure the quality or degree of democracy; and second, what components are most important for democratic progress, with a focus on elections, political parties and foreign influence. There follow four chapters examining democratically 'unconventional' countries: India, Indonesia, Mexico and Zambia. These are unconventional because none of them demonstrate a straightforward authoritarianism-liberalisation-transition-consolidation pattern. For example, as Darren Wallis explains in his chapter, Mexico has 'failed' democratically in the past, but is now 'bouncing back', that is, it has recently showed signs not only of rolling back authoritarianism but also of putting in place a recognisably democratic regime. After three-quarters of a century of rule by the same party, an opposition candidate, Vicente Fox, won presidential elections in December 1999. What would happen after Fox's victory? Would a qualitatively 'better' democracy emerge? Or, would it be merely a 'changing of the guard' at the top, with politics, essentially, continuing as usual?

Andrew Wyatt examines India's democratic position in the context of party fragmentation. Democratic for more than half a century, some observers nevertheless contend that the country is currently 'failing' democratically (Kohli 1994). Until the late 1970s India showed much political stability under the hegemonic rule of the Congress Party, with no realistic alternative contenders for power. But by the 1990s India had over 400 political parties, many of them concentrated at the regional level, and Congress Party's domination had evaporated. During the 1980s, and especially the 1990s, India experienced increasingly fragile, short-lived, coalition governments. In addition, political unrest grew, especially at the margins of the country, for example, Jammu-Kashmir, which was effectively ruled directly from Delhi. Wyatt examines the quality and practice of India's democracy and suggests that party fragmentation, open revolt in Jammu-Kashmir, and the rise of the Hindu-chauvinist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) all reflect serious stresses and strains in India's democratic fabric.

Until recently, Indonesia, like India, had experienced decades of political stability. Ruled for more than thirty years by General Suharto, Indonesia was to many the epitome of the East Asian developmental state: economically successful, political stable, a 'guided democracy'. Then in 1997 things fell apart economically; a year later Suharto was forced to stand down by popular pressure. His temporary successor, B.J.Habibie, tried to make piecemeal reforms, but was later replaced by an elected president, Abdurrahman Wahid. The decline of Suharto's authoritarian rule encouraged the rise of an increasingly confident, yet fragmented, civil society, united only by its demand for fundamental political change. By 2000, as Olle Törnquist explains in his chapter, the situation was stalemate, between, on the one hand, a regime apparently unwilling to countenance fundamental reforms and, on the other, a vibrant civil society seeking to accomplish major political changes but stymied by urban-rural, class, regional, ethnic and religious divisions.

While Indonesia's eventual political destination is anything but clear at the present time, there is greater consensus regarding Zambia, our final case study. Zambia seemed, initially, to be a rare African democratic 'success story'; eventually, however, it turned out to be a democratic 'failure'. Until the 1990s, Zambia, like Indonesia and Mexico, had had one-party rule for decades. Its shift to democracy in 1991 was widely seen as the result of a combination of external and domestic pressures which forced an initially unwilling regime, beset by economic problems, to allow free and fair elections. However, the resulting government led by a former trade union leader, Frederick Chiluba, was, for many, a democratic disappointment. Peter Burnell explains in his chapter why the optimism of the early 1990s later gave way to pessimism: Chiluba's government ruled much in the manner of the pre-1992 regime, with a crackdown on opposition activists and a declining economy.

Taken together, the chapters of the book emphasise the following:

- *There is no single precondition or condition for the emergence of a democratic polity.* Seeking to identify a single cause to explain democratic outcomes—whether rooted in economic, social, cultural-psychological, or external factors—has not yielded a general law of democratisation. Our analyses suggest that such a grand theory is probably not attainable. A search for the 'holy grail'—a set of identical conditions that can account for the presence or absence of democratic regimes—should probably be abandoned. Better results might be achieved through more modest efforts to derive a contextual approach to the study of democracy among the new democracies of the 'Third World'.

- What some observers have considered to be *essential preconditions for democracy are better understood as its outcome*. For example, patterns of sustained economic growth with more equitable income distribution, higher levels of literacy and education, and increases in social communication and media exposure, are probably best treated as the product over time of relatively stable democratisation processes, not as their essential requisites.
- *Civil society matters*. Civil societies differ in their ability to make a democratic difference: for example, many in Africa and the Middle East are weak and divided and, consequently, unable to exert much pressure on governments to change policies. Civil societies tend to be more influential in parts of Latin America and South, East and Southeast Asia. The point is that civil society has a crucial role in persuading those in power to allow a relatively large measure of democracy.
- *Democratisation is 'always…a messy non-linear process'* (Tripp 1999:5). Most new democracies in the 'Third World' have, at best, moved hesitantly and tentatively towards consolidating democracy. In some cases, democratic progress seems to have begun and ended with reasonably free and fair elections.
- *It is not necessary to have a certain set of cultural norms present before democratic prac tices and institutions can emerge and develop*. Huntington (1993) claims there is a strong likelihood that Christian countries will be democracies, and an equally strong expectation that Muslim or Buddhist countries will not be. As our case studies of Indonesia and India illustrate, the important issue is not what religious or cultural system is paramount; it is this: is there an 'appropriate' civic culture—characterised by relatively high levels of mutual trust among citizens, tolerance of diversity, and propensity for accommodation and compromise? When such factors are present, they are likely to be encouraged by the work of democratic institutions over time, as they serve to encourage appropriately democratic values and beliefs among ordinary citizens and members of the political class. Evidence for this assertion can be found in the circumstances and experiences of various countries—for example, Costa Rica and arguably India—which managed to introduce and sustain democracy following prolonged periods of civil conflict.
- *Democratisation in the 'Third World' has produced a large number of 'electoral' democ racies*. I define an electoral democracy as one characterised by regular, reasonably 'free and fair' elections, and a consequent handing over of power to the victorious presidential candidate or the party or parties winning most seats. But electoral democracies tend to be deficient in the liberal aspects of democracy, when judged against the criteria of organisations, such as Freedom House, or

those of Western governments and international organisations, for example the European Union.

- *The importance of external factors on a country's democratisation path differs from place to place and time to time.* The result is that it is impossible to generalise about the impact of external factors on domestic democratisation processes. Despite much rhetoric, Western governments and institutions often seem most concerned with political, economic and social *stability* in new 'Third World' democracies than in abetting sustained democratic progress.

## Categorising democracy in the 'Third World'

Before going further it is appropriate to assess what democracy is. How best to operationalise the concept? Collier and Levitsky (1997) note that there is a large measure of conceptual disarray; after perusing around 150 (mostly recent) studies, they counted *more than 550 subtypes of democracy,* pointing out, however, that many such subtypes could actually be classified and ordered by moving up and down a relatively restricted conceptual ladder. While some subtypes related merely to specific institutional features or types of democracy, others referred to forms of 'diminished' democracy, exhibiting a plethora of terminological and conceptual emphases relating to problems of realising democratic outcomes.

A plethora of labels is interesting, but it is not analytically very helpful. As Baker points out in his chapter, democracy and democratisation have dominated political debate in and about the 'Third World' for around twenty years; and, as already noted, much political analysis of the transition stage has been published. However, studies concerning the processes *beyond* the basic introduction of democratic institutions and governments have been much more limited in terms of their breadth of coverage. Part of this shortcoming has come from waiting for the dust to settle and data to be collected; yet unresolved, albeit fundamental, questions lie at the heart of the issue. Baker explains that there is no agreement as to which 'Third World' states have consolidated democracies, because the cut-off points—both for 'democracy' and for 'consolidated'—are contested. He is also concerned with the issue of defining and judging democratic *quality.* Side-stepping the question of whether or not a country has enough democratic content to be called a democracy (or semi-democracy, or any of the numerous subtypes), he argues that it is more appropriate to try to measure the nature of its democratic content through a 'democratic audit'.

Following Baker's analysis of the issue of democratic quality, Engberg and Ersson examine the value of a subtype increasingly used to define 'Third World' states' political systems: 'illiberal' democracy. In an illiberal democracy there are—often considerable—electoral freedoms but few liberal ones. Engberg and Ersson focus on two main questions: first, are 'Third World' illiberal democracies distinctive empirical categories in a comparison with other regime types; and second, to what extent is illiberal democracy developing into a common 'role model' in the 'Third World'? They argue, not only that illiberal democracies tend to be relatively stable over time, but also, *contra* Karatnycky (1999), that they are a growing phenomenon. They also contend that the concept of 'illiberal' democracy becomes an interesting feature of political analysis *only* after making a distinction between *illiberalism by design* and *illiberalism by default*.

Bearing in mind the concerns discussed by Baker and Engberg and Ersson, it is appropriate to move to the issue of categorising types of democratic regimes. While I am aware of the dangers of over-generalisation, it seems to me that there are also dangers in too much hair-splitting: having very large numbers of democratic subtypes, without substantive differences between them, does not easily aid analysis. I offer a simple—if not simplistic—tripartite democratic typology of relevance to 'Third World' countries, which inform democratic categorisations in later chapters. These are, one, 'facade' democracy; two, 'electoral' democracy; and three, 'full' democracy. It should be noted that Diamond (1999) has offered a similar classification using the terms, pseudo, electoral and liberal democracy that are, to a large degree, synonymous with the classification presented here.

### *'Facade' democracy*

Facade democracies have the following characteristics:

- Rulers have few real pretensions to democracy.
- There are regular, albeit heavily controlled, elections.
- Rulers of facade democracies always work closely with their armed forces.
- In sum, the democratic characteristics of such regimes are minimal, quantitatively and qualitatively less than countries identified as electoral democracies (see later).

Facade democracies were historically common in Latin America, the result of elections primarily to impress external observers; as Whitehead puts it: 'for the English to look at' (*para os ingleses ver* (Portuguese)) (Whitehead 1993:316). Bayart describes how similar kinds of elections in Africa—he calls them 'fig leaf' elections—have recently led to facade democracies in a number of countries, including Togo, Burkina Faso and Cameroon (Bayart 1993:xii-xiii). In the Middle East, Presidents Saddam Hussein (Iraq), the late Hafez al-Assad (Syria) and Hosni Mubarak (Egypt), have all won recent presidential elections with more than 90 per cent of the popular vote and, more generally, rule facade democracies. However, Colonel Muammar Gadafy of Libya runs perhaps the most egregious example of a facade democracy: he does not even bother to put himself, or the members of his government, before the electorate, despite the fact that he grabbed power by *coup d'état* in 1969. His justification is that he is merely a conduit for popular decisions taken at lower levels. Despite variations, what all these cases have in common is that such regimes' real democratic pretensions seem substantively absent.

Some facade democracies were for years strongly encouraged by Western governments not to relax their grip by democratising 'too much', as they were often perceived as important bulwarks against the spread of communism. Examples include Colombia and, as Wallis notes in his chapter, Mexico. In effect, there was an alliance, Gills, Rocamara and Wilson (1993) suggest, between domestic and international class actors who commonly championed forms of 'low intensity democracy' that were seen to help bolster the West's stability *vis-à- vis* international communism. Socially progressive or reformist movements had great difficulty in making headway, routinely being labelled as communists. While widespread human rights violations regularly occurred under such regimes, there may well have been also extensive Western aid programmes, trade links and/or military pacts.

Underlining the importance of Western support to the continuation of many facade democracies, Gills, Rocamara and Wilson (1993) argue that, in some cases, recent democratic changes, for example in El Salvador and Guatemala, were little more than attempts to put a gloss on the continuing hegemony of incumbent, conservative elites. Leftwich (1993) suggests that during the Cold War, in some 'Third World' countries—for example, Argentina, Brazil, the Philippines—it was beneficial to Western interests for there to be an authoritarian government of the right rather than a representative government critical of Western policies. In other words, during the Cold War, while liberal democracy was the proclaimed preferred condition by the West for the 'Third World', Western governments did not necessarily regard free and fair elections and a large measure of civil rights as essential for their economic support or military and diplomatic protection of friendly, yet largely undemocratic, governments. In addition, international agencies, such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, showed no serious commitment to promote democratic government, although as primarily economic institutions there was no real reason why they should.

### *'Electoral' democracy*

Philippe Schmitter (1994) has identified a large number of what he calls '*un*consolidated' democracies among new democracies in the 'Third World'. These are regimes that, unlike most facade democracies, have at least some plausible claim to be relatively democratic. However, in an unconsolidated or electoral democracy, democracy is not embedded as in consolidated democracies, principally because there is no consensus among important groups of political actors that democracy is 'the only game in town'. Hagopian argues that, after the institution of democratically elected governments and, for some countries at least, partial macroeconomic recovery under structural adjustment, many less economically developed new democracies have 'barely managed to limp along in an unconsolidated state' (Hagopian 1993:465).

The point is that while electoral democracies have certain formal procedural criteria of democracy they are deficient in respect of a number of societal freedoms, such as poor civil liberties regimes, especially *vis-à-vis* minority interests; often limited societal toleration; and little citizen participation in politics, other than at election times when voters are exhorted to cast their ballots. The core of the concept of electoral democracy is that:

- there are meaningful rules and regulations determining the conduct and content of elections, which take place when the constitution demands
- governments, most of the time, rule with at least some concern for the processes of law.

There is no certainty that *all* important dimensions of democracy will exist in an electoral democracy, particularly some of the liberal aspects, which, it is often argued, give a polity the status of a consolidated democracy. As Bratton and van de Walle suggest, 'regular multiparty elections will change *the form* in which political actors pursue control of the state apparatus and its resources *but not the logic of their behaviour*' (emphasis added; Bratton and van de Walle 1997:235–6). The point is that, if it is acknowledged that a purpose of a democratically elected regime is, *inter alia,* to strive to alter materially the position of the mass of citizens for the better, electoral democracies do not necessarily have such a concern uppermost. This is because such regimes do not primarily exist to shift power and resources from the control of a small group of elites to wider constituencies. Typically, electoral democracies involve political competition or collaboration among groups of powerful elites, often exclusive oligarchies dominated by relatively small groups of powerful men (and rarely women).

In electoral democracies, political stability tends to be based less on respect for democratic values, than on the personal power of the principal leader(s). Often there will be only limited institutional constraints on executive power; power is effectively personalised, seemingly wielded by individuals constrained only by the 'hard facts of existing power relations and by constitutionally limited terms of office' (Zakaria 1997:22). But electoral democracies do not endure only as a consequence of the actions of sometimes unprincipled, capricious leaders. Complicating the picture is that governments of many current electoral democracies inherited serious socio-economic difficulties on coming to power, amounting to post-election crisis conditions. For example, in Latin America, Presidents Menem of Argentina, Fujimori of Peru, Serrano of Guatemala and Chavez of Venezuela all attempted, with varying degrees of success, to deal with inherited economic crises by adopting policies that required little more, if anything, than their own personal diktats (Philip 2001).

There are two important points to underline: first, such policies were sometimes effective (at least in the short- or medium-term term), but not necessarily popular with the mass of citizens. Second, such individualistic policy initiatives probably made it more difficult to develop appropriate levels of political institutionalisation. As O'Donnell points out, 'The longer and deeper the [economic] crisis, and the less the confidence that the government will be able to solve it, the more rational it becomes for everyone to act', first, in a highly disaggregated manner, especially in relation to state agencies that may help to alleviate the consequences of the crisis for a given group or sector; second, with extremely short time-horizons; and third, with the assumption that everyone else will do the same (O'Donnell 1994:65). Such factors, needless to say, do not facilitate democratic consolidation.

A further problem for democratic consolidation is that in most electoral democr acies there is incomplete civilian control over the military. It is very difficult for elected politicians emphatically to weaken the military's role as the ultimate arbiter of politics, because of its highly significant political role, often over long periods. Consequently, military leaders will routinely profess public support for an elected government, but nonetheless frequently resist efforts to control their internal affairs, dictate security policy, or make officers subject to the judgement of civil courts (Kaplan 1997; Izaguirre 1998). In sum, the capacity of elected representatives to act will be limited if the military believes its interests are going to be unacceptably damaged by policy changes. Finally, a range of constitutionally guaranteed liberal freedoms of expressions and assembly may be, in extreme cases, subject to interference or undermined by the military.

In the early 1990s, O'Donnell (1993) identified nine Latin American electoral democracies: Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru and Uruguay. By 1999, in the opinion of Freedom House, Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Panama and Uruguay were all 'free' states, that is, where democracy might be thought to be consolidated to a considerable degree. However, all these countries, except for Uruguay (with a combined political rights and civil liberties score of '3'), had a score of '5', placing them at the very margin of the free state category. This indicates that while democratic progress had undoubtedly been made in Latin America, it is also clear that it had limits.

Regarding Africa, Bratton and van de Walle suggest that while popular, 'bottom-up', political demands widely tipped the balance in the late 1980s and early 1990s in favour of multi-party elections and the establishment of new governments, such protest-led, reformist-oriented, actions 'did not necessarily lay a firm foundation for the subsequent institutionalisation of democratic regimes' (Bratton and van de Walle 1997:278). Their point is underpinned by the fact that of the more than thirty African countries holding at least one national-level election in the 1990s, only seven managed, according to Freedom House, to achieve 'free' political systems by the end of the 1990s. Electoral democracies, of which there were fifteen examples in Africa in 1998, were the most common form of democratic regime in the region at this time.

A serious difficulty for democratic consolidation in Africa is that the region has historically been replete with military and one-party regimes. In many African countries, as a consequence, polities have little in the way of institutional heritages of political competition. Consequently, attempts to democratise have often been both messy and non-linear, either threatened by reversal, or actually reversed in the 1990s by the military as was the case in Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Niger, Guinea Bissau, Comoros and Congo-Brazzaville. The point is that the institutional logic of patronage and clientelism, frequently exacerbated by ethnic and religious rivalries, and informed by a traditionally important political role for the military, remains at the heart of political competition in Africa, making the imminent widespread establishment of consolidated democracies highly unlikely.

Regarding Asia, there was a mixed picture at the end of the 1990s, with three of four democratising regimes in East Asia judged by Freedom House to be 'free' states. In South Asia, the picture was reversed, as all three of the region's democratising countries—Bangladesh, Nepal and, until October 1999, Pakistan—were electoral democracies.

### *'Full' democracy*

'Full' democracy is at the other end of the democratic continuum to facade democracy. It extends the idea of democracy beyond the formal mechanisms of electoral democracy, to include real and sustained, as opposed to rhetorical and intermittent, stress on individual freedoms and the representation of interests via elected public fora and group participation.[3] In such regimes there is a high degree of equity, justice, civil liberties and human rights; and the armed forces are unequivocally subservient to civilian rule. It is a kind of democratic regime that in its most developed state would offer citizens means of access to governmental processes and a real say in collective decision-making, via elected representatives in national and sub-national legislatures. In sum, in a full democracy there would be not only genuine participation in rule by the majority of citizens, but also consistently effective channels of accountability between ordinary people and public officials. Those traditionally lacking power—for example, the poor, minority ethnic and religious groups, women, young people—would have a say in the direction of the nation. But examples of such democracies in the contemporary 'Third World' are hard to identify. However, it is possible to argue that countries in the estimation of Freedom House achieving a combined 'Political Rights' and 'Civil Liberties' tally of 2 (1+1), may be close to achieving such a position. Three tiny 'Third World' countries achieved such a position in 1999: Dominica, Barbados and the Marshall Islands. In addition, four other countries with a combined tally of 3—Cape Verde, Sao Tomé e Principe, South Africa, Uruguay—were the closest to the 1+1 position at the end of the 1990s.

In conclusion, it is clear that there are a range of types of democracy, and that the dividing lines between the categorisations are likely to be blurred. We should also note that judging countries' democratic positions according to universal characteristics is likely to be problematic because it largely ignores their specific political, economic and social characteristics which, collectively, might be thought to make the chances of democracy more or less likely. Then there is the issue of external factors and their impact upon democratic consolidation. It is to these issues I now turn.

## Perceiving democratic consolidation in the 'Third World'

In the first part of this section, I look at the importance of various internal factors to democratic consolidation, before turning in the second to the influence of certain external factors and actors.

A democratic transition can be identified by the following: first, a non-democratic government leaves office, followed by second, relatively 'free and fair elections'. The next stage, democratic consolidation, that is, the embedding and perpetuation of democratic institutions, practices and beliefs, may well commence before democratic transition is concluded. Indeed, the precise separation of the two stages is theoretically possible, but often practically impossible. And while transition, it may be argued, can be identified empirically, it is more difficult to do the same with consolidation. However, there is much agreement that there was anything but straightforward progression from transition to consolidation among most new democracies in the 'Third World'. Multi-party competition and relatively 'free and fair' elections may have been commonplace, with, in some cases, quite a large degree of uncertainty over electoral outcomes; but this did not necessarily imply that democratic consolidation was proceeding.

### *What is democratic consolidation?*

Evidence suggests that *most* political transformations away from once-stable nondemocratic regimes do *not* end in consolidated democratic transitions. There are various ways of judging democratic consolidation. For example, Huntington (1991) assesses whether a polity has a consolidated democracy by a 'two-turnover test': that is, a ruling party loses an election, an opposition party, or coalition, wins it and, next time, loses. This test has the virtue of being easy empirically to verify, but it has the vice of not being nuanced enough. For example, following the introduction of democracy after the Second World War, Japan did not fulfil the criteria of Huntington's test until 1993, nearly fifty years later: was it not a democracy until then?

Mainwaring, O'Donnell and Valenzuela argue that democratic consolidation is not dependent on electoral tests *per se,* but should be perceived as a situation when 'all major political actors take for granted the fact that democratic processes dictate governmental renewal' (Mainwaring, O'Donnell and Valenzuela 1992:3). For Bratton and van de Walle, democratic consolidation is 'the more or less total institutionalisation of democratic practices, complete only when citizens and the political class alike come to accept democratic practices as the only way to resolve conflict' (Bratton and van de Walle 1997:235). In sum, democratic consolidation is present when, first, after developing ad hoc during a shift from authoritarianism, political actors' behaviour appears decisively to shift towards democratic patterns; second, there is open admittance of pro-democracy political actors into the system; third, political decision-making henceforward proceeds according to what have become legitimately coded procedures; and fourth, the mass of ordinary people, as well as political leaders and activists, perceive the democratic system to be better than any other possible alternative form of government.

There is wide agreement in the literature that to consolidate democracy is to create and sustain a novel kind of political environment involving, *inter alia,* new challenges to both civil society and political society actors. The collective aim that once sustained and encouraged them—ousting the nondemocratic regime—is no longer there. Instead, the challenge shifts to two new areas: how to one, institutionalise democratic competition, and two, balance interests and aspirations of various groups, previously united in opposition, now in political competition. This novel situation clearly demands a different range of skills and commitment than those needed to engineer a transition from authoritarianism. As Karl suggests, democratisation actors must now show the

> ability to differentiate political forces rather than draw them into a grand coalition, the capacity to define and channel competing political projects rather than seek to keep potentially divisive reforms off the agenda, and the willingness to tackle incremental reforms…rather than defer them to some later date.
>
> (Karl 1990:17)

Each of these individually tricky, collectively very difficult, goals must be achieved before one can talk of the accomplishment of democratic consolidation.

To sum up, consolidating democracy can be thought of as involving the following: first, democratically-orientated actors must heavily outweigh non-democratically-orientated actors; second, elites and masses alike must be comfortable with politics rooted in democratic norms and behaviour; and third, leaders of political parties agree to subordinate their strategies and divisions to the common goal of not facilitating a return to authoritarianism. If such developments eventuate, over time there develops, first, more open political competition, second, commonly accepted political rules, third, stable democratic institutions, and fourth, a satisfactory range of state-guaranteed civil and political rights, upheld by the rule of law.[4]

But, as I have already pointed out, and as the book's case studies emphasise, this ideal sequence of events is often elusive. Why is democratic consolidation so difficult to achieve and sustain? There is much agreement that its chances may be retarded or facilitated by a mix of domestic and external factors, although the precise blend will differ from country to country. However, the following are generally thought to retard democratic progress: one, excessive executive domination, two, neo-patrimonial socio-political systems, three, serious state-level corruption and clientelism, four, weak, unstable political parties, five, the exit or co-option of civil society activists, six, serious ethnic, cultural, and/or religious divisions, seven, widespread poverty, and eight, an international climate unpropitious to democracy.

What is clear from the examples discussed in this book is that the evolution and sustenance of recognisably democratic polities requires a complex, typically prolonged, process of democratic institutional building: a period sometimes known as *tâtonnement* ('groping'), that involves trial and error, and reversals, as well as advances (White 1998:46). Once established, a consolidated democracy requires constant work to maintain; if that is lacking, democracy can unravel—as some suggest, Wyatt notes, is happening currently in India.

Shifting power from small groups of elites to representative bodies is clearly a major undertaking. It is not surprising that there may well be less than full commitment to the notion of extending democracy on the part of incumbent elites, including those found within the military. In other words, those in power may be willing to do enough—that is, preside over periodic, relatively free and fair, elections —to get their polity labelled at least a qualified democracy; but not more than is strictly necessary to acquire that nomenclature. In other words, there may be little or no real commitment to deepening democracy, to encourage those previously outside the boundaries of political competition to engage in political competition. As Elklit suggests in his chapter, featuring material drawn from a number of recent 'Third World' elections, there is a range of pertinent issues related to the increased understanding of the interplay between institutional design and change, on the one hand, and the course of the entire democratisation process, its background and concomitants, on the other.

Seeking to avoid the twin fallacies of *electoralism* and *anti-electoralism,* Elklit argues that the nature of an electoral system is nevertheless often a central factor behind the unsatisfactory course of the democratisation process in many new democracies in the 'Third World'. His conclusion is that more emphasis should be put on sustaining the different requisites of democracy, while simultaneously more effort should also be put into the preparation of elections. This dual effort, he suggests, would enhance democratic deepening beyond simple, yet inadequate, electoral democracy. And even if the more technical refinement of the electoral process cannot alone ensure a democratic development—far from it—it can be a step in that direction, especially by contributing to the creation of an internal dynamic in the political process which gradually will engender more contestation, more participation, and more rights and liberties.

In their chapter, Randall and Svåsand turn to a different but related aspect of democracy and democratisation. They examine the concept of institutionalisation in the context of political parties in the 'Third World' and their role in democratic consolidation. In the first section, the authors explore the concept of party institutionalisation, pointing to problems and inconsistencies, and suggest a possible analytical framework. Drawing on empirical studies, the second section considers the prospects and problems in the new democracies of the 'Third World', for individual party institutionalisation in terms of this framework. The third section examines the relationship and possible contradictions between the criteria and requirements of individual party institutionalisation on the one hand, and institutionalisation of competitive party systems on the other.

### *External factors and democratic consolidation*

Randall and Svåsand point out that, after the Second World War, the development of political parties in the 'Third World' was sometimes linked to external factors: for example, the initial growth of party systems in francophone West Africa after the Second World War was largely the result of the activities of parties such as the (French) Socialist Party. More generally, one of the features of this book is a focus on the impact of external factors on recent democratic progress in the 'Third World'. While this issue has been increasingly subject to debate and opinions abound, there is relatively little in the way of empirical positions put forth to support expressed opinions. For example, some commentators would argue that external factors are ultimately relatively unimportant in explaining democratic outcomes; others claim the opposite is true. Seeking to examine the issue empirically, Nolting's chapter focuses on, first, the role of the European Union (EU) as an international promoter of democracy in the 'Third World', and second, the EU's role in relation to Malawi in this regard in the 1990s. By African standards, Malawi was judged a democratic 'success story' in the 1990s; but how important was EU encouragement? Nolting chose Malawi as his country of focus for two main reasons. First, the country's initial democratic transition in the early 1990s was strongly promoted by external forces, led by the EU. Second, by 2000 Malawi had enjoyed nearly a decade of continuous EU support in the field of democratisation and democratic consolidation.

While arguing that the EU's role was significant, Nolting does not claim that democracy in Malawi was *imposed* from the outside. This is in line with what is generally agreed in the literature; direct foreign intervention—that is, democracy is introduced at the overt instigation of a foreign power—is a very uncommon method of democratic transition. As Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens note, 'external imposition of any kind of regime is difficult, and particularly so of democratic rule' (Rueschemeyer *et al.* 1992:279). Short-term external intervention may, for a while, tip the balance in favour of democratisation, while its absence can certainly aid the forces of authoritarianism, but democracy is likely only to take root if the internal balance of class power and the state-society constellation are broadly favourable. In other words, democracy will only develop with the active involvement of popular pressure—via civil society—to ensure that significant democratic changes take place via pressure on rulers. Two recent cases of heavy foreign involvement in Panama and Haiti failed to result—especially in the latter—in the embedding of clearly democratic regimes.

What of the more general influence of external factors on the processes and outcomes of democratisation in the new democracies of the 'Third World'? The first point to note is that concern with external factors was apparent right at the beginning of the third wave in the mid-1970s. They were judged to have been of great importance in the swift move to democracy in Greece, Spain and Portugal, all of which were strongly encouraged by the EU (Pridham 1991a). However, swift progress to democracy in these countries was not solely the result of external encouragement, but also, crucially, involved within each country, first, deepening societal consensus that democracy was more desirable than any alternative political arrangement, and second, social conditions conducive to democracy: that neither ethnic, religious, nor class schisms seriously threatened democratisation. Second, many observers have noted the importance of so-called 'global values' in the post-Cold War era: liberal democracy, the 'market', human rights and so on. Conversely, specific measures—for example, international promotion of democracy and monitoring of elections—often seemed of only limited importance in the medium and longer term. As Elklit suggests in his chapter, they may well have been of great significance in helping kick-start the initial transition, but of lesser importance in the longer term.

Some have argued that, in a significant number of 'Third World' countries in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the influence of external factors on the initial *aber tura* was often quite profound. The main factors in this regard included Bretton Woods institutions' lending for economic structural adjustment, global resurgence of economic neo-liberalism, collapse of Eastern European communist regimes (which for decades offered an alternative development model), and, finally, the global rise of pro-democracy movements. At the same time, Western actors 'pushing for democracy as a component of good governance' seemed 'oblivious to how few of the conditions for democratic endurance exist[ed] in the Third World…and what their implications for democracy might be' (Leftwich 1993:607). For example, the World Bank's analysis that 'good governance' was an essential development for successful economic reforms in the 'Third World' seemed to ignore the fact 'that good governance is not simply available on order, but requires a particular kind of politics both to institute and sustain it' (Leftwich 1993:612).

Regarding Africa, as Nolting's chapter shows, one cannot ignore external actors when examining the introduction of democracy in the 1980s and 1990s. This factor was often important for African countries because, being economically poor, many looked to donors such as the EU or individual Western governments for necessary foreign aid and economic assistance, often via structural adjustment programmes. Consequently donors were able to use their clout to encourage authoritarian regimes to democratise.

Chabal avers that the region's transition from authoritarian regimes in the early 1990s was 'the outcome of a singular combination of internal and external factors' (Chabal 1998:294). Joseph argues that Western-inspired moves to install market-based economic programmes were 'intrinsic' to democratic openings (Joseph 1998: 10), and Clapham and Wiseman assert that external support for multi-party democracy was 'undoubtedly significant in bringing pressure on recalcitrant incumbent regimes…helping to provide a favourable international setting for newly elected governments' (Clapham and Wiseman 1995:222). However, while Western pressure was often an important catalyst in undermining authoritarian regimes, not just in Africa but more widely, for example, in Indonesia where it helped to stimulate a democratic transition; overall, its impact tended to diminish over time. This was the case in Indonesia, as Törnquist shows in his chapter, following founding elections. Regarding Central America, Karl suggests that the initial shift to democracy was 'profoundly affected by the level and direction of international assistance' …'a reality that does not bode well for democratisation' (Karl 1995:77). Cammack claims that external pressures aided the enactment of 'pacts and understandings' more widely in the Latin American region, thus helping make 'widespread transitions possible' (Cammack 1997:172). The overall point is that Western political conditionality declined from the late 1980s and early 1990s in economically poor 'Third World' countries; later, Western governments seemed reasonably content with relatively free and fair elections only (Cumming 1999:205). This was partly because attention shifted to issues of regional stability rather than democracy in the wake of new or renewed civil conflict in, *inter alia,* Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire). In sum, over time Western governments generally seemed to become accustomed to electoral democracy rather than pushing for sustained democratic progress. 'Third World' countries could no longer expect continual economic rewards from the West for democratising nor serious economic punishments for not doing so, once the West's attention moved on to other issues. For example, maintenance of the equilibrium of the global economic system—especially following East Asia's economic turmoil in 1997–8—and regional political stability in Europe, Africa and South Asia topped the global agenda.

Generally speaking, Western governments became complaisant about limited forms of democracy in the 'Third World'. As long as governments showed themselves capable of overseeing an acceptable level of socio-political stability, and, hopefully, presiding over serious economic reforms, democratic progress—beyond relatively 'free and fair' elections—perhaps seemed less important. For example, Diamond pointed out that 'even the no-party regime in Uganda has become a darling of Western powers eager to see economic reforms implemented under any kind of fig-leaf of political legitimacy' (Diamond 1999:56; for an alternative view, see Ottemoeller 1998).

President Yoweri Museveni managed to oversee both political and economic stability in large areas of the country, but without conventionally democratising (Haynes 2001). What was the West's response? 'What is happening in Uganda is … your own type of democracy that is trying to fit into the Ugandan context', said one Western government. The response of the British (New) Labour government, on coming to power in May 1997, was that it would not 'press for multiparty reforms in Uganda'. (Both quotes are from Kasfir 1998:50.)

The example of Uganda exemplifies how, as the global economic picture deteriorated in the late 1990s—with the near-collapse of several East Asian economies and serious economic problems in Russia and Brazil—the West's primary objective shifted from pursuing deepening democratic advances to seeking to minimise systematic economic instability. Because the global interests of liberal democracy's economic counterpart—capitalism—hinge on stable, rather than democratic, governments, diminished forms of democracy were tolerated. Examples include 'Third World' countries with flawed elections and questionable human rights regimes, but with an acceptable degree of political and economic stability, such as Saudi Arabia, Oman and Kuwait, plus, *inter alia,* China, Malaysia and Indonesia (before Suharto's political demise). Nigeria serves as a further example: militarily-run for years until 1999, but with Africa's largest population and large reserves of high quality oil, it was not seriously confronted by the West over its lack of democratic reforms, even after the extra-judicial murder of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his comrades in November 1995 (Haynes 1996).

In conclusion, the precise impact of international factors on a country's democratic trajectory is variable. For example, the great majority of African and Central American countries are economically weak, reliant on foreign aid, and therefore vulnerable to pressure from aid donors; it seems appropriate to suggest that in such cases external factors have been important in determining democratic outcomes. On the other hand, this cannot be the whole story. For example, the Cold War was still raging when Southern Europe and Latin America began to democratise from the 1970s; there was certainly no serious pressure to democratise from Western governments at this time. For the large and relatively autonomous countries of the southern cone of Latin America (Brazil, Argentina and Chile), the impact of external factors was less than on the small, economically weak countries of Central America, geographically contiguous to the USA, or the economically weak countries of Africa, collectively highly dependent on foreign aid injections.

## Conclusion

A realistic assessment of the global state of democracy at the beginning of the twenty-first century is to see a continuum marked 'maximalist' ('full' democracy) at one end and 'minimalist' ('facade' democracy) at the other. The literature is in broad agreement that some countries have political systems towards the minimalist end of the spectrum, others are somewhere in the middle, and a few nearer the maximalist position. Given such conditions it seems implausible that some time soon there will be unequivocal movement towards greater democracy in every polity which might be conventionally described as democratising. This is not to suggest that there will not be progress in some cases towards freer political systems; merely that it is necessary to be realistic when seeking to ascertain what *kind* of democracy is likely to occur and why. For example, Clapham and Wiseman observe that it is prudent to adopt an 'unromantic and pragmatic view as to what type of [democratic] system might be consolidated' in new democracies as the idea that all or even the majority of such countries would eventually build 'perfectly functioning democracies which will survive indefinitely is too improbable to warrant serious consideration' (Clapham and Wiseman 1995:220).

Underlining such an assessment, this introductory chapter has suggested that, far from being a straightforward process, attempts to consolidate democratic systems are tied up politically with a number of issues. These include: the extent and nature of the ruling elite's solidarity and its control over society, the nature of a polity's political culture, the strength and effectiveness of civil society as a counterweight to state power and, finally, the overall impact of external factors and actors. What seems beyond dispute is that, first, in many formerly authoritarian countries there has been at least a *degree* of democratisation; but second, overall, the impact of the third wave has been patchy. Sometimes authoritarian governments have managed to stay in power by transforming themselves into 'democratic' governments via the ballot box, as in Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon and Burkina Faso. Elsewhere, authoritarian rulers have simply refused to budge: it is worth recalling that over forty countries—concentrated in the Middle East and Africa—were devoid of most democratic characteristics at the end of the 1990s (Karatnycky 1999:124–5).

I have suggested that it was common to find regimes with mixed characteristics, that is, electoral democracies. This is very much a 'glass half full or half empty?' issue. That is, given the unpropitious signs of democratisation two decades ago, the progress that has been recorded deserves to be highlighted. For example, focusing on Latin America, Munck (1997) has suggested that there are clear signs of democratic progress. He pointed to the opening up of political systems with newly democratic practices, reasonably competitive politics, relatively free and fair elections, growing freedom of the press and speech, and increased civil liberties compared to the era of military regimes. These were developments, he argues, that anti-democrats would in the future find very hard to undo; collectively, they were progressively altering the notion of the political 'good' in the region. Consequently, future undemocratic governments, perhaps emanating from the military, would inevitably lack legitimacy and hence be unable to stay in power for long.

However, looking at the same regional picture, others have maintained that democratic progress was actually very limited; that is, democratic transitions in the region were less about progress to democratic consolidation than ensuring that by and large the same figures stayed in power, but this time via the ballot box rather than *coup d'état*. Philip (2001) has observed that various factors—including, weaknesses in the rule of law and the lack of professionalisation of governments—were creating unique political systems in the region, not 'necessarily in transition to anything at all'. Instead, Latin America's political systems with their cultures of personalism, traditions of successful lawlessness—that is, grabbing power via *coup d'état*—and economic strictures created as a consequence of globalisation, were unlikely to develop into perfectly consolidated democracies. Instead, Philip (2001) contends, the region's future may lie in what he calls 'media-based personalism', such as that of Venezuela's President Chavez. Many observers have commented on democratic decline where the regions' strongest party systems (Chile and Venezuela) have recently been undermined. Finally, it is an important question whether 'orthodox' democracy with its parties, legislatures and so on, can develop in the region. Perhaps a more relevant question is whether 'Latin American' styles of populism are the future in other countries as well? Chabal argues that Africa shows evidence of a similar situation: generally, recent democratic transitions have so far failed to produce 'adequate political frameworks for the reforms which need to be implemented to increase political accountability and spur sustainable economic development' (Chabal 1998:300).

The point is that democratic consolidation, once perceived as a fairly straightforward set of processes and structures, is clearly a highly complex issue. There is not only the question of the relationship between economic and democratic progress —does the latter depend on the former?—there is also the nature of interactions between the state and civil society to contend with: how much political space is available for non-state controlled politics? How much influence can civil society organisations collectively bring to bear on democratic outcomes? What is the relationship between civil and political society? As was noted earlier, the logic of consolidated democracy is that those politically excluded under the *ancien régime* are now free to work 'to correct past inequalities or new hardships' (Leftwich 1993: 614). Generally speaking, however, such an outcome seems remote.

To be democratically relevant, civil society cannot merely be an ordering of elite groups, but must actively encourage involvement from those traditionally lacking political influence: the poor, women, the young, certain minority ethnic and religious groups. But because such an extension and deepening of democracy will normally be resisted by those in power, then legal guarantees and extensive protections for individual and group freedoms and associational life are crucial, to be secured by and through an independent, impartial judiciary. To increase welfare to those that need it, redistribution of scarce resources is both politically necessary and economically appropriate, while the military must be neutralised as a political actor. Put another way, the consolidation of democracy necessarily implies a conscious effort to redress past imbalances, a course of action necessary so that the mass of ordinary people come to believe that democracy is a better system than alternative ones, such as benign dictatorship.

Yet progress has often been retarded, Burnell and Calvert suggest, because those in power have been reluctant 'to allow more substantial and rapid progress' (Burnell and Calvert 1999:2). This is a way of saying that only very rarely do traditional formulations of power and its purposes comfortably co-exist with newly introduced principles of constitutional democracy. Despite relatively free and fair elections, those with economic or political power—often the same people—will always fight tooth and nail to retain it, often going to very great lengths to prevent power from passing from their hands to others. This is because, as Clapham once noted, control of the state is nearly always too appealing to be easily abandoned (Clapham 1985:41). Pointing to a conspiracy between local and foreign elites to minimise political changes, Gills, Rocamara and Wilson (1993) contend that, in many cases, third wave democratisation amounts to little more than often defective multi-party elections. Recently elected regimes differ little from unelected predecessors as most have failed to put into practice the 'rigours of the political compromises required by democracy' (Chabal 1998:300). If democratic consolidation requires a demonstrable relationship between political accountability and the quality of government in the new 'Third World' democracies, in most cases it is not (yet) forthcoming.

## Notes

1 The term 'Third World' is problematic, hence the inverted commas. Given that its genesis was in the context of the Cold War, when the 'First World'—the democratic West—was pitted against the 'Second World'—the communist countries of Eastern Europe—then logically the end of the Cold War in 1989 should have meant the end of the tripartite classification of countries. In other words, the 'Third World' can no longer exist. However, the term 'Third World' was invented in the 1950s also to refer, on the one hand, to the large group of economically underdeveloped, then decolonising countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, and on the other, to Latin American states, mostly granted their freedom in the early nineteenth century, but still economically weak.

Despite a common history of colonisation there are important differences between contemporary 'Third World' states. For example, economically diverse countries such as the United Arab Emirates (1998 GNP per capita:$18,220), South Korea ($7,970) and Mozambique ($210), or politically singular polities such as Cuba (one party communist state), Pakistan (military dictatorship), and India (multi-party democracy), are all still referred to as 'Third World' countries. To many observers, the economic and political—not to mention cultural—differences between 'Third World' countries outweigh their supposed similarities.

While the blanket term 'Third World' obscures important cultural, economic, social and political differences between states, it does have advantages over alternatives like 'the South' or 'developing countries'. The expression 'the South' is essentially a geographic expression which ignores the fact that some 'Western' countries—Australia, New Zealand—are in the geographical south. The idea of the 'South' does, however, have the advantage of getting away from the connotation of developing towards some pre-ordained end state or goal which is explicit in the idea of '*developing* countries'. It is by no means clear, however, what the idea of a 'developed' state looks like: does it connote only a certain (high) degree of economic growth or is there an element of redistribution of the fruits of growth? What of widely divergent social conditions in a so called 'developed' country? In this book we use the term 'Third World', reluctantly, as it is still a standard terminology in the absence of a better alternative. (GNP figures from *World Development Report 1999/2000,* Table 1:230–1; Table la:272.)

2 Many analysts of democracy have a problem with using Freedom House ratings to substantiate an argument about where a polity lies on a democratic spectrum. However, in the absence of any other comparable data series—both in terms of comprehensiveness and over time—those of Freedom House, many would agree, are invaluable. Indeed, most chapters in this book refer to Freedom House ratings to substantiate or bolster points made about the 'democratic-ness' of various polities—even when individual authors express doubts about the comparability of the grading system. The Freedom House survey methodology, definitions and categories of the Survey, Political Rights and Civil Liberties checklist, rating system for Political Rights and Civil Liberties, and the explanation of Political Rights and Civil Liberties ratings are at www.freedom-house.org/survey99/method/

3 I am aware that 'full' is a bold word to use to define democracy. For example, to say that there should be: a 'real say in collective decision making', 'effective channels of

accountability between ordinary people and public officials', and that 'the poor, minority groups, women and young people [should] have a say in the direction of the nation', would be pretty stretched in, for example, Britain—let alone in countries including South Africa, Cape Verde and Sao Tome that scored highly on the Freedom House ratings at the start of the twenty-first century. The point, however, is that 'full' democracy—unlike liberal democracy—is an aspirational category rather than necessarily reflecting any country's current democratic situation.

4 This definition of consolidation, it might be argued, is rather vague. *How* heavily must democrats outweigh others? *What* percentage of the elite and masses should favour democracy? *How* many leaders of parties should be democrats? *How* open should competition be, and so on. While such judgements are inevitably subjective, in Chapter 2 Baker makes a useful attempt at more precision in his assessment of democracy and its conditions by use of a 'democratic audit'.

# 2

# Quality assessment of democracy in the ‘Third World’

*Bruce Baker*

After the excitement of the ‘third wave’—when autocracies crumbled, constitutions were rewritten and elected representatives stepped into office—there followed a more sober assessment of what had been achieved. While forms of democracy had been established, the quality of democratic performance was clearly mixed. Some of the ‘new’ civilian heads of state bore an uncanny resemblance to former military dictators, not just in style, but in appearance; some of the elections represented more the will of the ruling party than the people; and the new civil rights provisions were either not communicated to the security forces or disregarded by them when they dealt with opposition parties, independent journalists and suspected rebels. As a consequence, there was a clear need both to measure and analyse this variable performance. But the exercise has proved to be problematic.

Those who set relatively high standards for democracy have been reluctant to confer the title of democracy at all on many of the new claimants (Ottaway 1997: 1). Others, fearful of being too exacting with the term when the new institutions have just been established, have settled for a minimalist or proceduralist definition along the lines of Dahl’s ‘polyarchy’ (Wiseman 1996:8–9). However, while some have tried to capture it with typologies and multiple adjectives, even conceding the title ‘democracy’ has left analysts with the problem of a wide range of attainment within the category. Questions include: How many political prisoners must there be to constitute an ‘illiberal’ democracy (discussed in Chapter 3)? How many presidential decrees constitute a ‘delegative’ democracy? How neutered must a parliament be for there to be ‘virtual’ democracy? What percentage of the electorate (or elite) must agree that democracy ‘is the only game in town’ for there to be a ‘consolidated’ democracy? How high a score must be achieved from the assessment of different institutions for there to be a ‘free’, as opposed to a ‘partly free’, regime? Inevitably, the search for cut-off points along what is evidently a continuum, is arbitrary and therefore contested (O’Donnell 1996:34–51). And, in addition to disagreement over defining democracy and its subtypes, there is also little agreement about a suitable methodology for comparing them. As a result, so many publications on democratisation, following constitutional changes within countries, are little more than a collection of individual case studies.

This chapter suggests a way forward: in side-stepping the question of whether or not a country has enough democratic content to be called a democracy (or semi-democracy, or any of the other numerous subtypes), it seeks to discuss the nature of democratic content through a democratic audit. That is, it is concerned not with *if* a country is a democracy, but with *how* democratic it is. The main purpose is to explicate and defend the notion of a democratic audit to measure democracy. While the chapter is firmly rooted in my own work on African states and uses African illustrations, its principles, I would argue, are relevant to all new democracies in what is still commonly, if unsatisfactorily, called the 'Third World'.

## What is a democratic audit?

An audit is a systematic, qualitative assessment of the performance of a regime's many parts, against agreed democratic standards. It is a snapshot in time of the democratic functioning of a regime. The object is not to reach a single verdict on whether or not the whole regime can legitimately be called democratic, but to determine by empirical observation, preferably conducted by nationals of the country in question, how democratic it is in its various parts. It was first devised by David Beetham and the Democratic Audit UK (Beetham 1994a; 1999).

## What is the valueof a democratic audit?

A democratic audit:

- *Is a methodology that is value explicit.* It has no inherent definition of democracy, whether Western or liberal. It is accepted that democracy is a contested concept and therefore researchers will use it differently. A standard does have to be agreed by the auditors, but there are no constraints on the choice of that standard other than the requirement of internal consistency. For example, if there are specific African standards of democracy, as the United Nations Development Programme is now arguing (Davis 1998), then these can be used. Likewise, Catt's (1999) criticism of the audit for failing to detect the 'politics of presence' and the treatment of disadvantaged/minority groups, is a criticism of one particular construction of the audit questions, not of the methodology *per se*. The audit questions offered below as examples would probably be regarded as being in sympathy with a democratic autonomy model of democracy (Held 1996: 295–334) and assume widely used international standards of good practice among 'liberal' democracies.
- *Disaggregates democracy into its component parts.* As a result it discloses the variable and sometimes inconsistent performance within a democratic polity. These variations within a system are concealed in typologies or aggregative devices such as single numerical scores. The latter (for example Freedom House's 'Freedom Rating' (formerly Gastil's 'Freedom Index') and Joseph/Africa Demos' 'Quality of Democracy Index'), depend on the limited indicators used and how the individual categories are weighted and combined. The principal problem with them is that they mask the very features of difference that are the key to

inter-democracy comparisons, and these important variations can combine to give aggregate scores identical to those based on very different component parts. This is even more so when the component scores are rolled into a single score for the state.

- *Measures not only the presence of institutions in place, but the performance of those institutions in terms of their outcomes.* Procedures are only the means to democracy, not the end; they do not guarantee that democracy is fully experienced by the citizens. One only has to look at the frequent abuse by incumbent ruling parties of multi-party elections: while the required procedure may be there, the people may not get either the representatives or the policies they wanted because of manipulation and corruption of the process by incumbent elites. Outcomes, on the other hand, describe the reality of democracy in everyday life.
- *Is free of any teleology.* It makes no assumptions as to where any particular democracy is placed on some historical path towards 'consolidation', or if a polity is becoming an 'advanced democracy' or not. In contrast, many analyses set Western liberal democracy as the goal to be achieved, assume there is only one route to its attainment and set out to determine how far the polity under observation 'has to go'. The audit, however, is interested in the present not the future.
- *Takes democracy as a continuum.* Consequently, *all* regimes are at best incomplete approximations of the ideal, rather than embodying a dichotomy of 'democracy/ no democracy' where the cut-off point between the two categorisations is often disputed. Critics of the 'maximalist' approach to democratic studies argue that their unrealistic requirements exclude most regimes in the real world (Wiseman 1996). But 'maximalist characteristics' do not have to be excluded from analysis if the obsession with conferring democratic status is abandoned. The audit's approach is not about insisting on the presence of certain features, but examining to what degree certain features may be present.
- *By expressing in detail the heterogeneity and contradictions that are such a distinctive feature of democracies, provides a basis for accurate comparisons.* This may be achieved either by longitudinal studies to measure change over time in individual regimes or by horizontal studies to measure differences between regimes.

## Establishing the standards for an audit

To establish such standards, it is necessary to determine what is the nature of political democracy. I believe it is helpful to distinguish between, one, essential democratic principles, two, democratic procedures, and three, democratic ground rules. At the heart of the concept of democracy lie the *essential democratic principles:* namely popular control over collective decision making and decision makers, and an equal right to share in such control, or political equality (Beetham 1994a:28). These democratic principles need democratic procedures that are relevant to the particular realities of the social organisation concerned. Time and experience have suggested that the essential democratic principles underlying the scale and complexity of the modern state are best preserved by a cluster of *democratic proce dures* at the state level. These include: equality in law; freedom of expression and association; universal suffrage; majority rule but with maximum debate and consensus on decisions; open contestation for office; sovereign government, free of constraints by internal and external actors; wide representation and subsidiarity in decision making; accountability, responsiveness and accessibility of decision makers; and impartiality in appointments, decisions and treatment.

There is nothing to suggest that, in regard to democratic procedures, 'Third World' states have different requirements from developed states. The organisational problems of holding leaders of complex, technical and all-pervasive states to account are universal, and the above devices have been well tested in real life laboratories. However, there is room for national variation in the application of these procedures. Democratic state procedures allow space for wide variation in their execution according to societal values and resources. In other words, there can be different *democratic ground rules,* for example, regarding voting systems (to determine majority rule), public offices open to direct elections (to determine the breadth of contestation), the relationship between the executive and the legislature (to determine accountability of decision makers), and concerning the choice between corporatism, consociationalism, and proportional representation (to determine broad and group representation). It is apparent that there can be multiple combinations of rules which can equally reflect democratic procedures, although each configuration might not give the same weighting to those procedures. These may be different ground rules, but the point is that they are all democratic ground rules, in that they express, in their differing ways, democratic procedures.

Democratic quality, however, amounts to more than measuring whether democratic procedures are installed. Procedures are only the means to democracy, but they are not synonymous with democratic outcomes. For instance universal suffrage in law can be written in the constitution, but can be undermined by restrictions in practice on registering for voting. It is to this level of *democratic outcomes* that the measurement of the quality of political democracy needs to extend. To what degree are state democratic ground rules being implemented so that the state democratic procedures (assuming they are in place) are experienced and the essential democratic principles realised?

It might be argued that such an assessment would entail measuring democracy in one culture, by the presence or absence of institutional procedures or standardised practice forged in an alien culture. This need not be the case if, as has been argued earlier, the difference between democratic state procedures and specific historical expressions of them as ground rules within different cultures is kept in mind. The rules will of course differ according to historical and cultural circumstances, and an assessment of quality must allow for that specificity. It is the democratic state procedures, however, that claim universality. If they look like 'Western' procedures this is largely because the state in its modern form first developed in the West, and that region has had the longest time to experiment with procedures that offer popular control (or at least establish a measure of restraint on decision makers) and that manage the conflicts in society without stifling them. Aside from the pragmatic argument, it is surely a morally defensible (if contentious) position, to insist that neither lack of resources or cultural traditions should be allowed to deny freedom and equality to individuals and communities. Practical difficulty in upholding those rights, and differences in the balancing of competing rights, are not the same as saying the rights do not exist world-wide.

## Writing the audit questions

If the essential democratic principles, and the democratic state procedures that are based on them, are sound, then the boundaries of measuring democratic outcomes become clearer. Beetham distinguishes four *necessary components of political democracy:*

- Free and fair elections, to provide a basis for popular control over government, electoral choice between candidates and programmes, open access to political office, and equality between electors.
- Open and accountable government, guaranteeing the continuous public accountability of officials, both elected and non-elected, the rule of law upheld by independent courts, and decision making that is responsive to public opinion.
- Civil and political rights and freedoms, enabling citizens to associate freely with others, to express divergent or unpopular views, to create an informed public opinion, and to find their own solutions to collective problems.
- A democratic society, where there is agreement on the political nation; a flourishing of independent and accountable associational life; social inclusion; and a culture of tolerance, non-violence, participation and trust (Beetham 1994a: 29–30; cf. Beetham 1999:10).

For an audit to ensure a thorough and consistent assessment of a state's democratic quality, an array of standard questions have to be devised. There is obviously a balance to be struck between probing all the parts of a political system and containing the number of questions to a manageable size. The thirty democratic audit questions detailed in the remainder of the chapter are adapted from the Democratic Audit UK, with 'Third World' countries and in particular Africa in mind. Where major variations from the UK Audit text occur, notes follow each section explaining why these alterations were felt necessary in the 'Third World' and in particular, the African context.

## Examining the electoral process

A democratic audit would aspire to address and assess the following questions:

- The reach of the process: how extensively are decision-making offices and constitutional change open to election?
- The inclusiveness of the process: is there universal adult suffrage, and what is the degree of ease of accessibility to registration and voting?
- The independence of the process: how free is it of party and/or government interference?
- The integrity of the process: how free is it of intimidation, bribery and dishonesty?
- Voter options: how much genuine range of choice is there in candidates, programmes and information, and equal access for candidates/parties to the media and to all the constituencies?
- The impact of the process: to what extent do the votes of all electors carry equal weight, and how far does the resulting composition of the legislature reflect the parties chosen and the groups within society that have a conscious identity?
- The candidature opportunity: to what degree is there equal and effective opportunity for all to stand for public office regardless of sex, class, religion, ethnicity, age, literacy and parentage?
- Participation levels: what proportion of the electorate (as opposed to those on the electoral roll) actually vote?
- The acceptance of the result: when there is a transfer of power, to what extent have the defeated elected government, and powerful vested interests (capital; military; ethnic) accepted the outcome?

The importance of issues not tackled by the UK Audit, but relevant to the 'Third World' can be illustrated by reference to examples from a number of African countries.

### ***Freedom from intimidation, bribery and dishonesty***

For insecure governing parties the world over, the appeal of electoral corruption is very great. It is true that organisational inadequacies and incompetence must not be confused with wilful cheating. Nevertheless, it does seem that as far as Africa is concerned, Presidents Banda (Malawi), Buyoya (Burundi), De Klerk (South Africa), Kaunda (Zambia), Kolingba (Central African Republic), Nguesso (Congo-Brazzaville), Pereira (Cape Verde) and Ratsiraka (Madagascar) all fell in relatively fair presidential elections to their opposition rivals, while Presidents Biya (Cameroon), Bongo (Gabon), Campaore (Burkina Faso), Conte (Guinea), Eyadema (Togo), Deby (Chad), Gouled (Djibouti), Jammeh (The Gambia), Moi (Kenya), Obiango (Equatorial Guinea), Rawlings (Ghana) and Taya (Mauritania) succeeded (repeatedly in some cases) in elections that were suspected of irregularities or manipulation. Incumbents have resorted to restricting opposition access to the media, intimidation at the polling booths and corruption of the voting figures through ballot box stuffing, impersonation, double voting and plain destruction of voting slips. The results have sometimes been as bizarre as they have been blatant. In

1992 in Ghana, and 1993 in Togo, the overall voter turnouts were, in both cases, judged to be more than a million above the statistically possible number of voters (Oquaye 1995:267; *Africa Research Bulletin* 1993).

### ***Access of candidates to all the constituencies***

This has not always been the case in recent African elections. The master stroke of President Moi of Kenya in the 1992 election was an amendment passed earlier in that year that required a winning presidential candidate to obtain more than 25 per cent of the vote in no less than five of Kenya's eight provinces. He then proceeded to keep the opposition out of the Northeast by refusing permits to hold rallies or issuing them late; and by restricting flights into the remote province throughout 1992. Likewise President Obiang restricted the opposition parties from campaigning in large parts of Equatorial Guinea in 1996.

### ***Representation of groups***

As Catt (1999:60) points out, equal votes can still lead to minorities being permanently marginalised either by boundaries that ignore their majority areas, by parliaments where their parties are permanently in the minority despite proportional representation, or by governments that ignore even those members of parliament that do represent minorities. In Africa's multi-ethnic and communal societies, group representation is seen as vital. Some heads of state go out of their way to balance their cabinets, but others have been accused of showing favouritism to their own regional/ethnic groups, including Presidents Moi (Kenya), Museveni (Uganda), Dos Santos (Angola) and Zenawi (Ethiopia).

### ***Candidature opportunity regardless of age, literacy or parentage***

Candidature restriction is surprisingly common in Africa. In Zambia, the regime of President Chiluba excluded a former president, Kenneth Kaunda, on the grounds that he had already been president for more than two terms and because of his allegedly non-indigenous parentage. Similarly, Côte d'Ivoire banned from running for elective office the opposition candidate, Alassane Ouattara, because his father was from Burkina Faso; and the government of Guinea was proposing—although with no clear sign that it was followed through—the disqualification of presidential candidates that hold dual citizenship (a large majority of the leading opposition figures hold Guinean and French citizenship). Literacy rules (for example, the ability to speak English, French or the dominant indigenous language) apply in Botswana, Cameroon, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Togo, Uganda and Zambia, which obviously prevents those without a command of such languages from standing for office. In addition, many countries have age eligibility for candidates higher than that for voting, some considerably so: for example, Benin limits presidential candidates to the ages of 40 to 70; Côte d'Ivoire limits presidential candidates to 40 to 75; Gabon stipulates 28 for legislative candidates yet 21 for voters; and Angola stipulates 35 for the legislature, but 18 for voters.

### *Participation rates for the total (not simply registered) electorate*

In Africa, as in many parts of the 'Third World', registration is not automatic and is often neglected by those eligible. The number of eligible voters who actually vote is therefore smaller than appears from turnout figures. For instance, referenda in Niger (1992) and Botswana (1997) recorded 55 per cent and 20 per cent turnouts of registered voters, but the percentage of estimated eligible voters was only 38 per cent and 10 per cent. In the 1996 Zambian parliamentary and presidential election, a 46 per cent turnout of registered voters was reported, but this amounts to only 21 per cent of those eligible to vote. And in Zimbabwe's referendum in 2000 it is estimated that 26 per cent of the eligible voters participated.

### *Acceptance of the result*

The proof of consolidation for many political scientists, such as Huntington (1991), is that there have been 'two electoral turnovers', that is, a transfer of power whereby the defeated elected government, and powerful vested interests such as capital, the military and ethnic leaders, accept the result. Yet this has only occurred in Africa at the head of state level in Benin and Madagascar.

## Examining the openness and accountability of government

In this regard, a democratic audit would want to assess:

- The government programme: how far does it reflect what the ruling party stood for in the election?
- Government consultative procedures: to what extent are public opinion and relevant interests systematically and openly consulted prior to policy formation and legislation?
- Information about government action: to what extent is the information about government actions, and the effects of their policies, accessible to the public from independent sources?
- The control of non-elected executive personnel by the legislature: how effective is it, and how open in civilian, military and supra-national organisations?
- The powers of the legislature to scrutinise legislation and public expenditure: how effectively are they used by the legislature as a whole, and to what extent does a dominant ruling party abuse parliamentary procedure?
- The relevant interests and sources of income of elected officials (and political parties): how openly declared are potential conflicts of interest?

- Accessibility and representativeness of parliamentarians: how conscientiously do they gather and present their constituents' interests?
- The authority of the courts: how effectively do they ensure that the executive and public officials are subject to the law and the constitution?
- The independence of the courts: to what extent are the judiciary appointed independently, given security of tenure and granted freedom from interference?
- Access to the courts: to what extent can any citizen find redress for government maladministration?
- Appointments within public institutions: to what extent are there equal opportunities, and how far is the system free of favouritism, prejudice and bribery?
- Sub-national government autonomy: how autonomous is local government, and how accountable to the local electorate as opposed to being merely an administrative arm of central government?

Once again the importance of issues not tackled by the UK Audit, but relevant to the 'Third World', can be illustrated by reference to examples from a number of African countries.

### *Single party domination of the legislature*

Examples of small numbers of opposition members of parliament compared with the total number of seats abound in Africa (as of March 2000): Burkina Faso, 10 of 111; Côte d'Ivoire, 25 of 175; Djibouti, 0 of 65; Equatorial Guinea, 5 of 80; Ethiopia, 53 of 546; The Gambia, 12 of 49; Ghana, 67 of 200; Lesotho, 1 of 79 ; Mali, 10 of 147; Mauritania, 1 of 79; Mauritius, 6 of 66; Namibia, 17 of 72; Niger, 28 of 83; Senegal, 47 of 140; South Africa, 133 of 400; Tanzania, 55 of 269; Zambia, 19 of 158. In practice this means that ruling parties need no longer be accountable to parliament. Thus when one of the three non-ruling party MPs in Zimbabwe called for an audit of a veterans' fund that she alleged was being used illegally for senior government figures, her move was blocked by ruling party loyalists. Similarly proposed changes to the constitution that enabled incumbent presidents in Namibia, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire to extend the number of terms of office they could fill were easily passed in parliaments dominated by their supporters. Dominant party legislatures are the death of the legislature's control of the executive.

### *Parliamentarians' accessibility to their constituents*

The current network of relationships between politicians and the grass roots is often meagre in Africa. The head of the office of RENAMO's party leader in Mozambique has admitted that contacts between the grassroots and the RENAMO secretariat have been 'virtually zero' and considered that the parliamentary group was being corrupted by life in Maputo. The problem may be particularly acute in those countries that have proportional representation (for example Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Sao Tome and South Africa). Barkan found in Namibia in 1994 that 'members of the National Assembly rarely make an appearance in the rural areas, because they have no constituency to which they are accountable' (Barkan 1995:110). Interestingly COSATU, the largest federation of unions in South Africa, has found its unions' traditions of mandating representatives, holding them accountable, and expecting consultation on every important issue affecting the members before decisions are taken, to sit uneasily with the practices of parliamentarians. Though twenty of the COSATU leaders became MPs in 1994, it has proved impossible to hold them to account in the way shop stewards are in the unions. The party list system has cut the link between individual voters and individual representatives. Consequently COSATU called for a constituency based electoral system (Maree 1998) and denounced the 'non-consultative' approach to the 1998/99 budget.

### *Judges' independent appointment and security of tenure*

The judiciary is vulnerable to pressure where judges are presidential appointments, as in Kenya, The Gambia, and so on. Thus a Liberian judge was dismissed following his warning to the government not to make a mockery of justice and to produce the bodies of an opposition politician and his family who had been arrested and later found murdered by the roadside. In Chad, too, the courts are subject to intimidation and attempts to secure independence invariably lead to the dismissal of offending judges and packing of the panel to obtain the desired result. Thus when the Court of Appeal sought to declare the first census invalid in 1995, the composition of the Court was modified and two judges relocated.

### *Where local government is merely an administrative arm of centralgovernment*

This is a world-wide trend. In Kenya the central government controls local government even to appointing local government staff and holding the right to nominate up to one-third of councillors (which it used in 1992 to overthrow opposition majorities). By controlling councillors, senior council officers and most of the purse strings, it manipulates local government for its own political ends (Southall and Wood 1996). The violent riots among the Masai in Tanzania, March 1998 are a warning to such centralised states that lack of consultation can be a dangerous miscalculation. In this particular case, it was the increase by more than double of the development levy without consultation (a tax which had previously shown little evidence of being put into local development) which caused fierce opposition.

## Examining civil and political rights and the democratic nature of society

A democratic audit would want to assess:

- Statutory provision for civil and political rights: how clearly are rights and liberties regarding equal opportunity, and freedom of belief, expression, assembly, association, and movement, defined by law and how effectively are they upheld?
- Equality of application of political and civil rights: how far is their enjoyment ir respective of gender, class, ethnicity, religion, or political affiliation; to what extent do the security forces employ violence, torture and other illegal procedures?
- Civil rights education: how effectively informed are citizens of their rights and how to exercise them? How well are they made aware of failings by effective independent monitors?
- National consciousness: to what degree is there agreement on nationhood within the current state boundaries? How far does support for political parties cross regional, linguistic, religious or ethnic boundaries?
- Social tolerance: to what degree is there discrimination/tolerance between peoples of different ethnicities, cultures, beliefs and so on, and to what degree is violence used for political ends?
- Associations that represent their constituencies' views and critiques to government: how widespread in coverage, influential, accountable, autonomous, and representative are they?
- The activities of economic institutions: how publicly accountable and subject to legal regulation in the public interest are both national and trans-national companies?
- The pluralism of the news media and arts: to what degree is ownership widespread and independent of the state; how far are they open to different opinions and sections of society; to what degree do they operate as a balanced forum for political debate?
- Popular confidence in the political system: to what degree is there support for democratic procedures and for the rule of law; how far is there confidence among individuals and groups in their ability to solve the main problems confronting society and in their own ability to influence it?

Once again the importance of issues not tackled by the UK Audit, but relevant to the 'Third World', can be illustrated by reference to examples from a number of African countries.

### *National consciousness*

Though this question is asked in the UK Audit it takes on an added significance in the large multi-nation states of Africa. As regards agreement on nationhood within the current state boundaries, Bratton and van de Walle believe that: 'As many as ten states in Africa probably do not fill this condition: the most egregious and tragic examples are Rwanda and Burundi, but one might also mention Chad or Mauritania' (Bratton and van de Walle 1997:239). As regards support for political parties across regional, linguistic, religious or ethnic boundaries, the strength and primacy of the ethnic allegiance in Africa is still such that parties have coalesced along ethnic lines in Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Djibouti, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Niger and Togo, although not, by and large, in Zambia, Namibia, Madagascar and Benin. Such ethnic-based political parties only further the focusing of interest on local rather than national issues. The highly localised nature of politics is illustrated in Benin. In the 1991 legislative elections 'few of the political parties secured any support in more than one main region. Only five seats were won by organisations with a national base' (Nwajiaku 1994:443).

### *Political violence*

The increasing resort to violence by political groups is a disturbing pattern in African politics. This applies not just to rebel and terrorist groups, anti-crime groups (for example 'People against Gangsterism and Drugs', Western Cape, South Africa) and racial and religious organisations that attack non-members (for example Nigeria), but to parliamentary political parties. Countries such as Chad and Congo-Brazzaville have a long history of political militia culture. But even a number of self-proclaimed democratic parties that have taken part in democratic elections, have an ambivalent attitude towards the use of force to pursue their policies. For example, Guinea's opposition coalition (the Coordination of Democratic Opposition) announced in December 1996 that it was calling upon its supporters to defend their rights and freedoms by setting up 'resistance militia…to resist arbitrary arrests' of its activists. It further elaborated, in February 1998, that, believing that President Conte would 'never leave power through the ballot box', it had decided to set up a 'combat headquarters'; this body would unleash a campaign to promote 'a series of acts of resistance against the dictatorial power' of Conte (*Africa Research Bulletin* 1996, 1998).

### *Public support for democracy and the rule of law*

Unfortunately public opinion surveys are comparatively rare in Africa outside of South Africa. In the latter it has been found that 56.3 per cent (1997) thought that 'even when things don't work, democracy is always the best' (quoted in Mattes and Thiel 1999:128). Those black South Africans (1996) who had 'quite a lot' or 'a great deal' of confidence in the police, local courts and legal system in general numbered 47 per cent, 53 per cent and 68 per cent respectively (quoted in Gibson and Gouws 1997:183).

## Drawbacks of the methodology

Though legal and constitutional provisions are encoded and even evidence of their implementation is often indisputably recorded, an audit cannot be free of subjective interpretation when considering questions of degree and effectiveness. Issues such as the reliability and significance of the data, determining what is symptomatic and what exceptional, and evaluating all in terms of what is locally acceptable are all open to debate. Whenever expert judgement is employed in political research it is open to a number of accusations: the auditors may not have expertise with regard to some or all of the judgements that are being asked of them; information that is not only recorded, but accessible and reported, represents only a small and not necessarily representative proportion of the whole data; relative levels of performance, not being identified, will lead to inconsistency; and bias through personal involvement, political philosophy, or eurocentrism will affect their judgement. These problems are not all insuperable, however. Panels made up of suitably qualified auditors, where possible from the country being audited, and balanced according to political outlook, have previously been assembled for democratic indices (for example the Freedom Rating) and measurements of political change (for example Scarritt 1996), while the framework of the audit questions will certainly restrain individual bias by insisting on justification and by denying selective coverage of the system. Turning the criticism on its head, it can of course be argued that subjective measures can venture into vital areas of democratic processes which defy objective measurements, such as freedom of expression and fairness of elections, or areas that are not recorded and yet known, as repressive measures against the opposition.

Though the audit provides the rich detail on which extensive comparisons in time and place can be made, when it comes to studies aimed at comparing democracy as a dependent variable against other variables (for example Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Hadenius 1992), quantitative approaches are usually preferred. This is the basis for the study in the chapter that follows, which takes ‘illiberal democracy’ as given (following Freedom House ratings) and compares their performance against regimes that are not illiberal democracies. These quantitative studies offer the possibility of providing correlations that can be statistically validated (although the demonstration of systematic error in democracy indices undermines the strength of this argument; see Bollen 1993).

The argument has been put forward by critics that an audit must inevitably be a depressing record for the countries concerned. ‘Insisting on standardised outcomes… may strengthen the legitimacy of democracy for those within near reach of the specified performance standards, but it generates disaffection among those for whom these particular outcomes are unattainable’ (Whitehead 1997:126). Anyone who has read Weir and Beetham’s (1998) Democratic Audit study of the UK, will know that this country is certainly not among those within ‘near reach’ of arriving at the standard! Though all audits may be humbling, it is to be hoped that not all need lead to the inactivity of despair.

## Conclusion: the benefits of measuring democratic quality

Measuring the quality of democracy in the detail called for by the audit provides a substantial basis for further research programmes. The debate on the 'causes of democracy' has largely stagnated and this could well be because the task is over-ambitious; the variables are too many, and the field is so broad as to allow too many special cases and exceptions. The logjam is more likely to be broken by taking individual components of democracy and examining their causes. The audit would provide a useful basis for such an investigation.

There is considerable unease among 'Third World' countries that the democracy debate has become dominated by the liberal model. In the process of auditing democratic practice, however, it may well emerge that either these liberal 'ground rules' and 'procedures' are not achieving the democratic 'principles', or that certain ground rules are more effective in particular regional contexts at achieving democratic procedures. Systematic comparative analysis based on the audit should raise important issues of public-policy making and the design of institutions of governance suited for particular regional contexts. Certainly at the level of analysis at which the audit is conducted, it should be clearer under what circumstances and to what extent concrete policies might or might not be transferred from the outside or within developing regions.

Within its broad view of democracy the audit provides a fuller survey of democracy than is currently available. The frequent reports on the fairness of elections and on the human rights record, though valuable, are incomplete accounts of the condition of democracy within the nation. Even Freedom House's 'Comparative Survey of Freedom' which does bring together political rights and civil liberties in its country reports and quantitative scoring, still has a less than complete view. Bratton and van de Walle might regard it as 'the best coverage of any data set on liberties and democracy [in Africa] currently available' (Bratton and van de Walle 1997:283), and use the score on its eight-point check list on political rights as the measurement of the extent of democratisation, but with its focus on 'rights in practice' it is particularly weak on open and accountable government, and ignores societal factors vital for a healthy democracy, such as agreement on who is the demos (national consciousness), social tolerance, and popular confidence in the political system.

Qualitative measurement of democracy in the developing world is not a panacea. It does not replace other approaches to democratic analysis, but it should provide a useful adjunct to the tools on offer for those concerned with understanding, assessing and comparing the changes taking place in the developing world's politics.

# 3

# Illiberal democracy in the 'Third World'

## An empirical enquiry

*Jan Engberg and Svante Ersson*

### Introduction

A growing number of countries in the world seem to be developing a kind of democracy that facilitates democratic procedures but fails to provide essential civil liberties. However, this is not a new phenomenon: states with such features have long been referred to as 'semi-democratic', 'quasi-democratic', 'authoritarian' or worse. But for some commentators, such terms are no longer sufficient. Consequently, a new catch phrase—*illiberal democracy*—has recently appeared on the scene (Zakaria 1997; Bell *et al.* 1995). The concept—rooted in the practice of allowing for political rights yet denying civil liberties—has become both ideology and theory. It is ideology in the sense that political leaders, predominantly in some 'Third World' countries, increasingly advocate 'guarded' or 'guided' democracy, often seeking to rule by presidential decree despite functioning electoral assemblies while instigating debates on the alleged shortcomings of 'Western' perceptions of human rights (Bell 2000; Foot 1997; McSherry 1998; Robison 1996). This differs from earlier times when politicians with an inclination towards authoritarian rule simply denied accusations of human rights abuses. Today a new self-assured defence for restricted, *illiberal,* democracy is on the rise, particularly among countries that have demonstrated an ability to combine illiberal measures with economic growth and social stability. Developmental alternatives with a record of continuous success are rare in world politics. Hence the use and misuse of illiberalism may become an important ideological tool for a number of political agents—leaders in politics, business as well as leading scholars—involved with 'Third World' affairs.

Theoretically, illiberal democracy is sometimes presented as a different case of democratisation that does not quite fit into standard versions of modernisation theory. The roles of interests, social classes and ruling elites are said to be different compared with conventional histories of Western democratisation (Brown and Jones 1995). Thus, the rise of illiberal democracy may challenge conventional wisdom, yet our knowledge of illiberal democracies is limited. When it comes to finding the roots of illiberalism, or discussing consequences of illiberal practice, there is not much to report. However, since powerful ideologies and interesting theories have a tendency to reinforce each other, there are both political and theoretical reasons to look closer into the phenomenon of illiberal democracy.

Fareed Zakaria portrays the potential of illiberal democracy in a rather dramatic way:

> Illiberal democracy is a growth industry. Seven years ago only 22 percent of democratising countries could have been so categorised; five years ago that figure had risen to 35 percent. And to date few illiberal democracies have matured into liberal democracies; if anything, they are moving toward heightened illiberalism. Far from being a temporary or transitional stage, it appears that many countries are settling into a form of government that mixes a substantial degree of democracy with a substantial degree of illiberalism. Just as nations across the world have become comfortable with many variations of capitalism, they could well adopt and sustain varied forms of democracy. Western liberal democracy might prove to be not the final destination on the democratic road, but just one of many possible exits.
>
> (Zakaria 1997:24)

This chapter is about the pretensions and potential of illiberal democracy. First we intend to establish the occurrence of illiberalism over time and to ascertain to what extent illiberal systems are stable phenomena. Second, we are interested in finding the roots, as well as demonstrating the performance, of illiberal democracies in comparison with other regime types. Third, we propose to discuss some political and theoretical implications of the rise of illiberalism as a systemic alternative for 'Third World' countries.

However, before this enquiry can take place, it will be useful to clarify, both conceptually and contextually, the notion of illiberalism. It will probably come as no surprise that much of the debate on illiberalism originated and has taken place in the context of East Asia, as it is in East Asia that new self-assured forms of political organisation have been developing in recent years (Fukuyama 1995; 1997). While much of this has to do with the unprecedented economic growth of the area, it is also linked to the fact that, in the region, authoritarianism often seems to co-exist with a large measure of public consent (Bertrand 1998). For example, ideas such as 'Asian democracy', 'guided democracy' and 'Asian forms of human rights' have been advocated by political leaders in countries such as Malaysia and Singapore (Emmerson 1995; Means 1996). These ideas focus on the necessity to restrict aspects of democracy, particularly civil liberties, while developing a range of different mechanisms for societal control. These include: dominant party systems, vote-buying, legal fine-tuning, ethnic affirmative action, co-option, emergency laws and restrictions on the right to organise, debate and voice opinions. In order to facilitate control, political regimes in illiberal democracies may use these mechanisms to punish the electorate, in the event of dissent. In the case of Singapore this would mean that constituencies who fail to support the ruling PAP party in elections could find themselves without public transportation or outside a promised programme for housing renovation. In short, illiberal democracy is more about controlling people than the other way around (Tremewan 1994; Jesudason 1996; Case 1997).

But illiberalism is not only inspiring Asian politicians. A growing number of African, Asian and Latin American political elites have been looking towards East Asia for inspiration when it comes to matters of political stability, economic development and ability to cope with internal and external crisis. While the recent economic downturn in the area may have reduced the attractiveness of the East Asian systems as role models for regimes elsewhere, they could yet regain their allure. This is because, despite a severe economic crisis in 1997–8—in terms of financial breakdowns, currency depreciation and a near collapse of equity markets—the political and economic systems seemed on the whole to survive. With the exception of Indonesia, East Asian countries may have emerged post-crisis as stronger developmental alternatives, not only due to their economic record and other important achievements, but also because of the ways they managed to overcome the financial crisis. The point is that the ability to produce both economic and social development *and* at the same time demonstrate a capacity towards managing political and economic crisis demonstrates features rarely found in 'Third World' or transition countries. This is why illiberalism may become a powerful, widespread ideology.

How should illiberalism be analysed? Illiberal practice, as it is defined here, reflects a feature within liberal democracy itself, that is, *democratic procedures* may coexist with different degrees of liberalism and vice versa. It is entirely possible for a country to develop a system of free and fair elections—that is, political rights—and at the same time limit a number of civil liberties, such as freedoms of speech, assembly, religion and the right to private property. And a political system may allow civil liberties but restrict the democratic process. In the first case we are dealing with what Zakaria (1997) has called *illiberal democ racies* and in the second, *liberal autocracies*. Thus, both political rights and civil liberties are dimensions with a variety of possible combinations. Theoretically this means that it is not altogether easy to operationalise 'illiberalism'. How much of political rights should be linked to how much civil liberty in order for a typology of illiberalism to be constructed?

An empirical enquiry into the nature of illiberalism must be sensitive to the fact that:

- Only countries with a record of providing some rudimentary aspects of democracy may be included in the analysis. Democracy should not be altogether a facade in order for illiberal democracy to exist.
- Only countries that demonstrate a better performance on political rights than civil liberties may be referred to as illiberal.
- Only countries with some degree of continuity with respect to illiberalism would be of analytical interest.

In order to analyse roots and consequences of illiberal practice, it is necessary to relate illiberalism to characteristics of other kinds of political systems. If illiberal democracies are to become role models for 'Third World' countries outside East Asia, then their potential to master essential political, social and economic problems must be empirically demonstrated over time. This can only be achieved through system-relevant comparisons with a focus on regime performance. In this regard it seems natural to compare illiberal democracies with other semi-democratic regimes, with authoritarian regimes, and with 'fully-fledged' democracies. Since we are predominantly interested in analysing the potential of illiberal politics for developing countries, only Third World' countries will be included in the following analysis.

These deliberations are operationalised in the next section followed by an empirical analysis of the roots and performances of illiberal democracies.

## Illiberal democracy: operationalisation

Illiberal democracy is only one type of regime identified among the many regime typologies that have been suggested in the literature (Almond 1956; Lijphart 1968; Finer 1974; O'Donnell 1994). A regime may be identified as an illiberal democracy following the application of two criteria: the degree of democracy and the degree of (il)liberalism. Such a regime cannot be a fully-fledged democracy nor can it be classified as an outright nondemocracy, but rather something in between. How best to identify this kind of regime, illiberal democracy, in the real world?

Quite a large number of indices or measures are available that attempt to map the world-wide variation of democracy in different time periods (Bollen 1986; 1990; Banks 1992; Beetham 1994a). One of the first systematically developed democracy indices—covering the years 1960 and 1965—was presented by Bollen (1980) who later (1993) updated the index. Humana (1983; 1987; 1992) presented human rights ratings which could be used as proxies for a democracy index. Likewise, Gurr (1990) and Jaggers and Gurr (1995) have made regime ratings available that can be transformed to democracy scores. However, perhaps the most commonly used democracy indices are based on regime ratings compiled by Freedom House (FH) since 1972 (Gastil 1986; 1987; Freedom House 1999; 2000; Karatnycky 1999). In addition, there are a number of other similar indices (Vanhanen 1984; 1990; Hadenius 1992; Beetham 1994b). Based upon scores reflected in these indices it is possible to classify 'Third World' countries according to their degree of democracy (Kurzman 1998).

To our knowledge, no explicit, systematic attempt has yet been made to differentiate between liberal and illiberal regimes. However, one way to distinguish liberal regimes from illiberal regimes is to make use of FH ratings. FH codes regimes according to how they measure up to certain criteria relating to political rights and civil liberties. While Banks (1989) has argued that these two categories are highly correlated and that one of them therefore may be said to be redundant, it may still be useful to classify regimes as 'liberal' when they respect political rights and civil liberties on an equal footing, and to a considerable degree. Conversely, regimes where civil liberties are respected less than political rights could be classified as illiberal regimes. Our choice for an empirical operationalisation of the concept of illiberal democracy is to rely on the ratings reported by FH. There are two main reasons for our choice; first, it is appropriate to use since it gives access to an impressive time series, with data covering 1972–2000; and second, FH ratings make it possible to distinguish between liberal and illiberal regimes.

Our classification of different regime-types involves the following deliberations:

- The democracy score (DEMO) is obtained through adding the scores for political rights and civil liberties and normalising this added score so that the value of 10 illustrates the highest level of democracy, while the value of 0 represents a clear nondemocracy. Based upon these transformed scores, we identify three sets of regimes according to their degree of democracy: regimes scoring between 7.5 and 10 are judged to be 'democracies' (or 'free'); regimes scoring 3.33 to 7.5 are identified as 'less-democratic' (or 'partly free'); the rest, scoring from 0 to 3.33, are 'nondemocracies' (or 'not free').
- The liberalism score (LIB) is arrived at through a subtraction: political rights minus civil liberties. Regimes with a liberalism score of 0 or more are classified as liberal regimes, while regimes scoring less than 0 are identified as non-liberal regimes.
- To arrive at a fourfold typology we divide the partly free (or less-democratic) category between a liberal category (semi-democracy) and a non-liberal category (illiberal democracy). Thus we have the following regime-types: democracies, illiberal democracies, semi-democracies and nondemocracies.

For each year between 1972 and 1999, as well as for the 1970s, the 1980s, the 1990s and the whole period 1972–99, 'Third World' countries have been classified according to this typology. When identifying countries in the 'Third World' we have followed the listing used by Hadenius (1992:61–3), with one exception: we do not classify Israel as a 'Third World country'. (UNDP and other international organisations do not count Israel as a 'developing' country which is the case for all 'Third World' countries). The classification of regimes for each period is based upon the computed average scores for that same period. The distribution of 'Third World' countries according to this typology is displayed in Table 3.1.

Most countries in the 'Third World' are classified as nondemocracies during this period, while only a small minority could be called democracies. The illiberal democracy regime-type is more frequent in the 1990s than it was in the 1970s, and taking the whole period into consideration, close to 25 per cent of 'Third World' countries would be counted as illiberal democracies. This would appear to support the contention that illiberal democracy is a growing phenomenon. The question now is: how valid and how stable over time are these observations?

Let us show how the classification of regime-types for the various time periods reveals them to co-vary and agree with each other. Table 3.2 presents a correlation

*Table 3.1* Distribution of regimes in the Third World 1972–99

| *Period* | *Democracy* | *Illiberal democracy* | *Semi-democracy* | *Non-democracy* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1970s | 6 | 10 | 19 | 57 | 92 |
| 1980s | 9 | 19 | 12 | 56 | 96 |
| 1990s | 10 | 32 | 14 | 42 | 98 |
| 1972–99 | 6 | 24 | 15 | 47 | 92 |

Sources: Classifications based upon data reported in Gastil 1986; 1987; Freedom House 1999; 2000.

matrix which shows how these regime classifications—democracy, illiberal democracy, semi-democracy and nondemocracy—for four different time periods co-vary with each other. Here we employ the Spearman’s Rho correlation coefficient to display how these typologies correlate with each other.

From Table 3.2 we may note that there is a relatively stable pattern over time with respect to the overall typology. Nondemocracies in the 1970s tended also to be nondemocracies in the 1990s. However, in this chapter our focus is on the illiberal democracy regimes. In Table 3.3 we present information about the agreement in classifications of regimes as illiberal democracies for the different time periods, that is, the degree of agreement with respect to how countries have been classified as illiberal countries for the defined time periods. The table should be read such that the second column of the first row says the following: 31.6 per cent of those countries classified as illiberal regimes in the 1980s were classified in the same manner in the 1970s.

From this table we can see that there is no perfect matching of the classifications made of the illiberal democracies. It is, however, important to note that when we look at the overall classification (illiberal democracy 1972–99) we find quite a high rate of agreement for the 1970s and the 1980s as well as for the 1990s. This is, in our opinion, an indication that the illiberal democracy 1972–99 measure may be used for our analysis below of the roots and the performance of illiberal democracies in the post-colonial ‘Third World’.

If illiberal democracies are defined as those which allow for political rights but systematically deprive citizens of important aspects of civil liberties, then it becomes important to make sense of the word ‘systematically’. There is an important distinction to be made between systems that are illiberal by design or by (de)fault. Thus, for a regime, a bad record on civil liberties could be achieved in two ways (albeit with all possible combinations): either, one, as a result of deliberate actions, undertaken by political elites with an ambition to control people and political procedures; or two, as a consequence of failures, mismanagement, neglect, poverty, disease, war or any such activity or non-activity that tends to deprive people of opportunities to exercise their civil liberties. In the first case, illiberal politics is *designed* through an elaborate system of laws and regulations. In the second case, illiberalism is a result of accumulated societal *(de)faults*. Political regimes which display an illiberal ideology—claiming restrictions on civil liberties as ideology, not

*Table 3.2* Correlation matrix for regime typologies: 1970s to 1972–99

| | *Typology 1970s* | *Typology 1980s* | *Typology 1990s* | *Typology 1972–99* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Typology 1970s | 1.00 | | | |
| Typology 1980s | 0.64 | 1.00 | | |
| Typology 1990s | 0.54 | 0.65 | 1.00 | |
| Typology 1972–99 | 0.79 | 0.83 | 0.78 | 1.00 |

Note
Spearman's Rho correlation coefficients on display.

*Table 3.3* Agreements for classifications of regimes as illiberal democracies: 1970s to 1972–99

| | *Illiberal democracy 1970s %* | *Illiberal democracy 1980s %* | *Illiberal democracy 1990s %* | *Illiberal democracy 1972–99 %* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Illiberal democracy 1970s | 100.0 | 31.6 | 28.1 | 37.5 |
| Illiberal democracy 1980s | 60.0 | 100.0 | 43.8 | 62.5 |
| Illiberal democracy 1990s | 90.0 | 73.7 | 100.0 | 79.2 |
| Illiberal democracy 1972–99 | 90.0 | 78.9 | 59.4 | 100.0 |
| N | (10) | (19) | (32) | (24) |

necessity— and maintain such politics through a dominant party system, will be operationalised as illiberal by design. All other illiberal systems will be referred to as illiberal by default.

Thus, in addition to the three basic regimes—democracy, semi-democracy and nondemocracy—we will apply the distinction of illiberal democracy by default and by design. Hence, we arrive at the alternative regime typologies (relating FH categories to our deliberations) shown in Figure 3.1, which we will use in the remainder of the analysis.

The distribution of regime-types in the real world, based on our classification, is presented in Table 3.4.

This means that when we enquire into the features of illiberal democratic regimes we will consider three different sets of regimes: one, illiberal democracies as a unique set as identified earlier; two, illiberal democracies by default; and three, illiberal democracies by design. The classification of countries belonging to varieties of democracies and nondemocracies is specified in the Appendix.

## Empirical enquiry: roots and performance of illiberal democracy

In this section of the chapter we will not only enquire into possible roots of illiberal democratic regimes but also deal with consequences that may be associated with illiberal democracy, particularly public policies and socio-economic outcomes.

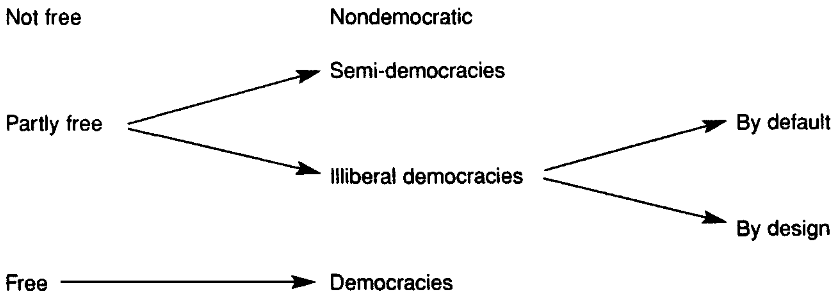

*Figure 3.1* Relations of regime types

*Table 3.4* Regime typologies to be applied in the empirical analysis: frequencies

| *Regime* | | *Frequencies* |
|---|---|---|
| Nondemocracies | | 47 |
| Semi-democracies | | 15 |
| Illiberal democracies: | All | 24 |
| | Default | 16 |
| | Design | 8 |
| Democracies | | 6 |

First, however, we will present an overview of the design and the methodology that will be employed in the empirical analysis.

### *Design and methodology*

Although our focus is on illiberal democracies it is necessary to compare this regime-type with other regime-types. The design we will employ is to compare the means of different regime-type characteristics, for instance: social structure, public policies and socio-economic outcomes. This implies that we will apply the methodology of one-way analysis of variance (see Blalock 1981:336–52; Bohrnstedt and Knoke 1994:120–49). The interesting question is whether illiberal democracies differ in their mean values compared to other regime-types. Another way of framing this question is to ask to what extent these group characteristics—the regime-types—have an impact on the dependent variable under scrutiny. The empirical analysis is designed so that for each relevant factor introduced into the analysis, the means for the different regime set-ups will be displayed, accompanied with relevant eta squared scores and their respective level of significance. If we have reasonably high eta squared values and an associated significance level of 0.05 or lower we may identify an impact of regime-type on the dependent variable. The next step is to enquire into whether the set of illiberal democracies performs in an expected, or different, way from the other regime-types; we are, of course, also interested in looking for differences among the alternative sets of illiberal democracies.

### *Roots of illiberaldemocracy*

In this section we wish to establish to what extent the illiberal democracy regime type has common roots, or background factors, that distinguishes this regime type from other regime types. We are also interested in finding out if illiberal democracies are more or less homogeneous with respect to background factors and to what extent we can observe major differences between illiberal democracies by design and by default.

The background factors that we attempt to identify refer to proxies for colonial traditions, religious and ethnic structure and cultural orientations. However, let us start by presenting an overview of the geographical distribution of illiberal democracies and other regime-types.

### *Geography*

Breaking down the data set of ninety-two 'Third World' states into eight macro-regions of the world (see Table 3.5), we may note that illiberal democracies are more frequent in Latin America and in Asia but the overall distribution of illiberal regimes does not suggest a 'natural habitat' for illiberalism. That is, illiberal political systems are to be found everywhere. A small number of democracies is located in the Americas and in Africa, while many nondemocracies are to be found in the latter region. All this is displayed in detail in Table 3.5.

The concentration of illiberal democracies in Asia and the Americas reveals an additional systematic feature: introducing the distinction between illiberal democracy by default and by design we find that it fits the geographical division between Latin America and Asia quite well—illiberalism by design is mostly an Asian feature, whereas illiberalism by default is more prevalent in Latin America. Let us go on from geography to what we have called proxies of colonial traditions.

### *Colonial traditions*

Here we are utilising two kinds of indicators as proxies for colonial traditions. First, we use the proportion of Christians in a country as an indicator of a Western tradition: the more Christians, the more Western penetration. We rely here on estimates reported by Barrett (1982) and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1996). Second, we rely on estimates of the use of the English language worldwide in the 1990s. Crystal (1997) distinguishes between the use of English as a first language (Eng1) and the use of English as a second language (Eng2). The implication is again obvious: the greater the use of the English language, the stronger the British colonial tradition.

Now the question is: when comparing means between the different regime-types, is the illiberal regime-type distinguishing itself? Data on this are reported in full detail in Table 3.6.

*Table 3.5* Political regime types by eight macro-regions

| *Regimes* | | *Eastern Europe* | *Central America* | *South America* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nondemocracy | (N=47) | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Semi-democracy | (N=15) | 0 | 3 | 4 |
| Illiberal democracy | (N=24) | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| Default | (N=16) | 0 | 3 | 5 |
| Design | (N=8) | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Democracy | (N=6) | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| All | (N=92) | 1 | 12 | 10 |

Comparing the four major regime-types regarding colonial traditions we may note that there are significant variations. The illiberal regime-type is, however, not distinguishing itself by being associated with any minimum or maximum values on these variables. The democratic regime-type displays the highest value for the proportion of Christians as well as those speaking English. It is only when separating between illiberal regimes by default and design that we may identify a particular pattern: the illiberal-by-design set demonstrates the lowest value for Christians and quite a high rate for English-speaking.

### *Ethnic structure and cultural orientation*

The next step is to enquire into the configuration of ethnic structure and cultural orientation. By ethnic structure we refer to the degree of homogeneity/heterogeneity of a society in terms of its ethno-linguistic structure. These structures tends to vary little over time and here we are taking data for the 1990s from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1996). In addition, we also wish to map variations in cultural orientation among different cultures as they may be measured by more or less individualism/collectivism/egalitarianism. The idea is that greater apparent individualism illustrates greater Western influences. We know of no entirely satisfactory indicators of variation in individualism cross-nationally, but we have created such a measure, which relies on various scores on individualism reported in the literature (Hofstede 1991; Diener *et al.* 1995). Means for these two variables broken down for the different regime-types are reported in Table 3.7.

We can identify no significant differences between the different regime types, because of large within-group variation. This is also true for the illiberal regime-type. Nevertheless, individualism as a whole appears to be more frequent in illiberal systems than in democracies. Thus, much of the political excuse for illiberalism seems to be ill-founded. That is, contrary to what is sometimes claimed by political elites in illiberal systems (Mahathir and Shintaro 1995; Beng-Huat 1995), it does not seem to be true that people in illiberal regimes are systematically and predominantly non-individualistic and collective in their cultural orientation.

*Table 3.6* Colonial traditions by political regimes: means

| ***Regimes*** | | ***Christians*** | | | ***Eng1*** | ***Eng2*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | ***1900*** | ***1970*** | ***1995*** | | |
| Nondemocracy | (N=47) | 7.5 | 26.5 | 24.8 | 0.3 | 5.9 |
| Semi-democracy | (N=15) | 50.9 | 63.3 | 60.4 | 0.1 | 6.7 |
| Illiberal democracy | (N=24) | 42.9 | 48.3 | 47.6 | 0.9 | 9.6 |
| Default | (N=16) | 48.7 | 54.7 | 52.8 | 0.1 | 4.3 |
| Design | (N=8) | 31.5 | 35.5 | 37.3 | 2.6 | 20.2 |
| Democracy | (N=6) | 67.6 | 72.0 | 63.3 | 31.7 | 41.2 |
| Eta-sq | k=4 | 0.30 | 0.17 | 0.17 | 0.31 | 0.16 |
| Sig. | | 0.000 | 0.001 | 0.001 | 0.000 | 0.002 |
| Eta-sq | k=5 | 0.31 | 0.19 | 0.18 | 0.31 | 0.19 |
| Sig. | | 0.000 | 0.001 | 0.002 | 0.000 | 0.001 |

### *Conclusion about roots*

With the exception of ethnic structure and cultural orientation we do find statistically significant differences between the four major regime-types with respect to their roots—or background factors. However, comparing the means we find no particular distinguishing pattern for the illiberal regime-type. Rather, it is the democratic regime-type which distinguishes itself from the other regime-types: here we find a higher proportion of Christians, more of an English-speaking population and greater levels of individualism. In some of these instances the illiberal regime-type comes close to the democratic regime-type, while in other respects it approaches the semi-democratic regime-type. Illiberal regimes are not to be found in any particular geographic context, but it is interesting that the illiberal-by-design category is mostly an Asian feature and illiberal-by-default a Latin American one. All in all, this suggests that it is not very meaningful to talk about illiberal democracy in terms of *one* single regime-type. Looking into its roots, we find that within this set of regime-types there are different patterns.

## The performance of illiberal democracy

The question to be addressed in this section is whether we can associate any particular performance profiles with different regime-types. There are five sets of performance profiles that we want to take a closer look at. First, we intend to study the distribution of what we call societal performance, illustrated by level of human development, and occurrence of violence and protest in different regime-types. Second, we attempt to map institutional performance with reference to the state of the market economy and the position in society of trade unions. Third, we enquire into public policies or the variation in the size of the public sector. Fourth, we look into the economic outcomes of different regime-types with respect primarily to

*Table 3.5* continued

| *North Africa Middle East* | *Sub-Saharan Africa* | *East Asia* | *South Asia* | *Oceania* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | 25 | 7 | 2 | 0 |
| 2 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 14 | 35 | 13 | 6 | 1 |

*Table 3.7* Ethnic structure and cultural orientation by political regimes: means

| *Regimes* | | *Ethnic structure: heterogeneity* | *Cultural orientation: individualism* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nondemocracy | (N=47) | 0.54 | 31.2 |
| Semi-democracy | (N=15) | 0.50 | 22.6 |
| Illiberal democracy | (N=24) | 0.48 | 31.6 |
| Default | (N=16) | 0.49 | 27.6 |
| Design | (N=8) | 0.45 | 36.8 |
| Democracy | (N=6) | 0.46 | 22.0 |
| Eta-sq | k=4 | 0.011 | 0.102 |
| Sig. | | 0.798 | 0.296 |
| Eta-sq | k=5 | 0.013 | 0.165 |
| Sig. | | 0.894 | 0.191 |

economic growth and inflation. Fifth, we enquire into various social outcomes, such as income distribution and female representation in parliament.

### *Societal performance*

'Societal performance' comprises some indicators measuring human development as well as occurrences of violence and protest events. A good societal performance profile would imply high scores on human development and few occurrences of violence and protest. Our indicators are based on data reported by UNDP (1994; 1995), and Banks (1996). The performance profiles broken down as means for the various regime-types are shown in Table 3.8.

In most cases we find significant differences between the four major regime-types. It is striking how often the degree of democracy co-varies with different performance profiles, with the democratic regime-type displaying the 'best' profile and the nondemocratic regime-type the 'worst'. We may also note that illiberal democracies distinguish themselves by showing the highest scores on violence and protest events.

However, disaggregating the illiberal regime-type into the design and default categories we may note some sharp differences. Illiberalism-by-design demonstrates a much better profile than the default category when it concerns levels of corruption

*Table 3.8* Societal performance by political regime: means

| *Regimes* | | *HDI* | | *Violence* | | | *Protest* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *1970* | *1995* | *1970s* | *1980s* | *1990s* | *1970s* | *1980s* | *1990s* |
| Nondemocracy | (N=47) | 0.26 | 0.48 | 0.75 | 0.45 | 0.98 | 0.39 | 0.45 | 0.83 |
| Semi-democracy | (N=15) | 0.40 | 0.62 | 0.69 | 0.76 | 1.18 | 0.78 | 1.33 | 1.47 |
| Illiberal democracy | (N=24) | 0.45 | 0.67 | 1.53 | 1.31 | 1.71 | 2.40 | 3.82 | 2.78 |
| Default | (N=16) | 0.40 | 0.60 | 1.62 | 1.41 | 1.86 | 2.22 | 3.32 | 3.02 |
| Design | (N=8) | 0.54 | 0.80 | 1.36 | 1.13 | 1.40 | 2.76 | 4.81 | 2.29 |
| Democracy | (N=6) | 0.62 | 0.82 | 0.20 | 0.03 | 0.28 | 0.28 | 0.33 | 1.03 |
| Eta-sq | k=4 | 0.37 | 0.26 | 0.10 | 0.11 | 0.05 | 0.27 | 0.20 | 0.20 |
| Sig. | | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.030 | 0.015 | 0.176 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| Eta-sq | k=5 | 0.41 | 0.31 | 0.10 | 0.12 | 0.06 | 0.28 | 0.21 | 0.21 |
| Sig. | | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.059 | 0.030 | 0.252 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |

and human development (HDI). In fact, illiberalism-by-design shows close resemblance to democracies in these respects. Thus we may conclude that various kinds of illiberal regimes may end up with radically different societal performance profiles.

### *Institutional performance*

When testing the institutional performance of different regime-types we include measures on the workings of the market economy as indicated by an index on economic freedom, as well as the position of the working class in a society, illustrated by trade union density. We rely on the economic freedom index developed by the Fraser Institute, which provides data from 1975 to 1995 (Gwartney *et al.* 1996; 1997), and the data on trade union density stems from the ILO (1997). Means for these performance variables for the different regime types are portrayed in Table 3.9.

The variation in this performance profile is not consistently associated with the four major regime-types. It is true that the democratic regime type has the highest scores both for economic freedom and trade union density, but the illiberal regime-type displays the lowest trade union densities, while the nondemocratic regime-type score lowest on economic freedom. Looking into one subset of the illiberal regime-type it is noteworthy that the illiberal-by-design subset has the highest scores for economic freedom for all three periods of time. Again we find that this subset has a distinguishable performance profile.

### *Public policy performance*

The third performance profile refers to the size of the public sector. Here we rely on two indicators, one measuring central government expenditures and the other social

*Table 3.9* Institutional performance by political regime: means

| | | *Economic freedom* | | *Trade union density* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Regimes* | | *1975* | *1985* | *1975* | *1985* | *1995* |
| Nondemocracy | (N=47) | 3.5 | 3.6 | 4.1 | 35.1 | 14.2 |
| Semi-democracy | (N=15) | 4.8 | 4.4 | 5.4 | 17.8 | 15.0 |
| Illiberal democracy | (N=24) | 3.9 | 4.2 | 5.6 | 17.0 | 13.8 |
| Default | (N=16) | 3.7 | 3.7 | 5.2 | 16.2 | 11.8 |
| Design | (N=8) | 4.4 | 5.1 | 6.6 | 18.1 | 16.9 |
| Democracy | (N=6) | 4.2 | 4.6 | 6.0 | 27.9 | 16.4 |
| Eta-sq | k=4 | 0.12 | 0.07 | 0.31 | 0.23 | 0.01 |
| Sig. | | 0.047 | 0.195 | 0.000 | 0.084 | 0.966 |
| Eta-sq | k=5 | 0.15 | 0.15 | 0.38 | 0.23 | 0.03 |
| Sig. | | 0.039 | 0.033 | 0.000 | 0.158 | 0.839 |

*Table 3.10* Public policies performance by political regime: means

| | | *Central government expenditure* | | | *Social security benefit payment* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Regimes* | | *1972* | *1980* | *1995* | *1975* | *1985* | *1995* |
| Nondemocracy | (N=47) | 22.1 | 25.9 | 23.5 | 1.4 | 1.2 | 1.4 |
| Semi-democracy | (N=15) | 19.3 | 23.2 | 29.1 | 4.6 | 3.1 | 3.2 |
| Illiberal democracy | (N=24) | 18.3 | 20.2 | 20.5 | 3.2 | 2.3 | 2.7 |
| Default | (N=16) | 18.1 | 20.5 | 20.4 | 3.4 | 2.1 | 2.6 |
| Design | (N=8) | 18.6 | 19.8 | 20.7 | 2.7 | 2.9 | 3.0 |
| Democracy | (N=6) | 21.8 | 29.5 | 29.2 | 3.8 | 2.6 | 3.1 |
| Eta-sq | k=4 | 0.04 | 0.09 | 0.12 | 0.25 | 0.07 | 0.06 |
| Sig. | | 0.583 | 0.108 | 0.117 | 0.029 | 0.272 | 0.351 |
| Eta-sq | k=5 | 0.04 | 0.10 | 0.12 | 0.26 | 0.07 | 0.07 |
| Sig. | | 0.746 | 0.195 | 0.212 | 0.056 | 0.375 | 0.503 |

security benefit payments, both as percentages of the GDP. The central government expenditure data stem from the World Bank (1992; 1997a), with the social security benefit payment data from the ILO (1992; 1998). The distribution of mean values on the various regime-types is reported in Table 3.10.

In this case we also find some differences between the major regime-types. The largest public sector is to be found within the democratic regime-type, while the smallest public sector is either among the illiberal regime-type (central government expenditure) or the nondemocratic regime-type (social security payments).

### *Economic perfomance*

In our attempt to capture the economic performance of various states we include two economic variables: economic growth and gross domestic investment growth. These variables are measured for three different time periods and we rely on World

*Table 3.11* Economic performance by political regimes: means

| | | *Openness (impex)* | | | *Economic growth* | | | *Gross domestic investments* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Regimes*** | | *1970* | *1980* | *1990* | *1960–73* | *1973–85* | *1985–94* | *1960–70* | *1970–80* | *1980–93* |
| Nondemocracy | (N=47) | 49.1 | 66.2 | 57.6 | 2.1 | 1.0 | -0.8 | 5.2 | 7.2 | 0.1 |
| Semi-democracy | (N=15) | 47.3 | 73.0 | 68.5 | 2.5 | 0.3 | -0.1 | 8.1 | 8.2 | 1.9 |
| Illiberal democracy | (N=24) | 43.6 | 62.4 | 63.8 | 2.7 | 1.0 | 2.2 | 9.1 | 6.3 | 2.7 |
| Default | (N=16) | 34.4 | 41.8 | 41.2 | 1.9 | 0.1 | 1.4 | 6.9 | 5.1 | 1.8 |
| Design | (N=8) | 62.1 | 103.4 | 106.1 | 4.4 | 3.0 | 3.9 | 13.3 | 8.4 | 4.5 |
| Democracy | (N=6) | 71.2 | 89.6 | 92.9 | 2.6 | 0.6 | 2.5 | 7.6 | 6.0 | 2.1 |
| Eta-sq | k=4 | 0.05 | 0.02 | 0.04 | 0.02 | 0.01 | 0.21 | 0.07 | 0.01 | 0.05 |
| Sig. | | 0.274 | 0.668 | 0.488 | 0.701 | 0.856 | 0.000 | 0.164 | 0.875 | 0.362 |
| Eta-sq | k=5 | 0.10 | 0.12 | 0.18 | 0.10 | 0.10 | 0.26 | 0.13 | 0.03 | 0.07 |
| Sig. | | 0.078 | 0.043 | 0.012 | 0.080 | 0.101 | 0.000 | 0.040 | 0.762 | 0.332 |

*Table 3.12* Social performance by political regime: means

| | | *Gini index* | | | *Female parliamentary representation* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Regimes* | | *1970s* | *1980s* | *1990s* | *1970s* | *1980s* | *1990s* |
| Nondemocracy | (N=47) | 41.3 | 37.6 | 43.8 | 7.1 | 7.7 | 7.2 |
| Semi-democracy | (N=15) | 49.0 | 46.6 | 46.7 | 4.7 | 6.2 | 6.8 |
| Illiberal democracy | (N=24) | 45.1 | 43.5 | 44.1 | 3.8 | 5.3 | 7.7 |
| Default | (N=16) | 44.5 | 42.6 | 40.7 | 4.1 | 5.5 | 7.1 |
| Design | (N=8) | 46.1 | 44.8 | 54.3 | 3.0 | 4.8 | 9.0 |
| Democracy | (N=6) | 45.6 | 44.9 | 43.6 | 5.6 | 9.2 | 10.4 |
| Eta-sq | k=4 | 0.08 | 0.17 | 0.02 | 0.08 | 0.05 | 0.03 |
| Sig. | | 0.459 | 0.053 | 0.885 | 0.105 | 0.279 | 0.545 |
| Eta-sq | k=5 | 0.09 | 0.18 | 0.16 | 0.08 | 0.05 | 0.03 |
| Sig. | | 0.602 | 0.095 | 0.236 | 0.175 | 0.421 | 0.603 |

Bank data (1975; 1983; 1992; 1996; 1997a). In addition we also include a variable which captures the importance of trade for the national economy. Here we use a variable estimating the combined share of imports and exports as a percentage of GDP, that is, a measure of the openness of the economy. This variable has been collected from the Penn World Table, mark 5.6 (Summers and Heston 1994). The relevant data are reported in Table 3.11.

We find few traces of any systematic differences between the four major regime types with respect to economic performance. Yet we find that the performance profile of the democratic regime-type is as impressive as for any of the other major regime-types. The illiberal democracy regime-type does not distinguish itself, and it is only when disaggregating this regime-type that we can note some interesting findings. It is the subset, illiberal-by-design, which consistently displays the highest scores on each and every economic performance indicator.

### *Social performance*

Finally, when enquiring into the social performance we have attempted to capture aspects of social equality and gender equality. Social equality stands for variables measuring income distribution in terms of the Gini-index as reported on by the World Bank and the ILO (Deininger and Squire 1997; Tabatabai 1996). Gender equality is captured through a variable measuring female representation in parliament as reported by the IPU (1995). Relevant distributions of data are presented in Table 3.12.

Social performance is not systematically associated with regime-type. It is not necessarily so that the more democratic a regime, the better the social performance. The illiberal regime-type does not perform better, or worse, than any other regime-type. In general, 'Third World' countries do not show high rates of female parliamentary representation, and estimates of the Gini-index are often quite high. Disaggregating the illiberal democracy regime-type we may again note that the subset illiberal-by-design scores lowest on female representation, and, particularly in more recent years, displays high scores on income distribution.

## *Conclusion about perfomance profiles*

Having enquired into five performance profiles in some detail, we may conclude that regime-type has some impact. With the exception of the last profile—social performance—it is generally the case that the democratic regime-type has a notable performance profile. In most cases, the democratic regime-type seems to perform better than any other regime-type. We find no similar performance profile for the illiberal democracy regime-type as a whole; there is no doubt that the illiberal democracy regime-type performs less well than the democratic regime-type.

It is only when disaggregating illiberal democracy that we can establish certain distinctive performance profiles. This is most obvious in the case of the subset illiberal-by-design, where we find high scores on human development, economic freedom and economic performance indicators but low scores on trade union density, public sector size and female parliamentary representation. The other subset —illiberal-by-default—displays some opposite characteristics: high scores on violence events; low scores on human development; less economic openness; and more uneven income distribution (Gini-index).

Our focus has been on the illiberal democracy regime-type, and we may safely conclude that this regime-type *per se* is not displaying any distinct performance profile. Illiberalism-by-design and illiberalism-by-default are associated with differing performance profiles. The issue to be addressed in the next section is: has this more to do with illiberalism or the economic wealth of a country?

## Discussion

Our empirical analysis suggests that illiberal democracy is a growing phenomenon. More countries were illiberal in the 1990s than in the 1970s and the 1980s. Also, illiberal democracies seem to be stable over time, at least as stable as other regime-types. How are these findings to be interpreted, given the fact that much doubt can be raised about the usefulness of a concept such as ‘illiberal democracy’?

Saying that illiberal democracy is a ‘growth industry’ may simply imply that more countries are becoming (more) democratic, and that in the process, they somehow fail to match political rights and civil liberties. This comes as no surprise. It appears relatively easy to construct a democratic constitution, given the amount of experts who are ready to provide their deep knowledge on the matter, but it is quite another thing to reconstruct a poor, corrupt, authoritarian social structure into something that sincerely values civil liberties. Therefore, political rights very often come first in contemporary processes of democratisation. (In European history it was very often the other way around: first there were property rights and the rule of law, then came universal adult suffrage.) Also, in the modern world democratisation is often tied to various external pressures, including preferential trade status, a condition for new or renewed foreign aid, membership of the European Union (EU) or NATO, or recognition of nationhood. (See Armin's chapter in this book for a discussion of these issues regarding the EU.)

Presenting a facade of democracy (*vis-à-vis* political rights) often becomes rational behaviour for national elites who may have few other alternatives if they wish to continue in power. The break-up of the Soviet Union may be illustrative in this regard. Given the opportunity once and for all to dismantle the Soviet hegemon, the rest of the world gladly accepted most new post-Soviet nation states, particularly in East and Central Europe. In doing so, democracy—or at least a viable road *towards* democracy—was often stated as a central condition for external acceptance. While our data-set does not cover former socialist countries (because they have not been illiberal long enough, or they are not conventionally perceived as part of the 'Third World'), the ramifications of the fall of communism were important for an understanding of political changes towards democracy in Asia, Latin America and Africa. The point is that many such countries have had an opportunity to establish democracy—illiberal or not—as a consequence of the demise of the Cold War. However, it appears that the growth of illiberal systems is associated with illiberalism-by-default, which again supports the idea that systems transformation is easier to accomplish at the level of political rights than civil liberties. The growth of illiberal systems cannot, according to our data, be explained by any specific set of country-based circumstances. Rather, it appears as if illiberalism as a regime-type is one of many regime-alternatives closely related to changes in the international system of power and influence.

What then about the stability of illiberalism? If countries demonstrate a tendency to remain in the same regime-type over time, is that not an interesting observation? A closer look at the data reveals that this tendency is also linked to the illiberalism-by-default category. The structural inequality in Latin American and South Asian countries (there are relatively few cases of illiberalism in Africa, but more cases of authoritarian regime-types) makes it extremely difficult for these societies to enhance civil liberties for the majority of citizens. In some cases, illiberalism-by-default can be explained not only by the existence of difficult structural barriers, but with the continuous practice of internal and/or external warfare (for example, India, Pakistan, Turkey, Sri Lanka and Central America). Countries engaged in such conflict have, for obvious reasons, poor records in providing civil liberties for their citizens.

When trying to generalise about the causes of illiberal regime stability, one circumstance appears to be more important than others: the relative stability (and growth) of illiberal systems is closely linked to 'Third World' status. That is, the provision of civil liberties may be a privilege and result of wealth. This would lead us to conclude that illiberal regime-types somehow would become more democratic when and if they become wealthier. Thus, illiberal systems would not be robust alternatives, but rather stages in a typical process of modernisation and democratisation. The only illiberal systems which can demonstrate sustained economic growth are the ones we have labelled illiberal-by-design. A closer look at this group reveals that it is indeed the case that some illiberal-by-design countries have become more democratic (South Africa, South Korea and Thailand). Thus the relative robustness of illiberal democracy is different depending on the design/default criteria.

What then about the ideological potential of illiberalism? Are illiberal political systems attractive alternatives for 'Third World' countries? From the point of view of (sincere) political leaders, the growth and robustness of illiberalism is of little importance. It is the ability of political regimes to provide economic growth and social achievements that matters. In that respect, this analysis would suggest some hope. It is only countries that have adopted an illiberal-by-design approach which can demonstrate positive social and economic performance. The problem however is to isolate illiberal politics from other factors that may explain the performance of particular countries. In our illiberal data set, the East Asian countries play an important role, due to their exceptional economic performance (Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and South Korea). It is not altogether obvious that achievements made by these countries are due to illiberalism. Much has been written about the 'East Asian miracle' and analysts emphasise different aspects of the story. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to give a detailed account of these discussions; suffice to say that more and more agreement tends to circulate around the notion of the *developmental state* as a way to describe East Asian achievements. A developmental state is characterised by the following:

- an insulated and autonomous set of economic agencies with a strong capacity to implement economic policies and programmes
- an activist industry policy that develops competitive export-oriented global industries
- an understanding of governance that places strong emphasis on the role of the state in securing economic development and security (Wade 1990; Jayasuriya 1999).

A developmental state with these characteristics will be dependent on a high degree of societal control and ideological consensus/mainstreaming. Hence, it comes as no surprise that most developmental states in East Asia have rejected notions of a left-right ideological spectrum and (after the Vietnam War) settled for the less controversial idea of economic *growth* as a way to summarise national ambitions. In real terms, the developmental state strategy is about land reforms and income distribution, state-controlled banking and finance systems, the manipulation of import substitution and export orientation, state-controlled wage setting, special conditions for foreign investment, the insulation of interest formation and trade union activity and the securing of political power through various illiberal measures. The developmental state seems indeed to be closely connected to illiberal practice (by design) and this would suggest that the ideological pretensions of those who advocate illiberal democracy for the sake of economic growth and social achievements perhaps have some argumentative leverage.

The problem with this argument is that there is more to the Asian miracle story than is revealed through its illiberal and developmental aspects (and the logic of the developmental state carries a close resemblance to West European welfare states). The East Asian economic and social achievements are also influenced to a very high degree by international politics and the specific regional systems of governance in the time period since the Second World War. The American security umbrella, the role of Western powers in the reconstructing of Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, and the general adoption of a growth-ideology explain to a high degree the *statist* orientation of economic and political affairs in the region. This becomes obvious when we contemplate the specifics of developmental states. To utilise import substitution and export orientation at the same time would not be possible without an all-embracing state and an overarching security consideration. Why would the Western world accept Asian import restrictions and at the same time allow Asian exports to the West, if not for security (read: anti-communist) reasons? These circumstances are very difficult to reconstruct for would-be illiberal states (by design) interested to follow the path of the Asian miracle.

## Overall conclusion

The practice of allowing political rights and restricting civil liberties is indeed a growing phenomenon, and such illiberal systems tend to be relatively stable over time. To an extent, Zakaria (1997) is right in his statement that illiberalism is a 'growth industry'. It is, however, doubtful to suggest that this development is a matter of deliberate choice. So when he claims that a new exit on the democratic road has been found, as if countries made a deliberate decision about which form of illiberalism to adopt, this is probably to overstretch the implications of empirical observations. Most illiberal countries fall into the illiberal category (or are classified as such) because of general malpractice, war or as a side-effect of being new to the democratic world. But empirically, illiberal democracy is not a very distinctive phenomenon. Not much can be found in terms of variation when it comes to analysing the roots and performance of illiberal systems. The really sharp difference between political regimes is the one between democracies and all other systems. Hence, using illiberal democracy as a theoretical construct is a doubtful enterprise.

## Appendix: 'Third World' countries classified according to regime-type

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Nondemocracies* (N=47) | Afghanistan | Algeria | Benin |
| | Bhutan | Burundi | Cambodia |
| | Cameroon | Central African Rep. | Chad |
| | China | Congo Brazzaville | Côte d'Ivoire |
| | Cuba | Egypt | Ethiopia |
| | Gabon | Ghana | Guinea |
| | Haiti | Indonesia | Iran |
| | Iraq | Jordan | Kenya |
| | Korea North | Laos | Liberia |
| | Libya | Malawi | Mali |
| | Mauritania | Mongolia | Myanmar |
| | Niger | Oman | Rwanda |
| | Saudi Arabia | Sierra Leone | Somalia |
| | Sudan | Syria | Tanzania |
| | Togo | Tunisia | Uganda |
| | United Arab Emirates | Zaire | |
| *Semi-democracies* (N=15) | Burkina Faso | Chile | Ecuador |
| | Honduras | Kuwait | Lebanon |
| | Lesotho | Nicaragua | Nigeria |
| | Panama | Paraguay | Peru |
| | Senegal | Taiwan | Zimbabwe |
| *Illiberal democracies by default* (N=16) | Argentina | Bangladesh | Bolivia |
| | Brazil | Colombia | Dominican Rep. |
| | El Salvador | Guatemala | India |
| | Madagascar | Morocco | Nepal |
| | Pakistan | Sri Lanka | Uruguay |
| | Zambia | | |
| *Illiberal democracies by design* (N=8) | Korea South | Malaysia | Mexico |
| | Philippines | Singapore | South Africa |
| | Thailand | Turkey | |
| *Democracies* (N=6) | Botswana | Costa Rica | Jamaica |
| | Mauritius | Trinidad and Tobago | Venezuela |

Note

The distinction between nondemocracies, semi-democracies, illiberal democracies and democracies is based upon the computed average score for the time period 1972–99 as outlined in the text. The specification of the illiberal regime-type into illiberal-by-design and illiberal-by-default is founded on a tentative distinction between the occurrence of dominant parties with outspoken illiberal claims on the one hand (illiberalism-by design) and the absence of such dominant parties and illiberal ideological features on the other (illiberalism-by-default). In both cases, however, civil liberties are deprived to a larger extent than political rights.

# 4

# Electoral institutional change and democratisation

## Election administration quality and the legitimacy of 'Third World' elections

*Jørgen Elklit*

The fallacy of electoralism has increasingly been recognised—at least in the scholarly community—as a concept which aptly denotes the mistake of confusing the holding of elections with the advent and development of democratic regimes (Karl 1986; Schmitter and Karl 1991). Diamond (1996; 1999) adds a welcome extension to the debate about the relationship between the holding of elections and democratisation, when he discusses whether the third wave of democratisation has come to an end because substantial progress towards fully-fledged democracy is only rarely seen in many of the new so-called democracies. Diamond also contributes to the debate about how to conceptualise and categorise democracies by focusing particularly on three distinct categories of non-authoritarian regimes: pseudo-democracies, electoral democracies, and liberal democracies. Obviously, these categories correspond closely to the categories used by Haynes in the introductory chapter of this volume, that is: facade democracies, electoral democracies and full democracies. What the three categories of 'democracies' have in common (both in Diamond's version and in Haynes' version) is primarily that elections for public office take place intermittently, but the categories differ significantly in the degree to which they actually allow for meaningful competition and participation. In Diamond's words:

> Contemporary minimalist conceptions of democracy—what I term here *electoral democracy,* as opposed to *liberal democracy*—commonly acknowledge the need for minimal levels of civil freedoms in order for competition and participation to be meaningful. Typically, however, they do not devote much attention to the basic freedoms involved, nor do they attempt to incorporate them into actual measures of democracy.
>
> (Diamond 1996:21)

The crucial distinction between electoral and liberal (or full) democracies relates to whether or not political rights and civil liberties are primarily seen as crucial to ensuring meaningful *electoral* contestation and participation, or if they are also cherished between elections and allocated wider importance to ensure other democratic functions as well (Diamond 1996:21; 1999:10–11; Elklit 1994).

The third category consists of pseudo-democracies (facade democracies in Haynes' terminology), which are

> less than minimally democratic but still distinct from purely authoritarian regimes…. [They] have legal opposition parties and perhaps many other constitutional features of electoral democracy, but fail to meet one of its crucial requirements: a sufficiently fair arena of contestation to allow the ruling party to be turned out of power.
>
> (Diamond 1996:25)

Pseudo-democracies obviously take different forms, but the common denominator is that they tolerate the existence of opposition parties. This is at least potentially important, since the presence of legal opposition parties could be the foundation upon which future democratic development will build.

Diamond also claims that a country's rating as 'free' in the Freedom House (FH) surveys is the best available empirical indicator of liberal democracy and there is no need to argue against that. A comparison between the FH survey methodology and the various elements listed by Diamond in order to clarify how liberal democracies differ from the minimalist/formal/electoral democracies also supports the claim. However, FH still presents the electoral democracies as the more comprehensive category which then subsumes the 'free' countries (that is, Diamond's indicator of the number of liberal democracies), apparently without realising that the two categorisations are best understood as referring to substantially different—and therefore in no way overlapping—conceptualisations of democracy. We have here an obvious example of the phenomenon discussed by Collier and Levitsky (1997), where they juxtapose 'moving up the ladder of generality' and the establishment of 'diminished sub-types'.

The methodological problems involved in assigning scores to the various items on the political rights and civil liberties scales, the multidimensionality of the measurement of these two interwoven clusters of variables, the inherent problems of validity and reliability, the absence of a more elaborate weighing procedure, and the inherent arbitrariness in setting thresholds between categories cannot be put aside as methodological truisms which one should not be concerned about. However, as demonstrated elsewhere, there is no easy solution to these measurement and indicator problems (Elklit 1994; see also Bollen 1993).

Obviously, the empirical indicator of Diamond's electoral-democracy category should then be appearance on the FH list of countries which are electoral democracies, while not being included in the category of 'free countries'. In early 1998, FH registered 117 electoral democracies (and eighty-one 'free' countries); Diamond would therefore claim that there were only thirty-six electoral democracies. The number of pseudo—or facade—democracies can then roughly be estimated as the remainder of the 'partly free' category (twenty-one countries in the 1998 count), allowing for some borderline cases. One problem encountered during the classification of some countries for Table 4.2 later, is that countries scoring 3 on civil liberties were not easily classified as liberal democracies (see, however, Diamond 1999:12–13). More electoral democracies than the reflections here might otherwise lead the reader to expect should therefore be envisaged.

The FH gross figures indicate that the size of Diamond's four categories has not changed significantly since 1995. This apparently supports his point about stasis: 'the third wave of democracy has come to a halt, and probably to an end' (Diamond 1996:30–1; 1999:60–3). However, one would expect such a drastic conclusion—as a minimum—to then build on more in-depth, year-to-year analyses of transitions between categories; something which neither Diamond nor FH provide. Nor have such data been presented in recent discussions of whether illiberal democracy is increasing or declining. (See Engberg and Ersson's chapter in the current volume.) This discussion cannot be settled by looking only at the increasing percentage of countries among the electoral democracies ranked by FH as free (Zakaria 1997; Karatnycky 1999, especially 116).

Diamond points to three fundamental differences between 'fully-fledged' liberal democracies and electoral democracies. The former have, first, qualitatively better elections and no reserved power domains for the military or other forces not accountable to the voters; second, 'vertical' accountability of elections complemented with 'horizontal' accountability; and third, extensive provisions between elections for political and civic pluralism, and for individual and collective freedoms (Diamond 1996:23–5). For Diamond, the basic features of liberal democracy are spelled out in nine specific elements, which overlap considerably with Dahl's seven institutional requirements for *polyarchy*. Diamond's recommendation, after his conclusion about the possible end to the third wave of democracy, is to engage in undertakings which in all three kinds of democracies will be conducive to the consolidation—or further development/completion in the two least developed categories—of the democratic regime: namely institutional, policy-related and behavioural changes.

## The case for conducting qualitatively acceptable elections in transitional democracies

In response to Diamond's recommendation (1996:33–4), the argument put forward here is that the development of a fully legitimate electoral regime—which might later develop into a more complete (deepened, consolidated) liberal democracy—requires an electoral process acceptable to all major stakeholders, including the ordinary voters.

It cannot be said often enough that the holding of acceptable elections is only a necessary, not a sufficient, condition for development towards fully-fledged liberal democracies. However, all attempts to improve the electoral process as part of a democratisation process will undoubtedly increase the social costs of reverting that process. This is also a crucial element in negative consolidation—that is, efforts to *avoid* democratic regression—which is at least as important as positive consolidation, especially in the present situation; and it is certainly one important means of counterattacking the reduction of an electoral democracy to a pseudo-democracy or something worse, a point made by many (Bratton 1998; Bratton and van de Walle 1997:236; Schedler 1998:100).

This is not to imply that one should concentrate only on the electoral field; far from it. Diamond indicates a number of causes also worthy of attracting attention if the intent is to consolidate democracies of all three kinds as well as the intermediary forms. But it will still be instrumentally valuable to improve on the electoral component, not only in the liberal democracies as part of an ongoing effort to increase the democratic score, but also—and probably even more so—in electoral democracies. This would be necessary to lift them one category, that is, if democracy is to be 'completed', as Schedler (1998:94–9) notes (even though electoral democracy is a broader concept to Schedler than to Diamond).

The claim of this chapter is that all variants of processes of democratic transition, development and consolidation—positive as well as negative—in all not-fully-consolidated democracies in the 'Third World' and elsewhere, would benefit from a renewed and reinforced analysis and improvement, not only of the electoral system, but of the entire electoral process (Bratton 1998; Elklit and Reynolds 2000; Sisk 1998). Such activities are important tasks in a democratisation context and—as has also been claimed by Lijphart and Waisman (1996:2)—must be taken care of because they are, directly and indisputably, conducive to the legitimation of new and fragile democracies.

Only when voters experience meaningful contestation and participation in the political process within the framework of relevant institutions and a certain socio-economic development, and only when they understand—however imperfectly—the importance of political rights and civil liberties, will they develop some kind of normative commitment to democracy. The development of this normative commitment is a component in the consolidation process, which should not be forgotten in spite of the focus on the importance of elites and their behaviour suggested in many analyses (see, for example, Mainwaring 1992).

In her discussion of the prospects of democracy in Central America, Karl outlines two scenarios: one 'optimistic', the other 'pessimistic'. According to her, development in the 'pessimistic'—that is, undemocratic—direction is facilitated if—among other things—elections are generally seen as flawed, losers are inadequately represented, and so on (Karl 1995:84). There is no reason why this should only be valid in relation to Central American countries. The same reasoning applies to most, if not all, 'Third World' countries experiencing democratic transition.

This is not the same as saying that qualitatively better elections will in the course of time solve all problems, as that would be a regrettable relapse into electoralism. Like Bratton (1998:51–2), I think it is both possible and advisable to steer a middle course between the two fallacies of electoralism and anti-electoralism. Many observers and commentators have recently pointed out that the prerequisites for democracy are in scarce supply, which explains the tendency towards democratic stagnation and retrenchment encountered in some parts of the world (Carothers 1997; see also Haynes' introduction in this volume). Crucial—social, economic, political and cultural—conditions are, in many cases, obviously lacking, and the same often applies at the institutional level. Qualitatively acceptable elections—and the framework for such elections—are only some of many institutional preconditions which must be in place before we can be truly optimistic about possible developments towards democratic consolidation in the 'Third World'. But that is just one more reason to engage in developing and refining the electoral process and the understanding of what is needed in order to have 'free and fair' elections as an element in progressing towards a consolidated democracy (Elklit and Svensson 1997).

It should be possible to identify the phases where the electoral process failed, in order to provide the tools for doing better if and when conditions are conducive to qualitatively better elections, which in any case require that the incumbent government/party will actually allow a true democratic process to unfold. The recent focus on political elite behaviour makes it obvious that the democratic intentions and inclinations of political and administrative elites might be tested by looking at how they legislate and regulate the electoral process. Do such elites actually do what is needed or do they do less? That appears to be the main question. And if they do less, what are the reasons for not doing better: is it lack of knowledge of electoral processes, lack of money, or lack of democratic intent—or is it some combination of these?

The first electoral process requirement which one should be concerned about is the one stated not only by Diamond (quoted on page 56), but also by many others; that is, the provisions for political and civic pluralism, as well as for both individual and collective freedoms. This concern coincides with the main tendency in recent discussions on how to develop and refine post-election evaluation procedures and approaches. In both cases the key question ('Was it free and fair—or at least acceptable?') to a considerable degree hinges on what actually happened *before* polling day, and even before the electoral process started (Elklit and Svensson 1997).

This perspective, namely that it is necessary to focus mainly on the pre-polling period if one's intention is to improve the quality of elections in a democratic perspective, implies stressing the presence of respect for, and unhindered use of, relevant political and civil rights and freedoms. These are the very qualities which Dahl (1992:246) has convincingly argued are prerequisites which must be in place, and in practice be institutionalised, before we can even think of elections being potentially free and fair. However, these rights and liberties are not only of value during the time of election campaigns. It is democratically unacceptable to restrict the use of political rights and civil liberties to a period every fourth or fifth year called election time. The democratic process cannot be and should not be restricted in time. Dahl puts it this way:

> In this perspective, free and fair elections are the culmination of the process, not the beginning. Indeed, unless and until the other rights and liberties are firmly protected, free and fair elections cannot take place. Except in countries already close to the thresholds of democracy, therefore, it is a grave mistake to

> assume that if only leaders of a non-democratic country can be persuaded to hold elections, then full democracy will follow.
>
> (Dahl 1992:246)

It is depressing to see how little concern for the complexities of the transition processes Western politicians and development aid administrations—and many first time election observers—have been able to muster. It is also surprising to observe the swiftness with which many academics have forgotten that the course of democratisation often seems to depend on a complicated and interwoven set of structural preconditions, including political history and culture, literacy levels, the existence of a middle class and/or the level or distribution of wealth. While the literature on the relative importance of socioeconomic conditions and political factors in Latin America has been thoroughly reviewed by Mainwaring (1992:326–9), one might ask if an even better understanding of the relationship between the two would follow if the situations during first and second transitions were analysed separately (Burnell 1998:17; Carothers 1997:92; Shin 1994:153–4).

It is worth contemplating whether the second transition (the consolidation phase) is, generally speaking, more dependent on structural factors, while the first transition (the regime change) might also—or even more so—depend on agency factors. The possibility of checking the democratic intentions and inclinations of political and administrative elites by looking at the legislation and regulation of electoral processes then becomes particularly pertinent, as the first transition will normally include the founding election, while the second transition will include second and subsequent elections. This perspective might help shed light on the remarkable quality decline, which Bratton (1998) found between founding and second elections in sub-Saharan Africa. Be that as it may, both founding and second (or later) elections can be used to evaluate the intentions of ruling elites.

One often sees that the international support of democratisation and elections is also characterised by a somewhat surprising lack of willingness to engage in serious discussions regarding election quality, both before and after the election event, and both in connection with first and second elections. The impression easily gained is that the mere holding of an election is enough for the international community—with or without foreign observers—and that the interest in seriously evaluating the entire election exercise is minuscule outside of academic circles, no matter how many foreign observers are flown into the country. A good illustration is the 2000 elections in Peru and the international reactions to the electoral process, where one saw broad agreement on the assessment of the many problems related to the re-election of President Fujimori, but neither individual countries nor the OAS were eventually willing to take specific action against Peru, in spite of their conclusions about the character of the electoral process.

Inside academic circles the ability and willingness to engage in election evaluation have also differed, as is evident from comparisons of different evaluations or analyses of the same elections. It is not difficult to understand this as election evaluation is a risky and difficult business because of the interwoven methodological, theoretical and empirical complexities of grading performances along different process dimensions without having a clear grading scheme and some agreed-upon weighting schemes (Elklit 1994; Elklit and Svensson 1997). It is also interesting to note how difficult the development of adequate election evaluation tools has been, and how election observation methodology development and refinement has moved in the direction of upgrading the in-depth analysis of the pre-polling period, instead of heavily investing in massive polling day observation (Boneo 2000).

The concept of 'electoral systems' (or 'rules', see Taagepera 1998) is often used to cover the allocation rules for converting votes to seats. It can, however, be argued that a broader electoral-system concept exists, encompassing the entire electoral process from start to end: that is, all formal and informal rules and practices that might have a bearing on how political attitudes in the electorate are converted into a distribution of seats in parliament. As has probably become evident, this chapter employs the broader electoral system concept, integrating into it the system for allocating seats to parties on the basis of the votes cast.

## What should be done?

The willingness of political and administrative elites to engage in activities which will be instrumental in achieving a level of democracy over and above that of a simple electoral democracy is not particularly difficult to evaluate. The main test is whether key decision-makers are willing to engage in legislation and regulation, which focus on the general democratic situation and not just on the more narrow and trivial election-related activities. Basic political rights and civil liberties are one such issue—obviously a *sine qua non*—and so is the overall institutional arrangement for the election (such as the electoral law, the seat allocation system, and the provisions for having a truly independent and impartial electoral commission). As already noted, election quality is not achieved by concentrating on election day activities only—far from it. Even though they are still important, this is the case only if the course of events during the pre-polling phase was equally acceptable (Bratton 1998:62; Elklit and Svensson 1997).

The prevalence of this understanding is increasing, and election administration and electoral system advisors as well as organisers of electoral observation missions are therefore well advised to pay considerably more attention than previously to the pre-polling phase. What goes on before polling is the main key to both success and failure. An indication of the elements which are particularly important during the three main phases is given in Table 4.1, which also shows how these can be tentatively attributed to the two traditional dimensions of electoral observation.

It is possible to approach the issue of what should be done by looking at genuine 'Third World' electoral success stories. They are, however, few and far between. It might also be difficult to decide how much of these experiences can be generalised and how much is to be attributed to particular conditions, which evade generalisations. Recent examples of good quality elections include Namibia since 1989, South Africa 1994 and 1999, Ghana 1996 and Mongolia 1996.

It is much easier to find examples of problematic 'Third World' elections, which have contributed to setbacks in the democratisation processes. It might, however, be

*Table 4.1* Key elements in an acceptable electoral process

| | *'Free'* | *'Fair'* |
|---|---|---|
| Before polling day | • Freedom of speech<br>• Freedom of assembly<br>• Freedom of association<br>• Freedom from fear in connection with the election<br>• Freedom of movement<br>• Absence of impediments to standing for election<br>• Equal and universal suffrage | • A transparent electoral process<br>• An election act and a system for seat allocation which grants no special privileges to any party, group or person<br>• An independent and impartial electoral commission (and administration)<br>• Impartial voter education programmes<br>• Absence of impediments to inclusion in the electoral register<br>• Adequate possibilities for checking the provisional electoral register<br>• An orderly election campaign<br>• Equal access to public mass media<br>• No misuse of government facilities for campaign purposes |
| On polling day | • Opportunity to participate in the election<br>• Absence of intimidation of voters | • Secrecy of ballot<br>• Adequate provisions to ensure that voters only vote once<br>• Well designed ballot papers without serial numbers<br>• Access to the polling stations for accredited party representatives and election observers<br>• Impartial assistance to incapacitated voters<br>• Proper treatment of void ballot papers |
| After polling day | • Legal possibilities of complaint<br>• Adequate possibilities for resolution of election-related conflicts | • Proper counting and reporting procedures<br>• Proper precautionary measures when transporting election material and securing polling stations<br>• Impartial reports by the media on election results<br>• Impartial treatment of election complaints<br>• Acceptance of the election results by all involved |

Source: Elklit and Svensson 1997:37.

equally difficult to tell what can be generalised from such cases and how much is to be attributed to particular conditions evading generalisation. Burnell's classification system for democratic failures and their explanation (1998) thus is of a more general character, which might be difficult to relate directly to the problem at hand, even though several of his categories might be part of the overall explanation. Another classification which might prove helpful in classifying elections for analytical purposes is provided by Merloe (1999) who, in a discussion paper, suggests a distinction between post-conflict elections, breakthrough elections, consolidation elections, elections in democratically back-sliding countries, and elections taking place as part of a managed transition.

It might, furthermore, be difficult to say precisely what should have been done and what might have worked better *if* implementation had actually been feasible. In some cases problems were only identified after the event; in other cases they were clearly spotted before the event, brought to the attention of the relevant political or administrative authorities, and then nothing or too little done. So there is ample scope for improvement, if the political and administrative readiness is there, and if it is not (as has sometimes been the case), what kind of election—and what kind of democracy—are we then dealing with? An electoral democracy voluntarily sliding backwards? (See the appendix in Schedler 1998.) Merloe's five types of election contexts mentioned above add an interesting new dimension to this discussion.

Table 4.2 is a first attempt to classify a sample of first and second elections in new democracies (together with a number of other countries, including India and Botswana) according to the type of democracy and the general quality of the election. The idea is to present qualitatively acceptable and less acceptable elections together in order to see if this will enable us to reach some useful conclusions. The basis for the classification is relevant FH scores in combination with an assessment of the election's congruity with the criteria displayed in Table 4.1—before, during and after the event. While any evaluation of the quality of an election must include the degree to which it was 'free and fair', one should also have a concern for the level of inclusiveness (over and above the suffrage component of the freeness dimension) as well as the technical quality (to be discussed later).

The next step is to identify common features within two groups of elections: elections scoring high and elections scoring low on the quality dimension. If the first group is tentatively seen as consisting of elections in the two highest categories on the quality dimension, it appears that what connects these rather different election situations is the intention and the willingness of political and administrative authorities to have elections of good quality in combination with a certain degree of respect for the rule of law. The key factor to explain the overall character of these elections appears to be the determination of the political (and administrative) elite to have elections which could be considered acceptable (or better if possible) by most local political stakeholders, as well as by the international community. Precisely because of this determination, perhaps caused by different motives for different actors—including that of the incumbent president or party being convinced of an easy victory and therefore affording internationally acceptable elections—the electoral process is as far as is possible conducted according to those generally accepted norms and standards. The classifications in Table 4.2 rely on a variety of analyses and descriptions of elections, including literature already referred to as well as the following: the country-specific chapters in this volume; Choe 1997;

*Table 4.2* Elections classified by type of democracy and quality

| | *Liberal democracies* | *Electoral democracies* | *Pseudo-democracies* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Good quality | | Botswana 1965+<br>Mongolia 1996<br>Namibia 1994 | |
| Reasonable quality | South Africa 1994, 1999<br>South Korea 1997 | Ghana 1996<br>India 1996, 1998<br>Indonesia 1999<br>Malawi 1994<br>Mexico 1997<br>Mozambique 1996<br>Nepal 1991<br>South Korea 1996<br>Zambia 1991 | |
| Below average quality | | Mongolia 1992 | Singapore 1997<br>Tanzania 1995 |
| Low quality | | Bosnia-i-Herzegovina 1996, 1997 | Kenya 1992<br>Kenya 1997<br>Nigeria 1999<br>Zambia 1996<br>Zimbabwe 1995 |

Note
'Free' countries in the Freedom House lists are classified as electoral democracies, not as liberal democracies, if their Civil Liberties score is 3. The order of elections within cells is alphabetical.

Darnolf 1997; Election Observation Centre 1998; Holm 1987; Kumar (ed.) 1998; Mushi and Mukandala (eds) 1997; NEC 1997; Svensson 1997; Tripp 2000; Wiseman 1992; 1998a; 1998b. The general argument is, obviously, related to Di Palma's (1990) discussion of democracy crafting.

When we look at elections in the two categories at the bottom end of the quality scale exactly the opposite is the case; in other words there is no such determination and dedication to go for high-quality elections. Obviously, agency factors are not only conducive to a positive democratisation; they can also—within a given set of structural factors—cause the development to slow down or even drop away, and to do so both during the initial transition phase and during the consolidation phase.

It is important to avoid a circular argument here. For this reason, elections are classified according to how they score on the indicators of Table 4.1 and only then are conclusions drawn about possible explanations of the pattern that emerges, rather than by proceeding by showing how such explanatory factors contribute to election quality. Such classification is, and indeed has to be, qualitative in nature. Also, no attempt has been made to establish a finer, possibly multi-dimensional grading system, as that might ruin the possibilities of drawing clear-cut conclusions because fewer elections would be classified together.

However, it might subsequently be instructive to see what specific administrative and technical solutions have been chosen in particularly commendable situations, as this might be an adequate operationalisation of a well-thought-out and orderly electoral process—a kind of benchmark against which the intentions and capabilities of political and administrative elites can then be evaluated. In this way, Table 4.3 might be instrumental in identifying ways and means of improving and developing the electoral institution, while issues related to political rights and civil liberties, allocation of sufficient funding and so on must be taken into account separately.

## The electoral process

The electoral process unfolds in chronological, systematic steps, some of which are also partly simultaneous, partly overlapping. The structuring of the entire electoral process in ten steps was first suggested by Kimberling (1991) in a discussion of voter registration. In Table 4.3 two more steps (11 and 12) have been added to give a fuller coverage of the entire process. The twelve-step outline of the electoral process demonstrates that there is a logical-systematic sequence of electoral process functions to perform, which should come more or less in the order indicated in Table 4.3, if the process is to unfold without problems deriving from the chronological and systematic order in which matters are addressed.

‘Good quality’ elections are elections where the full respect for and procurement of basic preconditions are accompanied by an election preparation process where the electoral calendar looks more or less like Table 4.3, with ample time for all the different phases. There are also preconditions that legislation provides an institutional framework conducive to a meaningful contestation (‘a level playing field’) and a high level of inclusiveness and participation, and that the law and all accompanying rules and regulations are duly implemented at all levels. This latter, partly more technical, aspect of the electoral quality concept includes, for example, that logistical matters are addressed adequately, that counting and tabulation of the results are precise, and that ballot paper accounts are correct (see also Elklit and Reynolds 2000).

Polling itself comes quite late in the process (step 8) so it both presupposes and depends on how well the seven preceding steps have been performed. Because of this, it is regrettable that the political focus both domestically and internationally has primarily been on the polling process itself and the immediate outcome of that process in a narrow sense—that is the distribution of votes on parties and candidates. It is also remarkable, as more and more observers and analysts of elections in ‘Third World’ countries seem to agree, that too little attention has been paid in the past to the early steps of the electoral process and too much attention to what goes on at polling day, which for many reasons is unfortunate.

*Table 4.3* The twelve steps of the electoral process

| *Step* | *Electoral process functions* | *Clarifications etc.* |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | • Establishment of the legal framework for the electoral process | • Includes the entire electoral legislation, i.e. from the constitutional framework to rules and regulations<br>• The seat allocation system is also covered under this heading |
| 2 | • Establishment of adequate organisational management structures, i.e. systems for managing the electoral process, including securing the adequate financial and other means | • The character and composition etc. of the electoral commission, if any<br>• The relationship between the electoral commission and its implementing arm, i.e. the election administration |
| 3 | • Demarcation of constituencies and polling districts | • Only the physical implementation, since the relevant legislation belongs under Step 1<br>• This also goes for the decision on what decision-making and administrative structures apply, i.e. if – for instance – a separate demarcation commission is foreseen |
| 4 | • Voter education and voter information | • Might overlap chronologically with steps 5 and 6<br>• Must come before voter registration, but might need to be repeated later also |
| 5 | • Voter registration | • Might overlap chronologically with steps 4 and 6<br>• Rules for public scrutiny of the voters' roll |
| 6 | • Nomination and registration of political parties and candidates, i.e. providing ballot access | • Might overlap chronologically with steps 4 and 5 |
| 7 | • Regulation of the electoral campaign | • Spending rules, if any<br>• Rules for access to publicly owned media, if any<br>• Code of conduct? |
| 8 | • Polling | • Rules regulating the presence of party agents, and domestic and international election monitors etc. |
| 9 | • Counting and tabulating the vote | • Counting at polling stations or centralised?<br>• Are opposition parties allowed to check the count? |
| 10 | • Resolving electoral disputes and complaints; verification of final results; certification | • The electoral court system, if any<br>• Time limits for handling of electoral complaints and disputes |
| 11 | • Election result implementation | • Are those elected actually allowed to perform their roles, i.e. are there any administrative or other hindrances?<br>• Are those elected actually willing to take office, i.e. to perform their role? |
| 12 | • Post-election handling of election material; production of the official election statistics; archiving; closing the books | |

If it is a correct observation that ‘Third World’ elections of an acceptable quality are only possible if and when political and administrative elites are genuinely interested in having such elections—which then tends to be yet another precondition—it becomes obvious why so many election and democratisation advisors are fighting an uphill battle, and why so many opposition party leaders are continually being frustrated. Multi-party elections might be called and take place according to current legislation, but the general electoral and administrative framework, and the state of mind of central political and administrative actors might still be such that good elections—meaning elections conducive to some kind of democratic improvement—are not really possible.

Some of the problem areas in the early phases of the electoral process are listed and commented on in the next section of this chapter. Implementation of these elements where they are not yet in place will almost certainly improve the electoral process, so a main argument of this chapter is that this is the course of action which should be followed. Another claim is that the attitudes of the political-administrative elites towards the implementation of these provisions is an adequate way of testing their willingness to engage in democratic consolidation, even though it may not be the only way of doing so, and not always the best.

It is easy, however, to analyse the willingness to engage in electoral institutional reform and high quality policy implementation because nothing will happen if key decision-makers have not understood that such willingness is required if improvement of the overall election quality is to be realised. This is where the problems lie, as demonstrated by many ‘Third World’ countries, some of which featured in the lower part of Table 4.2. Obviously, the political heavyweights have to be convinced one way or the other that this is what should be done, if they want to be seen as having elections of an acceptable quality, not least in order to gain international legitimacy for their regime. This was clearly a major element in the 1999 elections in Indonesia, and it can also be argued that it is a factor behind some of the institutional reforms in the electoral-administrative set-up in Mexico over the last ten to fifteen years. (See, respectively, the chapters by Törnquist and Wallis in this book.) But it is also evident that the concern for international opinion has not been an important driving force in recent—and qualitatively quite different—elections in India and Zambia. (See the chapters by Wyatt and Burnell in this volume.)

## Areas of concern

### *Step 1: Establishment of the legal framework for the electoral process*

The entire set of electoral laws, bylaws, rules and regulations should be in place before the calling of the election: the rules of the game should be known before kick-off—and they should not be changed at half time! It is also an important principle that electoral legislation should be understandable for the largest possible number of voters. Countries like India, Indonesia, Zambia and Mexico all have sizeable groups of people considerably disadvantaged because of low levels of literacy, and in some cases also because of inability to speak and understand the language used by the electoral administration and in the electoral legislation. In other cases, the incumbents wanted to make life more difficult for the opposition parties, as in Kenya 1992, when the Attorney-General used his power to shorten the period for parties to nominate their parliamentary candidates without even informing them (Macrory, Elklit and Mendez 1992:16–17). One can also think of the 1996 constitutional change in Zambia which disallowed the opposition's most potent presidential challenger from running for office. In yet other cases, electoral legislation is difficult to comprehend as some provisions gradually become inconsistent because the law has been amended over and over again, making it difficult to keep abreast of developments. In such cases a clear, consolidated version is necessary.

The legislative framework includes provisions concerning the electoral system (in the narrow sense), that is, the system for allocating seats on the basis of votes cast. The importance of the electoral system for, one, inclusiveness, two, accommodation and tolerance in divided societies, and three, party systems of a certain character, is well established and not discussed here. However, discussions about the criteria for keeping or changing an electoral system (Reynolds, Reilly *et al.* 1997; Reynolds and Reilly 1999) only rarely attract the attention of incumbent parties who have benefited from the system already in place (or expect to do so in coming elections). As Törnquist notes in his chapter in this volume, discussion about the future electoral system in Indonesia prior to the 1999 election was a fascinating field for the study of rational actors playing their games. In addition, a sequence of articles on the development of the Mexican electoral system during recent years illustrates some of that system's problems (Balinski and Gonzáles 1995; 1997; 1999).

This general state of affairs can easily be explained as rational behaviour when we recall that elites often only legislate institutional changes they consider instrumental to advance their own immediate interests. A case can often be made for using a proportional representation system to achieve inclusiveness and to avoid turning elections into an all-or-nothing event where the stakes are too high, as it will particularly often be in cultures where losing is something which makes one feel very ashamed indeed, or in transitional elections, where the outcome is uncertain. The positive importance of using PR systems in several countries in Southern Africa (most notably in South Africa) is beyond dispute, even though the debate about electoral systems for the region has been flourishing since the early 1990s (Barkan 1995; Elklit 1997; Horowitz 1991; Reynolds 1995; 1999; Sisk and Reynolds 1998). The consequences for the electoral outcome of a change in the seat allo cation system have been demonstrated on various occasions, including Mexico as referred to previously. Interesting debates have also been conducted in a number of countries, including Tanzania, Lesotho and Jordan, about the merits of different electoral systems, but only rarely do the beneficiaries of the current systems see such debates as particularly rewarding or interesting. A controversial issue is the use of so-called 'special seats for women' (as in Tanzania) or similar arrangements to promote female representation in parliament (as have been suggested in India). Less controversial in the Indian context are the provisions for reserved seats for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

### *Step 2: Establishment of an adequate election management structure*

A truly independent, impartial, and dedicated electoral commission is instrumental in achieving an electoral outcome which at the end of the day is acceptable to most contestants—particularly the losers. Appointment procedures contribute to the way in which political actors perceive an electoral commission, particularly with regard to its credibility and legitimacy, but appointment procedures are not always conducive to such feelings among opposition parties. Public vetting of would-be commissioners is one way of increasing public confidence, but various models for electoral commissions and their appointment do exist, and at the end of the day it is primarily the performance of the electoral commission which counts (Harris 1998). There are many examples of electoral commissions who have not been able to gain the trust of some of the electoral contestants (Zambia in 1996 is just one case in point, with the Electoral Commission under firm control of the government through the Office of the Vice-President), and in some cases there are good reasons for this lack of confidence. Obviously, losers might feel inclined to blame the electoral commission for their own poor performance. Therefore, and because it contributes to developing the acknowledgement of the importance of the rule of law, it is absolute necessary that electoral commissions perform their tasks in the most irreproachable way, and are perceived as impartial, as is the case in India, where the Electoral Commission is held in high esteem, in spite of its overwhelming and complicated task. The gradual development after 1990 of a new style of electoral management in Mexico, through the creation of the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), demonstrates that a system of electoral authoritarianism can also transform itself (Schedler 1999).

It has often been difficult for law makers to establish and legislate a good division of labour between the electoral commission itself and its implementing arm (under the Chief Electoral Officer, or local equivalent). The electoral commission is sometimes seen as a board of directors, while the day-to-day problems might require a much more 'hands-on' administration, which can then complicate enormously the relationship between the commission and its staff.

Adequate funding of the entire electoral process is a *sine qua non,* even though the resources available in the country might be too few to run a fully acceptable election. Foreign funding has become a possibility in some cases, but sometimes such money comes too easily, and is perceived by funders as one way of co-opting the players, even though the desired results might not be achieved.

### *Step 3: Demarcation of constituencies and polling districts*

Gerrymandering is a particular problem, especially in electoral systems relying solely on single-member constituencies. PR systems—or majority/plurality elections in multi-member constituencies—often rely on previously-existing administrative divisions and seat allocation in relation to some objective standard (such as population size), which in turn is another attractive feature of such systems. Gerrymandering in 'Third World' countries often takes the form of allocating more seats to regions where the incumbent party/group is strong than to other parts of the country. Different constituency sizes are, however, fully acceptable where geographical conditions or residential patterns make it unreasonable to go for full electoral equality (as in the Himalayan constituencies in Nepal).

### *Step 4: Voter education and voter information*

Impartial and precise voter education must start early in order to ensure that all potential voters are aware of why and how to register. It should be the responsibility of the impartial electoral authorities to conduct such campaigns, particularly in societies and regions with a high rate of illiteracy and/or popular languages being different from the language of election administration. Regionally (or otherwise) unbalanced information campaigns by public authorities are not acceptable, while it is unrealistic to demand the same of political parties. Their contribution should, however, be appreciated, because of their interest in going the extra mile.

### *Step 5: Voter registration*

Political equality requires that all members of the political collectivity be registered as voters so that they can participate in the elections (as voters and candidates) if they so choose. That is not the only reason why the registration phase is so important, but it is unfortunate that it is often not taken seriously enough by politicians, electoral commissions and election administrators. Registration is an excellent opportunity to start one's voter education campaign and to test the preparedness of the election administrative apparatus, but the opportunity is not always fully utilised. Examples are plentiful and clearly connected to the general standard of population bookkeeping in 'Third World' countries. The elections in Zambia in 1991 and particularly in 1996 are a clear example not only of a low quality of registration, but also as an illustration of why outsourcing is not a good way of handling registration problems (Elklit and Reynolds 2000:24). Many other illustrations could be given of what is a widespread problem. However, not to require proper voter registration—as in South Africa in 1994—is not a recommended solution to the problem of inadequate civil registration. The country's debate in early 1999 regarding how to achieve an acceptable level of registration before the June 1999 elections illustrates well how a combination of political, administrative and financial problems can jeopardise an otherwise well-thought-out registration plan.

Finally, systems for local public display of voters' registers and ample opportunities for corrections are an integral part of an acceptable registration system. Copies of the consolidated register should not be made available to the incumbent party only—it is either all parties or none!

### *Step 6: Nomination and registration of parties*

Parties should be free to organise, to assemble without being hindered by bureaucratic orders, to register (if that is the part of the political-administrative tradition of the country), and to nominate candidates of their own choice, selected according to procedures decided by the party itself according to its own decision-making procedures. Other restrictions are sometimes also established, as in the requirement in the Nepalese electoral law that parties must field at least 5 per cent female candidates in order to be allowed participation in the election. The effect is negligible as most of these candidates are allocated to seats traditionally unwinnable for women.

### *Step 7: Regulation of the electoral campaign*

Public funding of political parties and/or candidates—generally or for electoral campaign purposes only—is a controversial issue, in particular as it might call forward parties and candidates running only because of the funding. Such funding is a means to 'level the playing field', as is equitable access to public media for all registered parties. In addition, there should ideally be provisions for allocating sufficient funds to new and previously unrepresented parties, although this may help attract 'less serious' parties and candidates. It is equally problematic to let previously represented parties allocate funds only to themselves, since that might perpetuate the party system by denying new parties a fair chance of access.

Spending limits on election campaign and related costs are a controversial issue, in particularly since control is difficult, and auditing can only take place after the election. Still, such limits will encourage accountability, and as democracy develops, it will become part of a system of checks and balances, which will increasingly be integrated in the democratic culture. Thus, the long-term impact will be more important than the short-term. Vote buying in its many forms is a related issue, which is even more difficult to handle. Finally, the incumbent party must not be allowed to use government resources for campaign purposes. This has happened many times—and not only in the countries dealt with in this volume (Sandbrook 1996).

### *Step 8: Polling*

Rumours about election day fraud and misbehaviour are many and often difficult to control. Well-trained and dedicated polling station staff is one prerequisite for achieving reliable polling results. It is probably correct—as suggested by Bratton (1998:62)—that election rigging does not primarily take place on polling day, which is another reason for focusing on previous steps in the process. However, the claim is not that violations do not occur on election day, only that they are less important than one would think on the basis of the many election observer missions. Still, reports about the 1999 Nigerian elections say clearly that observers were less than happy with what they noticed on polling day (Carter Center 1999).

### *Step 9: Counting*

The use of decentralised counting (at polling station level) is preferable, because it removes problems related to transportation of uncounted ballot papers, and it makes it easier for local electorates to follow and understand the process. A positive consequence of decentralised counting and accurate reporting is local-level confidence-building. The flip side of decentralised counting is that it makes it possible to sanction negatively polling districts (wards, villages) that did not vote as they were expected to. Another argument against decentralised counting is that it makes it easier in situations with extensive vote buying to check the delivery of 'the goods'. Party agents and election observers should always be allowed to follow the count. A further possibility is to combine decentralised counting with a recount at the national level, to check accuracy.

### *Step 10: The electoral court system*

Provisions for an electoral court system, which can handle electoral complaints and disputes expeditiously and impartially, are necessary. It can be argued that the number of electoral court cases—and the degree of acceptance by the plaintiffs of the verdicts—is a good indicator of the quality of the work of the electoral commission (and the conditions it had to work under), but the actual use of the electoral court system depends on many other factors also, such as the fundamental social and political conflicts, as demonstrated in the Mexican case.

Several other areas of concern could also be indicated, but that should not be necessary. The list demonstrates convincingly that it is possible to point to specific and important areas within the electoral institution, which can be used simultaneously to, one, evaluate the democratic intent and seriousness of political and administrative elites in new democracies, and two, indicate areas where election administration and system improvement will be most helpful, if asked for.

### *Step 11: Taking office*

In some instances it happens that those elected do not take office or are not allowed to take office. In a number of municipalities in the 1997 local elections in Bosnia-i-Herzegovina, those elected did not want to take office, for example, because they did not want to—or were not allowed to—live in the municipalities where they were elected. Furthermore, at the time of writing (October 2000) the presidential election in Yugoslavia illustrates a situation in which the candidate elected in the first round is being prevented from taking office.

### *Step 12: Closing the books*

This step is about the finalisation of the entire operation. How is election material (including used ballot papers) dealt with, are election statistics published or not, and what kind of accounting system is used? Is an official report issued by the election management body?

## Conclusion

The electoral institutions matter for the democratisation process and so does electoral institutional change. Crucial factors when it comes to explaining the level of electoral quality and the electoral institution's independent contribution to democratic consolidation appear to be the democratic intent and seriousness of the relevant political and administrative elites—in combination with respect for the rule of law—while the amount of foreign financial support poured into the election, or the number of election advisors (not to speak of election observers) are considerably less important. The international community might be able to counteract democratic setbacks and de-democratisation, but democratisation and democratic consolidation can only come from within the country in question.

Having a fully-fledged liberal democracy—as well as elections of good quality—presupposes respect for basic political rights and civil liberties, not only formally and at election time, but in actual practice, year in and year out. It also presupposes that political competition is possible, and that there is a vibrant civil society, that NGOs and political parties are allowed to develop and flourish, that politically relevant information is available through the media and so on. The possibility of full and equal participation—and active, systematic efforts to ensure inclusiveness—is another crucial element, as becomes evident when the four countries dealt with in this volume are compared.

Actors—domestic or international—who are genuinely interested in promoting a democratic development and a democratic culture in a country which is not yet a fully-fledged liberal democracy should therefore concentrate their election-related efforts on those first steps in the electoral process where the returns both in the short and the long run are highest and most visible. And it can come as no surprise that actors with the opposite interest actually disregard suggestions for improvement in the early phases of the electoral process.

It is within the context of the preconditions stated above that the various elements of the electoral institution matter, and those include—as demonstrated by a comparison of India and Indonesia, Mexico and Zambia—a truly independent and impartial electoral commission, the nature of the seat allocation system, and the registration rules and how they are implemented.

All these elements are of prime concern to those who would like to see democracy develop and thrive in the 'Third World'. It might, however, be difficult or impossible to achieve in countries where the political and administrative elites are uninterested in taking the democratic route, and perhaps only do so superficially because it is the price for much-needed development assistance from the international community.

It has been argued here that the early steps in the process—from legislating the electoral process to regulating the electoral campaign—should in particular attract our attention. If the provisions and procedures listed under the first seven steps of the electoral process are implemented and adhered to openly and responsibly, then it becomes less important to subject the remaining elements to detailed observation and monitoring. There is a balance to strike, but the conclusion is clearly that it is more conducive to a worthwhile electoral process to focus on and support earlier rather than later steps in the process.

If sufficient effort is put into ensuring the quality of the electoral process before polling day, and if the election-related legislation is carried through and implemented without serious political biases, then qualitatively better elections will follow. One must therefore focus on the legislative and administrative processes in the early phases, with the budgetary and technical independence of the electoral administration as a main aim. The registration phase is also more important than is often realised, and the same applies to the strengthening of political parties who must be able to present to the electorate viable alternatives to the incumbent party.

The conclusion in relation to election observation and monitoring is similarly that such activities should also concentrate on the early phases of the electoral process, Instead of sending election monitors and observers (who in any case are usually too few and too ill-equipped to pass a reliable judgement on the quality of the election), it would be better to have expert teams analyse the country's performance during the seven first steps of the electoral process, while polling day observation could be left to locals; that is, party agents and NGOs with a vested interest in a credible outcome of the elections, and dedicated to monitoring their country's process towards a more democratic future (Boneo 2000).

# 5

# Party institutionalisation and the new democracies

*Vicky Randall and Lars Svåsand*

In any analysis of democratic experience and prospects in the 'Third World', it is widely accepted that political parties should play a central part. In this chapter we focus in particular on the 'institutionalisation' of parties and party systems, often identified as a vital dimension helping to determine what contribution parties can make to democratisation. How should we understand 'party institutionalisation'? What are the prospects for party institutionalisation in a 'Third World' context? And what is the relationship between party, and party system, institutionalisation? The discussion is broadly structured around these questions.

The relationship between parties and governance is well established in longrunning democracies. Indeed, it has become an axiom in the study of modern democracies that democracy is a form of governing which is unthinkable, save in terms of political parties (Schattschneider 1942). This view is echoed in the vast and growing literature on democratic transition. We see this in reference to the latecomers to democracy in Europe. Analysing democratisation in the southern Mediterranean, Pridham writes: 'focusing on parties and party systems must remain a basic if not the central theme for examining the quality of the liberal democracy in question but also its progress towards and achievement of democratic consolidation' (Pridham 1990:2). Paul Lewis (1994) similarly sees party development as a central aspect of democratisation in Eastern Europe. The development of political parties has also been a pervasive theme specifically in reference to the 'new democracies' in Africa, Asia and Latin America (Crotty 1993; Norden 1998; Sandbrook 1996).

While definitions of democracy abound and there is little agreement on which factors contribute to bringing democracy about or to its consolidation, a recurrent refrain is the vital role that is—or should be—played by parties. Surveying prospects for consolidation in sub-Saharan Africa, Clapham suggests the key indicator is 'the capacity to develop a political party system which is both integrative between different communities, and competitive between different parties' (Clapham 1993: 437). Diamond (1989) reaches a similar conclusion about the importance of parties in summarising findings in ten Asian countries. Moreover, the role of parties has received especial attention in the literature on Latin American transitions. Dix, for instance, argues that in assessing prospects for democratic survival and consolidation in that region, 'much may depend on political parties. Although it seems that strong parties are not necessary for inaugurating democratic regimes (although they might be helpful in doing so), they are almost certainly necessary for the long-term consolidation of broad-based representative government' (Dix 1992:489; see also Little 1997; Mainwaring 1988). In some ways the greatest testimony to the importance of political parties is offered by Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens, precisely because they adopt a more 'structural', class-based, approach to analysing democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean. They were surprised by their own finding that political parties were 'a crucial mediating mechanism', playing a'crucial role in making democracy viable or not in very similar economic and social structural conditions' (Rueschemeyer *et al.* 1992:287).

However, this view of the importance of parties is not universally shared. Schmitter (1992), for instance, argues that the emphasis on parties underestimates the complexity of modern democracy. Citizens of the new democracies are more politically sophisticated and less partisan than their historical counterparts, and the international environment provides them with innumerable alternative models of successful collective action. Though viewing parties as fairly indispensable to the moment of transition itself, he contends that both in the buildup to transition and in the consolidation phase, social movements or interest associations could be more decisive. A high degree of concern with parties also runs somewhat counter to recent arguments about the 'decline of the party' in Western democracies.[1] Finally, it is evident from the comments cited so far that political analysts see the actual or potential contribution of parties as varying at different stages of the democratisation process. In general the perception is that their contribution gets increasingly important as the process evolves, and is especially central to successful consolidation.

But beyond this perception of the potential importance of parties are the questions of how parties are to be characterised or categorised, and what *kinds* of parties—distinguished in these terms—can make the most positive contribution to democracy. The common perception that the existence of political parties is a vital ingredient in the consolidation of democratic regimes does not imply that there is agreement on which particular qualities individual parties should have, or what kind of party system is the most conducive for democratic governance. Nor is there a common understanding of which factors help to bring about these particular qualities in the first place. In this context, different criteria have been cited, for instance concerning the ideal number of parties, the degree of ideological polarisation, the relative merits of two-party, three-party or dominant party systems, and the relationship between parties and underlying social and cultural cleavages. But the criterion which has received most emphasis, especially in relation to democratic consolidation, is that of party *institutionalisation*. The need for institutionalisation is underlined in many of the discussions cited so far (Diamond 1989; Dix 1992; Lewis 1994), and it is the central theme of a recent volume edited by Mainwaring and Scully (1995) on party-system building in Latin America.

While there is considerable convergence on the need for party institutionalisation, there is much less clarity, or indeed consistency, as to what institutionalisation actually involves. Sometimes the term is used without further explanation. Alternatively the author invokes the definition and criteria suggested by Huntington (1968) or by Panebianco (1988). More critical and independent theorisation is very unusual.[2] There is also almost no explicit consideration of the relationship between individual party institutionalisation and the institutionalisation of the party *system,* although these are neither the same thing nor necessarily and always mutually compatible.

## Party institutionalisation: refining the concept

In shaping our understanding of the process and features of party institutionalisation, two writers have been preeminent and we should begin by briefly rehearsing their arguments. To some extent the 'father' of the concept is Samuel Huntington who made it central to his *Political Order in Changing Societies* (1968). In fact, in that work Huntington first discusses *political* institutionalisation more broadly, but then argues that the criteria he derives can as well be applied to parties (whether to parties singly or to the party system is a question we shall leave to later). For Huntington, 'institutionalisation is the process by which organisations and procedures acquire value and stability' (Huntington 1968: 12). He identifies four dimensions of institutionalisation: adaptability, complexity, autonomy and coherence. *Adaptability* can partly be deduced from longevity, including the ability to survive a first generation of leaders, but also entails functional adaptation, for instance in terms of groups represented or from opposition to government. Organisational *complexity* is measured by the number of subunits. *Autonomy* refers to the degree of differentation from 'other social groupings and methods of behaviour'. *Coherence* has to do with the degree of consensus within the organisation on its functional boundaries and on procedures for resolving disputes that arise within these boundaries. Although in theory autonomy and coherence are independent characteristics, in practice they tend to be interdependent.

Writing much later, Panebianco focuses just on political parties, specifically on parties in established democracies. By 'institutionalisation', he understands 'the way the organisation "solidifies"' (Panebianco 1988:49), which he later elaborates as the process by which it

> slowly loses its character as a tool: it becomes valuable in and of itself, and its goals become inseparable and indistinguishable from it. In this way, its preservation and survival become a 'goal' for a great number of its supporters.
> (Panebianco 1988:53)

For this to happen, an appropriate internal incentive system needs to develop which provides both selective incentives for those with an interest in leadership, and more collective incentives that foster diffuse loyalty to the party. In order to measure the *degree* of party institutionalisation, Panebianco singles out two criteria: the degree of *'autonomy' vis-à-vis* its environment and the degree of internal *'systemness'* or interdependence of different sectors. Again he recognises that autonomy and systemness will in practice be interrelated.

In sum, there is considerable overlap in the criteria of institutionalisation specified by the authors: both include autonomy, and Panebianco's notion of systemness seems to embrace the combination of Huntington's complexity and coherence. What Panebianco does not require is adaptability. In fact he suggests that a high degree of institutionalisation could actually hinder flexibility or adaptability.

Levitsky points out that these two accounts of institutionalisation have something else in common. There is a kind of disjuncture between the initial conception of institutionalisation and the way this is elaborated and related to specific criteria. The initial conception emphasises what Levitsky, following Selznick (1957), calls 'value infusion'. This is when an organisation becomes 'infused with value beyond the technical requirement of the task in hand'. Thus Huntington talks about the way in which an organisation 'develops a life of its own quite apart from the specific functions it may perform' and Panebianco likewise speaks of how the organisation 'becomes valuable in and of itself'. However when it comes to elaborating the term, the specifications, particularly in the case of Panebianco, are above all to do with organisational elaboration and routinisation in the narrow behavioural sense. Levitsky (1998) argues the need to distinguish these two aspects, or what we might call 'sources of cohesion'. He cites the case of Argentina's Peronist party—Partido Justicialista (PJ)—which on his reckoning scores high on value infusion measures, but in which rules and procedures are circumvented, manipulated and contested. This suggests that the two dimensions will not necessarily go together: parties could be high, or low, on both, but there could also be parties which like the PJ were strong on value infusion but low on organisational routinisation (and possibly vice versa—he suggests some of the European Green parties).

One final further dimension of party institutionalisation has been suggested by Kenneth Janda (1980), in his conceptual framework for a cross-national analysis of political parties. In fact he identifies institutionalisation as one of several aspects of the party's *external* relations, rather than being a feature of internal organisation. He suggests that an institutionalised party is one that is 'reified in the public mind'. Although in elaborating this idea, he seems to come closer to the value infusion notion examined earlier, he raises the issue of how the party is perceived by the wider society. The potential importance of this 'external dimension' has been subsequently underlined by Harmel and Svåsand in their analysis of the institutionalisation of right-wing 'protest' parties in Norway and Denmark. They characterise it as involving the extent to which 'the party has become part of the "routines" of other relevant actors in ways which suggest that they consider it to be an "established party"' (Harmel and Svåsand 1989:10).

The discussion so far has yielded a series of possible dimensions or criteria by which to give greater specificity to the notion of party institutionalisation. These could be summarised as: *adaptability, systemness* (coherence/complexity), *'value infusion', external institutionalisation* and *autonomy*. But first, there is disagreement as to how far these are all necessary aspects of institutionalisation. Panebianco, we have seen, questions whether party systemness will always promote adaptability, but this leads him to exclude adaptability, or flexibility, from his criteria. Most writers on the subject omit external institutionalisation.

There is also disagreement about the necessity for autonomy. Implicit in Levitsky's argument is the suggestion that autonomy is not necessary for institutionalisation, at least in the value diffusion sense. Janda had already raised this objection some time back, citing with some justification the case of the British Labour Party and its relationship with the trade union movement: 'I believe that a party can be highly institutionalised and yet lack independence of other groups (Huntington's "autonomy")…as [with] the Labour Party in Great Britain' (Janda 1980:19). This question about the need for autonomy seems to us important, but it is not susceptible to a simple yes/no answer. It must depend first on the form of interdependence. As with so many of these analytic distinctions, there is a conceptually hazy but empirically frequent situation in which a party is neither completely dependent on a sponsoring institution or group, nor simply in some neutral sense 'linked' to it. (In the literature 'linkages' are generally regarded as a good thing (Lawson 1980).) Where the party is clearly the dominant element in the relationship, a degree of interdependence could have very positive consequences, in terms of extending resources (which could be vitally needed), and indeed of external institutionalisation. But this is likely to be affected in turn by the nature of the group or organisation to which the party is closely linked. As Levitsky (1998) argues, the continuing close relationship between the trade union movement and the PJ in Argentina, rather than compromising that party's integrity or room for manoeuvre, may actually have helped to ensure its survival through long periods of political repression. This is partly because of the very top-down relationship that has prevailed between Peronist union officials—who were in the original corporatist model appointed from the centre, and were subsequently likely to be co-opted in reality if not in form—and the workers.

On the other hand, as Wyatt notes in his chapter in this voume, the relationship between India's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the so-called paramilitary organisation, the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh (RSS) has been more problematic. It is the RSS that has imparted to the BJP its distinctive centralised, unified system of organisation as well as helping to sustain its links with the 'grass roots', but the RSS has its own social, and increasingly political, project of Hindu nationalism, which has at times constrained the party leadership's room for manoeuvre (Jaffrelot 1996).[3] The difference here may have partly to do with the differing roles of the Argentinian unions and the RSS in the formation of the respective parties, a point returned to in the following section. Perhaps one way around these complexities would be to specifiy the party's need for *decisional autonomy*.

But even if we can agree on dimensions of institutionalisation, a difficulty remains that these may not all be compatible but can pull in opposite directions. Or as Morlino has recently observed, 'a form of institutionalisation that displays simultaneously maximum adaptability and complexity and maximum coherence and autonomy seems virtually impossible' (Morlino 1998:23).[4] We have noted in particular the possible tension between adaptability and systemness. Huntington also suggests that to the extent that complexity involves linkages with external organisation it could conflict with autonomy. This leads us to propose that rather than understanding institutionalisation as a single process, it is best regarded not only as multidimensional, but as potentially taking a number of different forms.

For purposes of analysis, we suggest the model in Figure 5.1 may be helpful. This model distinguishes, first, two main dimensions of party institutionalisation, an internal and an external, and, second, within these two dimensions a further division between what we shall call 'structural' and more attitudinal aspects.

The *internal dimension* refers to how well the party is organised and to how strongly the adherents are emotionally linked to the party. The structural aspect of the internal dimension captures Huntington's notion of 'complexity' and Panebianco's 'systemness'. Thus a party that has a fairly detailed organisational network and in which decisions in the party follow, at least in a formal sense, the procedures set down in its statutes, is considered highly institutionalised. The attitudinal aspect of the internal dimension refers to the strength of the affective linkage of party to societal groups. Parties are not only formal instrumental organisations that potential supporters regard like a type of supermarket, but purposeful actors in which the participants share an ideology and identify with the values of the organisation. Thus the more the party members and supporters identify with the party as an expressive phenomenon, and the higher the degree of voter loyalty, the more institutionalised it is. (This notion captures Levitsky's idea of value infusion.)

The *external dimension* refers to the party's relationship to its environment. Here the structural aspect revolves around the issue of autonomy. A party that is totally dependent on external factors is less institutionalised than one in which preservation of the organisation is not at the mercy of such factors. Furthermore, as regards the attitudinal aspect, reification refers to the fact that the party's existence is established in the public imagination; it has become taken for granted by external actors and therefore impacts on the way the environment behaves. A party that is expected to disappear may be ignored, a party that mobilises extensive electoral support over time cannot be.

Implicit in the concept of institutionalisation is the time dimension. A party cannot be said to be institutionalised if it is not able to survive over time. But adaptability should be seen as a consequence of both internal and external dimensions: pressures for change in parties may originate internally as well as externally (Harmel and Janda 1994). In the long run, only parties which are able to respond to challenges from both sources can endure. This suggested model of party institutionalisation is useful both in identifying the key 'variables', and in relating them to one another in terms of the central categorical dimensions of internal *versus* external and structural *versus* attitudinal. But as noted already, it does not mean that the different variables are always and necessarily convergent. By the same token, overall party institutionalisation is not simply cumulative: we cannot assume that the greater the 'score' on these four variables the greater the party's adaptability, or prospect of long-term institutionalisation. For instance a high degree of

| | **INTERNAL** | **EXTERNAL** |
|---|---|---|
| **STRUCTURAL** | **Organisation** | **Decisional autonomy** |
| **ATTITUDINAL** | **Value infusion** | **Reification** |

**ADAPTABILITY**

*Figure 5.1* Dimensions of party institutionalisation

organisational systemness and autonomy could isolate the party from the environment and thus limit its ability to accommodate new demands. In the long run this could limit its ability to remain institutionalised.

Nor are we suggesting that there is some optimum combination or recipe for party institutionalisation that is in principle appropriate for all parties. Rather, in practice we could expect variation in the balance among these dimensions of institutionalisation between types of party. Parties built primarily around the appeal of a particular leader, for example, will probably be far more dependent on the external/attitudinal cell in the matrix than on the internal/structural.

Finally we are not assuming an irreversible linear process. Although institutionalisation in terms of the four variables will increase the party's prospects for survival, it is certainly no guarantee against regression or *de-institutionalisation.* In Latin America for instance we have witnessed the de-institutionalisation and disarray from the 1980s of the formerly powerful Popular American Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) in Peru and still more recently the collapse of Democratic Action (AD) in Venezuela. Party de-institutionalisation may indeed have a special relevance in the context of democratic transition. In the movement from one-party to multi-party regimes the governing party has often had to divest itself of extensive control of state and parastatal organisations. The deinstitutionalisation of the incumbent party, in this sense, has been a corollary of the institutionalisation of new parties.

While the model matrix in the table may be thought of as 'variables' it does not follow that a maximum score on each of them will be conducive to the adaptability of a party. For instance, extremely strong organisation with clear demarcation between those inside and those outside the party, may isolate the party from the environment and thus limit its ability to accommodate new demands. In the long run this may limit its ability to remain institutionalised. Moreover, not all types of parties may rely on the same balance of qualities. For instance, parties built primarily around the appeal of a particular leader may be far more dependent on the external/attitudinal cell in the matrix than on the internal/structural cell. Although institutionalisation along our two dimensions increases the likelihood of a party surviving, it is certainly no guarantee against regression, or de-institutionalisation. In the transition from one party to multi-party regimes the governing party has often had to divest itself from its extensive control of state and parastatal organisations. De-institutionalisation in this sense of the incumbent party has often been the corollary of institutionalisation of new parties.

## Party institutionalisation in the 'Third World'

If the discussion so far has helped to clarify the meaning and criteria of party institutionalisation, we need next to consider how far these requirements can actually be met in the new democracies of those regions that have conventionally been grouped together as the 'Third World'. Of course this grouping contains countries that are widely diverse on a range of cultural and developmental indicators.[5] This is clearly a huge topic and one that moreover requires much more systematic empirical investigation before any authoritative judgements could be reached. What follows are provisional assessments only, based primarily on the available secondary literature.

Evidently a whole range of factors associated with the particular circumstances of democratic transition in 'emerging' societies have a potential bearing upon party institutionalisation. Many of these are familiar from the more general democratisation literature. They include features of the broad economic and cultural context, as in levels of 'development' (literacy, communications and so forth) and particular cultural traits. (Huntington emphasises the need for 'trust'; others stress the prevalence of forms of authoritarianism, as in 'Asian values', or 'caudillismo'.) But they also comprise factors of a more narrowly political institutional nature—especially the historical legacy in terms of earlier experience of party-building. The character and timing of the democratic transition itself will be of great relevance; political parties may play, but most often have not played, a central role in bringing it about. The shift in the global ideological climate away from socialist values poses particular problems for would-be left-wing parties, and this can in turn be argued to have implications for the institutionalisation of party systems as a whole, since in (North and Western) Europe at least, it is generally accepted that parties of the Left acted as pacesetters in the institutionalisation process.[6] Moreover, there are further institutional features of the emerging democratic context that can affect party development, such as the electoral system, the extent to which government is centralised, the way the executive function of government is organised (parliamentary *versus* presidential) and so forth. Of great importance, finally, will be the character and role of the mass media (discussed later).

Here, however, while these cannot be completely divorced from contextual features indicated earlier, we shall focus upon attributes more intrinsic to the individual parties themselves. We have already specified the main criteria of party institutionalisation. How far, and in what ways, might particular features that tend to be characteristic of political parties and their development in the contemporary 'Third World', affect the degree to which these criteria are met? The following discussion will be organised around our original institutionalisation criteria, but will aim to avoid repetition in the case of specific party characteristics that are relevant to more than one criterion.

Beginning with the *internal/structural* dimension, we have seen that a party's degree of institutionalisation depends on its ability to develop an organisational apparatus. Five aspects of party development seem of especial relevance in this respect. These are, one, the way the organisation originated and grew, two, organisational resources and especially funding, three, the role of the individual party leader *versus* the party organisation, four, the role of factions *versus* the party as a whole, and five, the implications of clientelism. We shall consider each in turn.

### *Party-building*

Panebianco has laid great emphasis upon the consequences for a party's institutionalisation, of the manner in which it was founded, its origins or 'genetic model'. One key dimension of this genetic model, with clear relevance for the party's organisational capacity, concerns what we will call the process of *party-building,* that is, the extent to which the party has been constructed through either a process of 'penetration' from the centre to the periphery (understood both in territorial and more organisational terms), or 'diffusion', in which the party emerged more diffusely out of the 'spontaneous germination' from below. Broadly, Panebianco argues that the greater the element of penetration, the more strongly institutionalised a party is likely to become, but at the same time some element of both is desirable.

Panebianco's notion of party organisation extending through a combination of penetration and diffusion from below reflects European experience. But how realistic is this in a 'Third World' context? In the first place, this approach tends to assume that parties emerge and develop gradually. By contrast, in the 'Third World' over the longer term, the process of party development has typically experienced regular interruptions. In some cases parties in the present wave of democratisation have had a headstart where they can build on institutional foundations laid in an earlier period. For instance, while seeking to explain why Chile's parties stand out in terms of institutionalisation, Munck and Bosworth (1998) identify the main reason in the existence of institutionalised parties prior to the coup of 1973. In this case, the argument is that institutionalisation survived military intervention. But in many of the 'new' democracies, general party development has been regularly interrupted. An example is Brazil where, as Power (1997) points out, there have been as many as seven different party systems since independence, four since 1945. Moreover, the process of democratic transition in the third wave was itself typically foreshortened. There may be particular parties, closely linked to, or even dominating the retreating authoritarian regimes, which have benefited from the restriction of party competition and the opportunity to extend their organisation and build up their resources—an obvious example being Taiwan's KMT, discussed in more detail later. But in contrast, once it gets underway, the sheer speed of the process means that alternative competing parties have to form very quickly, either reconstituting themselves from the residue of earlier parties, or organising from scratch. In other words, it can actually be the announcement of forthcoming elections that calls parties into existence. A further twist comes when opposition parties summoned into existence at fairly short notice, soon after find themselves in power—then the period for organisational consolidation is doubly truncated. Rapid electoral success may actually prevent parties from institutionalising organisationally because of the preoccupation of the elites with running the government, as examplified by left-wing parties in Greece (Spourdalakis 1998), Portugal and Spain (van Biezen 1977), in Southern Europe or the MMD in Zambia (Burnell in this volume).

It could be argued that Panebianco's conception of party-building also to an extent presupposes a social constituency available to be incorporated into some more or less regularised membership system. Again this tends to echo the earlier experience of a number of West European countries in which mass-integration parties, based generally on class but also on religious denomination, emerged with the expansion of suffrage. First, as we will discuss more fully in relation to value infusion, the possibilities of this kind of mass membership party in most 'Third World' countries have tended to be limited by differences in the level and sequencing of social development, on the one hand, and the impact of changing mass communications media on the other. Second, it is increasingly recognised that even in Europe this kind of party may be proving atypical. Party membership is falling rapidly in the established European parties and when new parties are formed in the established democracies, they often lack an extensive membership base. Regularised mass membership may not, then, be an essential feature of party organisation, but there does need to be some degree of grassroots presence.

To summarise this discussion around party-building, the problematic legacy of earlier periods of party formation, the circumstances and speed of democratic transition and the frequent absence of obvious and accessible social constituencies have restricted the opportunities for political parties to build organisations that are extensive in terms, either of their territorial reach, or of their regularised incorporation of substantial memberships.

### *Organisational resourœ*

Second, there is the question of *organisational resources*. Given what has been said in the preceding paragraph about the absence of regularised mass membership, we can seen that parties are unlikely to be able to derive any significant income from membership dues. On the other hand, the possibilities of effective and continuous organisation are heavily constrained by the availability of resources, including funding. Moreover, given the circumstances of democratic transition, the escalating costs of election campaigns in many parts of the world mean that parties need funds if they are to compete effectively. The ruling parties of Malaysia (the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO)) and Taiwan (KMT)—also Golkar in Indonesia (but so far there has been little possibility for meaningful party competition in that country, as Törnquist explains in his chapter)—are according to Sachsenroder (1998), among the wealthiest in the world. They have been able to build their own massive business empires, giving them effective financial self-sufficiency. In contrast, their opponents face tremendous difficulties in raising the necessary funding to pay for office space, staff, communication facilities and all the other requirements for effective electoral competition. This incidentally helps to explain why individual opposition politicians with substantial sources of personal wealth so often play a dominant role in the creation and direction of new political parties, whether in East Asia, Latin America or even parts of sub-Saharan Africa. However, the Democratic Progressive Party (DDP) in Taiwan may have succeeded in bucking this trend. Before being legalised in 1986, it had a long record of opposition to the ruling KMT and popular support. Partly as a result of its identification with the indigenous Taiwanese (and opposition to the Chinese mainlander) community, it has been able to collect funds from local business. Even so, it was reported in 1997 (Guo *et al.* 1998) that the DPP was in serious financial straits. Its cheques were bouncing and there was no cash to pay staff salaries.

## *The party and its leadership*

The possibilities for effective organisational development are likely to be affected by the relationship between the party and its *leadership*. In discussing party origins, Panebianco stresses the part played by 'charisma' in the party's formation and the extent to which it was created primarily as a vehicle for an individual charismatic leader. There will always be some element of charisma and it may indeed play a positive role in the early stages in helping to secure a cohesive 'dominant coalition', but almost by definition, charisma is antithetical to organisation; all institutionalisation involves the 'routinisation' of charisma. The more parties are based purely on charisma, the more ephemeral they will prove: 'they are parties which pass like a meteor over the political firmament, which spring up and die out without ever institutionalising' (Panebianco 1988:53).

This observation certainly has particular relevance for the formation of parties during the process of transition in the new democracies. A frequent criticism of these parties is that they appear to be personal mobilisation instruments for ambitious politicians. In Ihonvbere's view, African political parties, in particular, suffer from a 'pathological fixation on the leaders' (Ihonvbere 1996:21). Similarly, Amundsen argues that in Senegal parties 'are more like entourages around the party leader than real party organisations with a fixed program' (Amundsen 1997:293). Discussions of democratic transition in South Korea frequently note the extent to which party competition and the constant formation and reformation of parties has been a reflection of the ambitions of the 'three Kims' (Bedelski 1994).

Indeed where parties cannot build on a pre-existing organisational base and established identity, then it is more than likely that new parties will often consist of ephemeral vehicles for politically ambitious individuals with charisma and/or access to the necessary resources, or at least of largely opportunistic coalitions of such people. Commitment to democracy and opposition to the outgoing authoritarian regime will provide insufficient 'glue' to hold them together much beyond the first set of elections, whether they win or lose. Developments in the mass media, as in the West, may reinforce this tendency. As Semetko has noted, 'in countries with nonexistent or developing party systems, news values or journalistic preferences for personalities and conflicts may actually serve to hinder the institutional development of parties and public attachment to them' (Semetko 1996:279). In a number of Latin American countries, and perhaps most of all Brazil, the combination of a presidential system with sophisticated and extensive media network of mass communication is widely held to have contributed to the phenomenon of parties that are little more than temporary vehicles for the presidential ambitions of their leaders: the leaders using the media to appeal directly to the people.[7] In these circumstances, personalistic leadership could contribute at the initial stages to party cohesion and survival, but in the longer run, and in the absence of effective routinisation, it could seriously inhibit organisational development.

### *Factionalism*

Leadership is linked to a further issue that needs to be addressed here: factionalism. A tacit understanding in much of the literature is that factionalism, which tends to be endemic in 'Third World' parties, is inimical to organisational cohesion, and therefore to institutionalisation. The term 'faction' has been understood in a variety of ways, but a widely accepted and broad definition is that of Beller and Belloni: 'any relatively organised group that exists within the context of some other group and which (as a political faction) competes with rivals for power advantages within the larger group of which it is a part' (Beller and Belloni 1978:419). Factions within parties can reflect any number and combination of different motives, for instance ideological or issue differences, social or cultural cleavages or personal leadership struggles. Factionalism is often represented as the antithesis of cohesion, as in Janda's (1980) measure of party organisational coherence. Tursan's (1995) account of the 'pernicious' role of faction within Turkish political parties certainly demonstrates how undermining it can be of party institutionalisation.

However, it is also recognised that 'factions can play a constructive role in the creation of a party system in cases of political transition' (Waller and Gillespie 1995: 186), in circumstances where most parties are still in the process of formation and faction may have more substance than party. Furthermore, even in more evolved party systems, factions do not necessarily undermine party cohesion, and it could be argued that at times the existence of internal factions increases a party's adaptability. This has, for instance, been argued in the case of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party:

> It is now widely believed that factionalism had positive effects in sustaining the LDP's predominant rule, as the change in party leadership (and therefore the prime minister) from one factional leader to another transformed the party's public image and usually enhanced the popularity of the LDP government.
>
> (Kohno 1979:91)

Another example of the compatibility of factionalism and institutionalisation is Italy's Christian Democratic Party. What may partly make the difference in these cases is the extent to which a faction itself is institutionalised, in the sense of being governed by mutually recognised procedures and constraints.

### *Clientelism*

Finally we need to ask about the implications of *clientelism* for a party's organisational development. Like faction, and often associated with it, clientelism is widespread in 'Third World' societies and political parties. Neither economic growth in Latin America nor constraints on public expenditure associated with structural adjustment in Africa appear significantly to have diminished its hold. While in the past some political scientists stressed the positive role of patronage-based party politics in facilitating the growth of political parties in the face of overweening state bureaucracies, the more recent literature holds the existence of clientelistic relationships within parties and between parties and their supporters as inimical to effective party organisation.[8] This is because it undermines rules and regularised procedures, reducing the party constitution if there is one to a meaningless sham. It also constrains the possibilities for concerted party leadership or programme-making.

However, we need to recognise that clientelism within parties can take rather different forms. Of particular relevance to the present discussion is the broad intermediate zone extending between the kind of old-style, more personalistic clientelism characterised by a chain of transactional relationships, with notables themselves as the source of largesse and object of loyalty at the local, or periphery, level, and the situation where the party organisation, through its access to local or national government, is able to distribute resources to broader categories of people, who are coincidentally potential supporters. The latter case comes very close to what most parties do, or seek to do, in developed democracies. To the extent that the party collectively has control of this activity and distributes benefits to classes of people closely linked to its ideological profile and electoral strategy, clientelism clearly poses less of a threat to party organisation.

The second cell in our scheme for party institutionalisation *(autonomy: struc tural/external)* refers to the party's dependency on external actors. In discussing the origins of parties, Panebianco considers the implications of external sponsorship. He suggests that the presence of a sponsoring institution will tend to result in weak institutionalisation, since the leadership's source of legitimacy and the object of party organisational loyalties will be outside the party, vested in this external institution. As already noted, the contrasting cases of the BJP in India and the PJ in Argentina may provide an illustration of this point. On the one hand the RSS predated the BJP (it was actually founded in the 1920s) and was largly responsible for the formation in 1951 of the Jan Sangh, which was reincarnated in 1980 as the BJP. The RSS was, moreover, from the start highly institutionalised in its own right. On the other hand Peron himself from 1943 'regrouped the weak and divided Argentine unions into the regenerated CGT' (General Confederation of Labour), which thenceforth owed its particular allegiance to him or to his memory, in other words to 'Peronism', a powerful but famously vague ideology (Manzetti 1993:36). However an exception to this pattern of the weakening effect of institutional sponsorship, Panebianco concedes, may be the case where the external sponsoring institution is not actually based in the same country; the example he gives is of the relationship between Comintern and various national communist parties.

Although both Panebianco and Huntington see autonomy as a necessary criterion of institutionalisation, the distinction between institutional dependence and *linkage* is not always clear. In the case of parties emerging in opposition to an established ruling party, with all its resources and other advantages, external sponsorship even from within their own society may be essential. The absence or weakness of such sponsoring institutions, the most obvious of which are trade unions, or as in South Korea the positive prohibition on trade union involvement in party politics, may be part of the difficulty for new parties. Ihonbvere criticises parties in a number of African countries which have turned to the international donor community for support instead of cultivating links with national civic groups as a means of resource mobilisation (Ihonvbere 1998:26). In this way, he argues, new parties have become dependent on external supporters like aid agencies. However, and as acknowledged by Panebianco, some type of international support may actually contribute to internal party development. There exists a number of transnational party organisations, set up along ideological lines, that function as support organisations for new parties in multiparty systems. While this may give international actors an influence in the national development of a party system, this type of influence can nevertheless assist individual party institutionalisation (and to an extent thereby party system institutionalisation). Unfortunately to date in spite of the number of parties formed in new democracies, particularly in Africa and Asia, few of them are yet connected to these transnational party organisations. Parties in Latin American and Caribbean countries are fairly well represented in international party federations but for Africa there are only six in the Socialist International, two in the Liberal International, five in the Christian Democratic International and a solitary one in the International Democrat Union, the federation of conservative parties. (Reasons for this absence are likely to include the newness of many of the parties, the extent to which they are regarded simply as vehicles for individual leaders, and the corresponding difficulty of fitting such parties into traditional classifications of party families.)

The attitudinal/internal dimension of party institutionalisation we have labelled *value infusion*. It focuses upon the strength of the affective attachment to the party of members and supporters. Two issues, which are not entirely separable, and have both already been touched upon, seem of especial relevance here: the nature of the party's relationship with some kind of popular base, and the impact of clientelism.

Value infusion is likely to be strongest where the political party is identified with a broader social movement. The classic instance has been the European mass party, with its social base typically in the urban working class or alternatively a religious denomination, as described both by Duverger (1954) and by Kirchheimer (1966).

The strength of the 'class-mass' party was its ability to appeal to an expanding socio-economic group, incorporated into the party through an extensive network of party organisations. In addition to the party itself, it relied on a number of affiliated organisations, such as trade unions and cooperatives. The party became the linchpin in a 'movement' by itself stimulating the development of numerous other types of organisation including everything from children's associations to funeral societies. This helped to incorporate the electorate into the movement and to infuse party supporters with identification with the movement as a whole.

As already noted, in most 'Third World' countries the likelihood of this form of class-mass party is remote. In some regions this simply reflects the level of development: as Bienen and Herbst observe, 'class still is not a salient cleavage in most African countries' (Bienen and Herbst 1996:26).[9] Although there has been significant industrial growth in a number of Latin American and Far Eastern countries, the circumstances of late or dependent development have tended to constrain opportunities for the political mobilisation of labour on its own behalf. Specifically in South Korea, given its proximity to the communist North, attempts by the substantial industrial workforce to organise politically have been met with severe repression. The collapse of much of the communist world and growing global ascendancy of a neo-liberal outlook have for the moment further constrained the possibilities of political mobilisation on a coherent left-wing platform.

While the scope for class-based parties on the classical model may be limited—Chile is generally cited as an exception—organised labour, as in the case of Argentina's PJ, may help to underpin the more populist or nationalist movements with which a political party is identified. A still more powerful source of value infusion can be the identification of members of a particular religious or ethnic community with their 'own' party. The Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in Algeria, which was officially recognised in September 1989 and proceeded to dominate competitive party elections until military intervention in January 1992, was both a party and a political movement. It was the most organised and structured of the Islamic parties, but its precise social and political programme, beyond fervent identification with Islam and its Islamic vision of a future just society, was left vague enough to appeal to a wide range of groups (though by no means to all Muslims). In particular, according to Zoubir (1995), it commanded tremendous loyalty among the disaffected youth and poorest sections of Algerian society.[10] While such identification with a religious or ethnically-based movement can reinforce value-infusion, it may be associated with diminished autonomy, as was suggested in the case of India's BJP (and, of course, as we discuss later, it may well prove problematic for institutionalisation of a competitive party system).

We need also to consider the implications of clientelism for value infusion. As already noted clientelistic relationships are endemic in 'Third World' parties. Generally one would expect clientelism to encourage a highly instrumentalist orientation towards parties, rather than more long-lasting party loyalty or identification: party support would be conditional on the expectation of tangible benefits to the individual or community. The cases of the PJ and the Indian

Congress Party among others, however, suggest that clientelism is not intrinsically incompatible with party loyalty: where party identification is independently established through the party's association with a social or political movement and/or charismatic leader, clientelistic practices may actually help to extend and reinforce this sentiment.

Party *reification* (the *attitudinal/external* dimension) refers to the extent to which a political party becomes installed both in the popular 'imagination', and as a factor shaping the behaviour of political actors. The ability of a party to establish itself in this way will partly depend on the particular historical place and symbolic values it can successfully claim to represent. It will also depend on the party's organisational strength and especially its access to effective means of communication. But party reification is finally and importantly a function of longevity: the party's ability to survive over time. We have already discussed the severe organisational constraints facing the great majority of parties in the circumstances of democratic transition. Nor have many enjoyed a long, let alone an uninterrupted existence, although there are major exceptions, and moreover, the ability of individual parties to retain some kind of identity and place in public consciousness despite one, or successive, phases of political repression should not be underestimated: the PJ in Argentina is a good example of this.

As already emphasised, the discussion in this section has been provisional only; an attempt to begin to follow through the implications of a more rigorous understanding of the concept of party institutionalisation. Even so, it suggests two broad conclusions: first that we should guard against bringing into this analysis assumptions about how political parties work that are based on a particular, and increasingly outdated, model of European party development. Second, and none the less, the circumstances of transition in perhaps the majority of the new 'Third World' democracies are less than conducive to party institutionalisation on any of its dimensions.

## Party system institutionalisation

So far the discussion has concentrated on the institutionalisation of individual parties. But we come now to our second main criticism of the party institutionalisation literature: its tendency to elide the issue of party institutionalisation with that of party *system* institutionalisation, the implication being that the institutionalisation of single parties must contribute to the overall institutionalisation of the party system and thence to democratisation. In this section we try to unpick some of the conceptual confusion that has resulted from this elision, to identify the main dimensions or criteria of party system institutionalisation, and begin to explore the relationship and possible tensions between the institutionalisation of individual parties and the party system.

Although we have so far referred without qualification to the 'party system', at this point a further complication must be faced. We are not just interested, for the purposes of the current discussion, in the relationship between the individual party and every kind of party system. After all the notion of a party system denotes any system comprised of parties. In practice, though this may seem illogical, it has been used to describe *de jure* single party systems; more legitimately it includes systems in which a single party is overwhelmingly dominant. But we are interested here in the implications of party institutionalisation, and of party system institutionalisation for democratic consolidation. For a party system to be conducive to democratic consolidation it must have a certain level of competition. For example, as Wallis notes in his chapter, the Mexican party system has long been institutionalised, yet until recently no party other than the PRI had any realistic chance of winning major offices. *How* competitive a party system cannot be specified exactly, but clearly our focus needs to be on party systems that are competitive to some degree. The question we are posing concerns the relationship between institutionalisation of individual parties and of competitive party systems.

So what do we mean by (competitive) party system institutionalisation? Huntington (1968) uses the same criteria for party systems as for individual parties and indeed for political institutions as a whole. He does however acknowledge that organisational complexity may assist the party's functional versatility (adaptability) but for that very reason contribute less to the flexibility of the whole system. Mainwaring and Scully (1995), who however appear to ignore the possibility for conflict between party and party system institutionalisation, suggest criteria for 'democratic' party systems. In such systems, they maintain, there is stability in the rules and nature of interparty competition, major political actors accord legitimacy to the electoral process and to parties, political parties have 'somewhat stable roots in society', and party organisations matter.

While we cannot devote the same extended consideration to this question as we have to elaborating upon the dimensions of institutionalisation for individual parties, we suggest it may again be helpful to think both in terms of internal and external-regarding aspects, and of structural and attitudinal elements, of party system institutionalisation. This would be represented diagramatically as is shown in Figure 5.2.

The concept of a party *system* implies several relationships. First, a party system refers to the relationship between parties themselves. In a party system that is institutionalised one can expect continuity and stability among party alternatives *(internal/structural)*. Continuity in a party system means the extent to which a given set of parties are competing over several elections. In a highly institutionalised party system one can expect that the alternatives voters are facing are more or less the same across several elections. Stability, on the other hand, implies that electoral support for the individual parties is not wildly fluctuating from one election to the next.[11] Lack of continuity in party alternatives across time touches at the very base of the problem of political accountability (Moncrieffe 1998). Accountability in electoral terms depends on the ability of the electorate 'to make meaningful electoral choices predictive of policy performance, but also on the ability of voters to inflict retrospective punishment for party failure' (Hofferbert 1998:7). Second, a party system that is institutionalised is composed of parties who accept each other as

| | INTERNAL | EXTERNAL |
|---|---|---|
| STRUCTURAL | Continuity and stability | Party–state relationship |
| ATTITUDINAL | Mutual acceptance | Appreciation by electorate |

ADAPTABILITY

*Figure 5.2* Dimensions of party system institutionalisation

legitimate competitors *(internal/attitudinal)*. This is the essence of accepting the notion of political opposition.

To determine whether a party system is institutionalised, however, we need to examine not only the relationship between its individual party components, but also the relationship between the party system and the polity as such. The external/structural dimension is especially concerned with the party system's interaction with the state. Clearly a basic prerequisite for competitive party system institutionalisation is a sufficient degree of autonomy from the state. At the same time, however, while parties in democracies are 'private' associations, their activities are mainly of consequence for the political system as such, not primarily (or only) for their own members or supporters. This has led all political systems to regulate parties and their activities in various ways. Among such regulations are hurdles the parties must pass to be registered: regulation of both party finance and electoral campaigns. The more parties and their activities are supported by public measures such as public subsidies, access to media and legal protection for their existence—for instance in the constitution or in ordinary laws—the more the party system can be said to be institutionalised. Moreover, a characteristic of parties is their activity of nominating candidates for public offices. But in democracies, parties are not given a monopoly of this function. However, it is a sign of party system strength that parties are able to control the recruitment process. Thus, a more institutionalised party system is one in which the parties are able to control the access to political offices, an indicator of what Katz (1987) calls 'party government'.

Finally, for a party system to be institutionalised the electorate must express some trust in parties as institutions and the electoral process must be perceived as the only legitimate way to select political leaders and to promote policy goals *(attitudinal/external)*. Trust in parties as institutions is a problem in many of the new democracies, although we should note that declining trust is also part of the phenomenon of party decline in established democracies (Listhaug and Wiberg 1995).[12] Again we are not assuming here that these different dimensions of party system institutionalisation are always compatible, that they can be cumulated in any simple way or that there is only one ideal model of party system institutionalisation. Likewise, just as individual parties may be de-institutionalised, so may party systems. De-institutionalisation can occur when long-established parties lose control of the electoral process, for example when an outsider (Chavez) succeeded in winning the 1999 presidential elections in Venezuela. Another form of de-institutionalisation is increased fragmentation of the existing party system. India seems to illustrate such a case with a proliferation of regional parties and splits off the Congress Party (Wyatt 1999a). Party system de-institutionalisation is likely either when the party system has developed into a system of collusion rather than competition between parties, or when none of the existing parties has been able to respond satisfactorily to a severe economic, social or political crisis.

To return to our earlier question, then, would the institutionalisation of individual parties necessarily contribute to these features of an institutionalised (competitive) party system? How interdependent are they? Again our answer at this point can only be provisional. Party system institutionalisation is an outcome of a range of developments, only some of which have to do directly with the constituent parties themselves. In particular it is affected by the state's role in regulating parties and providing them with forms of support, and by the nature of the electoral system. Thus for instance, when states protect the existence of parties in the constitution or in ordinary laws, the party system has a better chance to become institutionalised. Similarly, when the state offers support for parties in the form of public subsidies and guaranteed access to the media, they are more likely to endure and to be able to communicate their policies and programme to the electorate.

None the less it appears that in many respects these requirements for party system institutionalisation, if they do not directly converge with those for party institutionalisation, are mutually supportive or at least compatible with them. Thus continuity in party alternatives and stable patterns of party support will benefit from, and create an environment conducive to, the institutionalisation of the constituent individual parties. Individual parties will benefit from an ethos of mutual acceptance among parties collectively (although party institutionalisation will not necessarily contribute to it—see later). One would again expect support for the party system—through various public measures—to assist individual party institutionalisation, unless it *either* came with conditions that significantly reduced the parties' autonomy, *or* it was distributed unevenly between parties. Certainly the case of Zimbabwe would not be an example to follow. There, when state subsidies rules were introduced, a minimum of fifteen seats was required for a party to qualify for such support. However, the only opposition party had just two seats, hence all public subsidies were directly allocated to the ruling party (Darnolf 1997:52). Public trust in political parties as a whole, finally, could only be to the benefit of individual parties.

But we can also see ways or contexts in which the imperatives of individual party institutionalisation and institutionalisation of the party system as a whole could be at odds. We shall concentrate here on two issues with particular resonance for the new democracies. The first concerns the *evenness* of party institutionalisation. When it is asserted that party institutionalisation is important for democratic consolidation, there is an unstated assumption that such institutionalisation will be relatively even across parties. But under conditions of democratic transition this is not necessarily, or even probably, the case. As we have seen, certain parties have enjoyed distinct institutional advantages, because of their close association with preceding authoritarian regimes or their access, following initial electoral victory, to the perquisites and opportunities of public office; advantages which are likely to stunt the possibilities for growth and institutionalisation of other parties. Just as a further example, in a number of partially democratised African societies, the ability of the ruling party to control much of the print media clearly detracts from the possibility of a 'level playing field' for party competition. Even in Botswana, usually identified as one of the most democratic African states, the government newspapers are distributed cost-free by the government's airline and railways while no such service is available for the independent press (Darnolf 1997; Molokomme 1991).

The extreme unevenness of party institutionalisation in many of the new democracies obviously detracts from the competitiveness of the party system. It is also likely, though not bound, to mean that significant social sectors are excluded not only from power but from any meaningful party representation. The party system as a whole will be lacking in responsiveness or adaptability, which will undermine popular trust in political parties and may affect the system's durability. In this sense party institutionalisation may be in tension both with party system institutionalisation and with the development of the kind of competitive party system that would contribute to democratic consolidation. As already noted this could mean in some circumstances that institutionalisation of the party system, or at least of a competitive party system, required the de institutionalisation of a particular party privileged under the old regime.

A second possible area of conflict which, while less widespread, can be perhaps still more drastic when it arises, is when a party is strongly institutionalised on the value-infusion dimension, but this is as a consequence of its *identification with an exclusive ethnic or cultural grouping*. This may take the form of a number of different parties each representing a distinct social group, as in the case of ethnically-based parties in many African countries. It can be argued that when only one party monopolises the electorate within each group, competition does not really exist. In this case, electoral entrenchment, which in other contexts is seen as a positive aspect of institutionalisation of the individual party, is detrimental to party competition and to the prospect of democratic governance (Sandbrook 1996). Such a danger has been acknowledged in the decision in some African countries not to register parties formed on an exclusive, particularistic basis. Thus Tanzania requires that parties are 'national' in character. In order to become registered, parties must be able to demonstrate that they have at least 200 members in at least ten regions, two of which must be the islands. Also, parties built for the explicit purpose of promoting religious, tribal or territorial interests are not permitted.[13]

Alternatively, major popular parties have appealed on the basis of a form of religious chauvinism. Examples we have seen have included India's BJP and most seriously the FIS in Algeria. According to Zoubir

> The FIS' leaders contended that they expressed the general will of the Algerian people and promised to implement the *Shari'a al Islamiya* (religious law) once in power. Which implied a total disregard for the republican constitution and foreshadowed the *divinisation* of politics, hence precluding the expression of secular views and the existence of a genuine civil society.[14]
>
> (Zoubir 1995)

Thus in a context in which class identification cannot, or can no longer, constitute a basis for party institutionalisation and especially for value-infusion, the very opportunity provided by other, more exclusive forms of cleavage, above all religion and ethnicity, could be at odds with the institutionalisation of the party system, through restricting the possibilities for cross-party competition, and undermining the ethos of mutual acceptance among parties as well as the confidence of at least a section of the public in political parties. The relationship, to reiterate, between party institutionalisation and party system institutionalisation, needs to be analysed logically and through reference to empirical cases, rather than assuming unproblematic convergence.

## Conclusion

There is a strong assumption in the democratisation literature that democratic consolidation is associated with party institutionalisation. This is a recurrent theme although there is much less explicit discussion of why the latter should assist the former. The tacit argument is perhaps that party institutionalisation helps to order, stabilise and legitimise a more democratic contest for power. A primary object of this chapter has been to call into question the imputed strong association.

Through a critical review of the existing literature on party institutionalisation we first aimed to show that the concept of party institutionalisation itself is not at all straightforward. Our own model seeks to identify the main variables of party institutionalisation and to relate them to one another in a more systematic way by means of a two-dimensional matrix. But we have also emphasised that these dimensions are not necessarily or entirely compatible.

Second, we have offered a provisional assessment of the prospects for party institutionalisation along these dimensions in the specific circumstances of democratic 'transition' in 'Third World' countries. We have considered in particular the implications—positive and negative—of such party-related factors as: the way the party has been formed, the resources at its disposal, the nature of its leadership and the role of factionalism and clientelism. We emphasised the need to avoid invidious comparison with a somewhat idealised, not to say outdated, model of party development in Western Europe, in terms, for instance, of our assumptions about mass membership, factions or clientelism. But we have none the less pointed to a number of formidable obstacles in the way of institutionalisation for perhaps the great majority of parties.

Finally we have called into question the tacit premise of much of this literature that the institutionalisation of individual parties is automatically conducive to (competitive) party system institutionalisation, and thence to democratic consolidation. As our provisional model of party system institutionalisation makes clear, the variables associated with party institutionalisation and with party system institutionalisation are not the same. Moreover, while there is convergence in many respects, there remain important areas of tension as perhaps epitomised most strikingly in the observation that the institutionalisation of a competitive party system may actually require the de-institutionalisation of a previously privileged party. The two processes—of party institutionalisation and of party system institutionalisation—need to be kept distinct both conceptually and for purposes of analysis.

## Notes

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1 See for instance contributions in Dalton, Flanagan and Beck 1984; Dalton and Kuechler 1990; Lawson and Merkl 1988; and Mair and Katz 1994.
2 Exceptions, which are discussed further later in the chapter, are Harmel and Svåsand 1989; Janda 1980: chapter 3; Levitsky 1998.
3 We recognise that some political commentators, including adherents of the BJP, might disagree with this view. However, the experience of the BJP Government, from March 1998 to April 1999, seems to us to offer further confirmation.
4 However he is not referring to parties as such, nor does he develop this tantalising perception much further.
5 For a critical discussion of the concept of a 'Third World', see, for instance, the Introduction to Randall and Theobald 1998.
6 This goes right back to Duverger's (1954) thesis of organisational 'contagion' from the left.
7 The classic case was the 1989 presidential victory, in Brazil, of Collor de Mello, leader of the newly formed and obscure National Reconstruction Party. See, for instance, De Lima 1993.
8 The original formulation of this argument is in Riggs 1963.
9 For a fuller discussion of the relationship between political parties and social cleavages in the 'Third World' see Randall 2001.
10 Zoubir may however exaggerate the 'mass' character of the FIS.

11 The combination of the two aspects can be seen as parallel to Rokkan and Lipset's notion of 'freezing of the party system'. See Rokkan and Lipset, 'Introduction', in Rokkan and Lipset 1967.

12 See, for instance, on the lack of trust in parties in the Baltic states: Steen 1996.

13 Republic of Tanzania: The Political Parties Act, no. 5 1992 section 9, section 10.

14 Zoubir's assertion of the anti-democratic character of the FIS would not, however, be universally endorsed.

# 6

# External actors in processes of democratic consolidation

## The European Union and Malawi

*Armin K.Nolting*

### Introduction

As early as 1980 an article by Theodor Hanf challenged the established philosophies of Western development assistance—hitherto conducted either technocratically or in the spirit of anti-communism—with the idea of a democracy-oriented 'Third World' policy. With the demise of Soviet communism and the waning necessity to contain its international influence, if necessary by supporting so-called friendly tyrants (Barkan 1997:371), the 1990s commenced as a hopeful decade for 'Third World' democratisation and its support from abroad (Hanisch 1997:29).

At the same time the European Community (EC), later also as the European Union (EU), became an increasingly powerful and independent actor in international relations. This development can be observed in the successive steps of enlargement and deepening, finding its expression first in the Maastricht Treaty on European Union, later the Treaty of Amsterdam. The widening as much as the deepening of the Union has to be seen as an ongoing process. New members are waiting on the sidelines and a new treaty is expected to be signed towards the end of the French presidency in the second half of 2000. These two developments, the global changes and ongoing European integration, were vital for the formulation of a policy in favour of human rights and democratisation, as put forward in a Resolution of the European Council in 1991 and confirmed by political rhetoric and activity throughout the 1990s.

Since this chapter is the only one in this volume to deal explicitly with the international dimension of democratic consolidation, the issue will be approached in a general manner before dealing with the present democratisation policy of the EU towards Malawi. It starts with a brief discussion of external factors in processes of political liberalisation, democratisation and democratic consolidation as identified and assessed by analysts of regime changes. There follow a portrait of the EU's external policies and an overview of how those policies can be applied in support of democratic change, especially in 'Third World' countries. The focus will then move to the EU's promotion of democracy in Malawi, with special reference to positive measures that were implemented during 1998–2000.

Malawi has been chosen as the case study for three reasons. First, because it is one of the poorest countries in the world, general problems of democratic consolidation in 'Third World' countries can well be illustrated by reference to it. Second, Malawi's democratic transition was strongly affected by the change of paradigm in development politics and significantly influenced by external factors. Third, Malawi is a country in which the EU supports a number of measures in favour of democracy and the protection of human rights, and has done so since the early days of its democratic transition.[1]

This chapter also aims to discuss general issues of the international dimension of democratisation with special reference to 'Third World' countries, as well as emphasising idiosyncrasies of the EU as an actor in this field and its specific problems. Intellectually, the issue under observation is at the juncture between on the one hand international relations, and on the other, analysis of democratisation processes—usually considered to belong to the realm of comparative politics. However, because the format and range of this volume makes a number of restrictions necessary, the copious references will enable the more interested reader to focus on specific questions which I can only allude to in passing in the text.

The chapter has two methodological aspects. First, relevant documents and reports on the promotion of democracy were scrutinised. Second, I conducted a significant number of interviews with actors in the field of democratisation, mainly in the context of EU-funded activities in Malawi but also at the European Commission in Brussels.

I argue that the EU is unique: a combination of a supranational organisation, on the one hand, and an international actor, on the other, and ideally suited to promote democracy in the 'Third World'. The pooled experience of member countries can lead to a high level of expertise, and the procedures of coordination and cooperation that are part and parcel of EU politics should enable it to set an example for the improvement of coordination practices among donor countries. This coordination is of crucial importance for the success of external influences in promoting democratisation (Barkan 1997: 393; Diamond 1997:357). Another potential advantage of the EU over national actors and therefore also over its individual member countries can be noted: while most influential European nations bear the stigma not only of former colonial powers but also of having later supported authoritarian governing systems, the EU, a fairly young and historically 'innocent' political body, might be granted more credibility in the eyes of opposition movements and incumbent rulers of countries in transition.[2] To retain this perception, however, it would be essential to create a genuinely and visibly European approach in the field of democratisation policy and avoid the impression that it is a mere re-labelling of national policies.

## The external dimension of democratic transition and consolidation

I do not consider it necessary to try to define here what 'democracy' is, because different people in different parts of the world might well have variable central concerns when striving for more democracy in their societies. Any international involvement in democratisation processes should therefore be based on a flexible definition of minimal standards that leaves room for historical and cultural peculiarities of the country in question. Consequently the question at hand must not be: 'what democratic ideal does the EU follow and is this the right one?' but rather: 'what is done by the EU and its partners to promote democracy and how do they do it?'

Contending theoretical approaches trying to bring order into the study of democratic transitions have introduced several dichotomies into the field. For example, structural and systemic causes of democratisation can be contrasted with actor-centred approaches (Merkel 1994:321ff.; Potter 1997:10ff.), while economic and political explanations also vie for prominence (Bratton and van de Walle 1997: 33ff.; Lipset 1960:29ff.). In addition, there is a clear distinction between domestic and international dimensions of democratisation processes discernible in the literature (Bratton and van de Walle 1997:27ff.; Di Palma 1990:14, 183ff.), with virtually all empirical evidence suggesting that domestic structures and actors are of primary importance in processes of liberalisation, democratisation and democratic consolidation. While this applies to 'Third World' countries as well, it should be noted that the so-called international community was and is able to exert more influence than in less economically dependent regions and countries (S.Schmidt 1994:240).

### *Indirect effects, contagion and diffusion*

The early 1990s saw the unprecedented collapse of numerous dictatorial and pseudo-democratic regimes. This happened first in Central and Eastern Europe but had parallels in other parts of the world, notably sub-Saharan Africa. The temporal proximity of those processes led to the assumption that effects of contagion must be at work.[3] The most frequently quoted example for an event with pro-democratisation effects was the execution of Romania's dictator, Nicolae Ceaucescu, with footage of the event widely considered to have had a massive impact way beyond Europe. Incumbents learned that not even the most totalitarian ruler enjoyed complete security and that losing one's office might be better than losing one's life. For movements demanding more public participation and political competition the political developments in Romania were a sign of hope, showing them that nothing was impossible.[4]

However, the relationships between political processes in different countries are actually very complex. One might assume that, since the global exchange of information is growing constantly, events in one country would increasingly influence developments in others. Whitehead elaborates on the hypothesis of 'contagion through proximity' (Whitehead 1996a:5ff.), but does not conceal the limitations this approach has, for explaining both why contagion takes place where it does, and why it fails to proliferate in other cases. Since the whole idea of geographical space and its significance for political processes needs to be reassessed in the face of globalisation and the spread of modern means of communication, proximity itself becomes a concept difficult to define. Hence one should expect 'demonstration effects' that enable democracy to travel and spread from one country to the other to be an increasingly important if somewhat hard to pin down phenomenon (Di Palma 1990:185).

## *International promotion of democracy*

In contrast to the effects mentioned above—where democracy seems to spread by more or less obscure mechanisms—we now turn to political measures, organisations and institutions deliberately and consciously aiming to encourage or foster democratic change. First, in order to relate to an established analytic distinction I turn to the issue of political conditionality. Second, I examine so-called positive measures applied to promote democracy.

### *Political conditionality*

Generally speaking, conditionality describes a policy that demands economic or political changes in a country in order to start or continue cooperation. It is worth noting that principles of political conditionality were introduced into the development assistance of the Netherlands as early as 1979 (Sørensen 1993:2), and incorporated by Canada and Scandinavian countries in the 1980s. Large-scale conditionality in development cooperation was launched in the economic realm when the structural adjustment programmes of the international financial institutions (IFIs) linked financial support to 'Third World' governments with demands to liberalise the economy, conduct a sound fiscal policy and encourage free enterprise (Gibbon 1993:38). Other actors not only adopted this approach but also applied conditionality to their requests for democratisation and respect for human rights.[5] In response to these policies the World Bank proclaimed that 'good governance' was a prerequisite for development (Gibbon 1993:53). However, as a means to spread liberal democracy to the 'Third World', political conditionality has often been treated with scepticism or seen largely in terms of its potential or actual risks and pitfalls (Frisch 1996:65; Sørensen 1993:5). As S.Schmidt points out, it would be necessary to tailor the approaches of conditionality to the political situation of individual countries in order to optimise its impact (S.Schmidt 1997: 327). However, even the earlier austerity programmes of the IFIs shook many authoritarian systems, as they now lacked resources to buy acquiescence from key actors in state and society. Hence these programmes can be seen as paving the way for subsequent liberalisation movements, which should not obscure the fact that the very same programmes often inflicted much suffering on the poor in such countries.

### *Positive measures*

Positive measures in support of democracy and human rights can be seen as a more recent and increasingly fashionable approach to support democratisation in less-developed countries. They can, just like restrictive measures, be applied to a nondemocratic setting, for example when they strengthen civil society organisations that strive for a more open society and state. Unlike negative measures, however, these activities can be upheld throughout the democratic transition and the subsequent consolidation of the political system. Thus, they can, as with positive conditionality, be used to acknowledge countries that have significantly moved down the road of liberalisation and democratisation and are now considered deserving of preferential treatment.

Regarding positive measures in favour of democracy, much attention has recently been given to the field of election monitoring, as Elklit describes in his chapter in this book. This can be explained by the importance attributed to founding elections by actors of democracy promotion (Lingnau 1996:798; W. Robinson 1996:109). Yet there are also other reasons to explain willingness to get involved in election monitoring. The overall expenses of election monitoring are relatively predictable and can be disbursed in a fairly short time, thereby raising the preparedness of political leaders to allocate resources in this area. This readiness is furthered by the visual quality of elections, making it easy to justify the allocation of funds. The pictures of election monitors and people queuing at the polls suggest tangible democratic progress even to less informed taxpayers/voters in the North. Sometimes, as Elklit points out, the focus on founding elections is criticised because they are only one, albeit essential, element of democratisation. And, it should be noted, many analysts and practitioners consider the most common form of election observation to be too narrow and short-sighted (Hanf *et al.* 1995; Mujaju 1997:9). In sum, short-term election observation is rarely able to establish a realistic picture of the quality, that is, democraticness, of an election.

Apart from the observation of elections, there are other positive measures that can take on many different forms, as we shall see later when focusing on the EU's policies. Generally speaking, positive measures identify dimensions of a political and social system where support for structures and actors (in the broadest sense of the word) appears to be conducive to the development of democratic institutions and behaviour.[6] Actors in the realm of positive measures include national governments as well as inter- or supergovernmental organisations. Since no economic and diplomatic pressure is necessary to promote democracy by means of positive measures, non-state actors, especially non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are also active.[7] NGOs working in the field of development assistance and/or democratisation and human rights often establish networks that bring together organisations from the North and organisations from Southern recipient countries.

They also function as implementation agencies for government bodies—such as ministries—that provide a high proportion of the funds. NGOs also amass information and expertise essential for drafting further programmes and strategies. Other than with conditionality, positive measures can only be implemented in concert with nationals of the country in transition or consolidation, as noted in the examples provided later.

### *A justification of the international promotion of democracy*

Before moving on to the EU and its policies, we should pause briefly to consider objections to democratisation policy regularly put forward since Western democracies started their attempts to nurture democratic developments abroad. When a superpower like the US or regional organisations with a prominent position in the international system promote liberalisation or democratisation, they may find themselves at odds with the principle of non-interference that has been the foundation of international relations for centuries. When foreign support goes to opposition groups or the free media, it may be seen, especially in closed authoritarian systems, as an unwelcome, one-sided penetration of another sovereign state. Positive measures, in these cases mostly conducted or financed by Northern quasi-governmental organisations or NGOs, may provoke resentment and suspicion of neo-colonialism, particularly in countries that claim to be part of a culture that is incompatible with principles of Western democracy. Others contend, however, that although the principle of non-intervention is still one of the cornerstones of international order, there are arguments in favour of international activity to foster democratisation world-wide that supersede these objections.

The question whether human rights are universal principles or not is vital in general, yet not essential for the issue at hand. No external actor can promote democratisation in other countries without building on an already expressed indigenous demand. When certain parts of a population demand civil liberties and the right to have a say in political affairs but are suppressed by their rulers, it is the people themselves that are supported, not an abstract idea which is imposed upon another culture. In this respect it should be noted that domestic requests for democracy were—and are—widespread in many African societies (S. Schmidt 1997: 302; Wiseman 1997:288).[8]

Simultaneously, one has to consider who precisely objects to the promotion of democracy by Western donors. It is not the 'Third World' as a whole, or for instance the people of Kenya or Zimbabwe, that reject Western involvement in processes of liberalisation as neo-colonialism. Resistance arises mainly from among the authoritarian leaders, that is, the people in danger of being removed from office by a free and fair election. It is always the ruling culture articulating itself in arguments about the differences in political culture and allegations that African culture and democracy would never fit together (Erdmann 1996:61). According to a member of the European Commission's administration, left-wing parties in the European Parliament—in defence of the cultural independence of 'Third World' societies—have rejected Western or Northern interference as cultural colonialism and thereby sometimes even entered into informal coalitions with incumbent dictators. In addition, there are voices demanding that development cooperation should remain apolitical. However, what is termed apolitical here in fact means not challenging the status quo in authoritarian countries but actually strengthening it by giving international legitimacy to incumbent leaders, irrespective of their political or democratic qualities (Hanf 1980:12). From this it follows that there is no such thing as apolitical development cooperation.[9]

Another criticism of the international promotion of democracy castigates the double standards of Western state policies. These are said to freely pressurise the dictatorships of small, poor countries, while ignoring—if not condoning—large-scale human rights abuses in countries like China or, until recently, Nigeria where major economic interests are at stake. While this criticism is perfectly understandable from an idealistic and moralistic point of view, it should be pointed out that politicians have to focus on the feasible and have to accept the well-established fact that the internal affairs of other countries can only be influenced under specific circumstances. At the same time the difficulties of influencing an economic and political giant like China should not be a justification to let other governments, which could possibly be pressurised to improve their human rights situation, also suppress their citizens. If in order to overcome these 'double standards' a stricter stance towards economic heavyweights is demanded, few arguments can be raised against this on the grounds of morality—even if it might appear somewhat naïve.

## The EU as an international promoter of democracy

I will start this section with a brief introduction on the international profile of the EU. Without attempting to draw a complete picture, the focus will be on those dimensions of Europe's international role that are vital for its endeavours to promote democracy. It will also highlight relevant areas of focus for the Malawi case study.

### *The genesis of a global player*

In the bipolar world of the 1950s and 1960s, the European Community became a project of regional economic integration that was unprecedented and is still unparalleled. For decades, however, the organisation abstained from questions of high politics. Attempts to establish a political union or an institutionalisation of the sporadic consultations of the foreign ministers were abortive (Nuttall 1992:40). As much as its integration was for a long time considered to be a purely economic exercise, its external affairs were limited to questions of tariffs and trade.

Nevertheless the economic resurrection of Western Europe, successive steps of enlargement, the introduction of first European Political Cooperation (EPC), then Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), all led to the increasing global importance of the Community/Union. A major step towards the politicalisation of its external role was prompted by the easing off of the global confrontation between the US and the Soviet Union from the mid-1980s onwards. Thereby, space was created for the European countries to act more independently from the US. Obviously this meant a new definition of Europe's role in the world, and it can be argued that the EU was, and is, struggling to live up to its own claims and the expectations it raises in the international system (Hill 1993:313).

### *External policies and their relevance for the promotion of democracy*

In the case of a political entity such as the EU—with around 370 million citizens and a high share in world trade—it is easy to see that any of its political actions would have effects beyond its external borders. Policy fields with a more explicit significance for the support of democratisation and democratic consolidation worldwide are: the external trade policy, CFSP and development policy.

#### *External trade policy*

Trade policy (covered by the articles 131–4 of the EC Treaty), it appears, is less related to matters of regime transition as it is mainly concerned with technical details of quotas for agricultural products or import tariffs. It has nevertheless a double significance for the issue of the international promotion of democracy that should not remain unmentioned. First, it is a resource the Community or Union can draw from when negotiating agreements (Article 310 of the EC Treaty) attached to strings of political conditionality. Sanctions, in the few cases in which they have been applied, mostly rested on the renunciation of trade relations as can be seen in the well-analysed case of sanctions against South Africa in the 1980s (Holland 1988). When trade links are asymmetrically in favour of the EU, that is, the target country is more dependent on trade with the EU than vice versa—which is the case with practically all 'Third World' countries—the chances to enforce acceptance of a democratic system are still higher. Second, the trade policy of an important trading partner can have a strong impact on a country's macroeconomic situation. For the democratic consolidation of a new democracy, the economic situation can be vital, since the new regime, although democratically elected, has to perform successfully enough to create output legitimacy in the eyes of the population. Weak economic performance is a heavy burden on a new democracy, especially where social forces that have been forced into opposition by elections are waiting for an excuse to seize power again. The external economic policy of the EU can therefore be an important factor in the stabilisation of democracy in countries with strong trading links to it.[10]

### *Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)*

In 1970, the supranational structure of the EC, expressing its international interests mainly by external trade policy and to a smaller degree development policy, was complemented by an intergovernmental set of procedures and institutions to deal more efficiently with questions of foreign policy. This institutional development coincided with increasing activity in the diplomatic sphere, closely related to the accession of the UK in 1973 which introduced diplomatic experience formerly unknown to EC organs (Hill 1996:77).

In the 1980s the member countries began taking European foreign policy more seriously than before. Members' preparedness to exchange information and coordinate foreign policy measures and declarations increased continually throughout this period. With the Single European Act, signed in 1986, this 'assembled' foreign policy (Rummel 1982) was legally codified, and the way was paved for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the Treaty of European Union, signed in Maastricht in 1992. The institutional adaptations that the Amsterdam Treaty brought marked a further if modest step towards a more Europeanised external policy.

For the CFSP, Article 11 of the Treaty of European Union sets out the objective to develop and strengthen democracy and the rule of law as well as respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. With respect to less developed countries, the principles of CFSP are more or less replicated in Article 177(2) of the EC Treaty, demanding that development cooperation of the Community should nurture democratic developments.

### *Development policy*

Since the mid-1970s the EC's relations with a great number of less-developed countries have rested on an elaborate contractual framework. The Lomé Agreement between the European Community and (today more than seventy) countries from Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP-countries) was concluded after the UK's accession to the EC and was based on the older Yaoundé Agreement, which attached former French colonies to the Community. With Lomé I, not only the geographical scope widened: the fact that the Community invited countries to the negotiations that had never belonged to the colonial sphere of any of its member countries (Frisch 1996:61), can be understood as expressing the evolution of a global approach to North-South cooperation instead of simply prolonging established ties from colonial times.

Generally speaking the development policy of the EC particularly in the Lomé scheme had, before the end of the 1980s, been conducted without explicit reference to political affairs, and until Lomé III, no reference to human rights was made in the treaties at all (Frisch 1996:62). The political pressure of the European Parliament and the Dutch government to include demands for democracy and human rights was not backed by other member states and could therefore be easily rejected by the

ACP states which in all but a few cases comprised authoritarian systems (Hartmann 1995:425). An information brochure on cooperation between the EC and Southern Africa put together by the Commission illustrates this low profile with respect to political freedoms (Kommission der Europäischen Gemeinschaften 1981). While there is a clear condemnation of apartheid policies in the Republic of South Africa, the human rights situation in the front-line states went unnoticed or was at least not referred to.

While Lomé III merely mentioned human rights in its preamble, the fourth convention, which was put into force in 1990, was more explicit and, with Article 5, introduced a distinct human rights article (Bretherton and Vogler 1999:120). This explicit commitment to human rights and the political participation of individuals was again highlighted in the 1995 revision of the convention. Here not only was Article 5 altered significantly, specifying 'democratic principles' as embodying the rule of law and good governance; in addition, the entirely new Article 366a set out a detailed procedure for cases in which parties of the convention fail to live up to the obligations arising from Article 5. A Communication of the Commission to the Council and the EP elaborates the principles of this article and emphasises that these detailed requests for democratic participation and the protection of civil liberties are aimed at the ACP states, and shall guide the discussions on future ACP-EC relations (Europäische Kommission 1998). The measures under the Lomé regime are financed by the European Development Fund (EDF) provided by member country contributions, and are agreed upon between the ACP-country and the European Commission which receives its negotiation mandate from the member countries (Bretherton and Vogler 1999:126).

In addition to the EDF, the budget of the European Commission which is controlled by the European Parliament provides funds for development policy in general, and the promotion of democracy in particular. Today fourteen budget lines of the European Commission provide funds for positive measures fostering democratisation and human rights, three of which apply explicitly to the countries of sub-Saharan Africa (budget items B7–7020, B7–7021, B7–7100). Since resources of the European Development Fund and schemes of co-financing with other actors of democratisation policy complement these lines of the Commission budget, it is not easy to give quantitative information on the overall expenses in favour of democratisation in Southern Africa. The figures available on measures funded by the EU in ACP-states between 1992 and 1997 suggest a focus on the Southern African region as it received 48 per cent of the funds, which results in an absolute figure of 120 million ECU (Mosca 1998:36).

Positive measures in favour of democratisation and human rights exist in a variety of ways. Here the typology established by the European Commission for its budget lines for the promotion of democracy in sub-Saharan Africa is expanded, put forward by a Commission paper dating from December 1998 (European Commission DG VIII 1998). The main divide in the field of positive measures lies between two broad areas of activity: one being the government and state institutions, the other the realm of civil society. The operations concerning the exercise of government are in themselves split up into subcategories. The first is support for democratic consultation processes, another the rule of law, and a third good governance. This last subcategory includes administrative and participatory decentralisation and the fight against corruption. It goes without saying that the differences between these fields of activity are sometimes rather a matter of definition than of substance. In fact, cross-cutting measures are crucial to produce synergetic effects for the democratisation of state and society.

In accordance with the general remarks made earlier, European support for governmental institutions in the process of democratisation focuses strongly on elections and related matters, be it in Southern Africa or in other Third World' regions (Heinz, Lingnau and Waller 1995: app. 2, table 5; Mosca 1998:36). A project example unrelated to electoral affairs would be the support for the penal reform in Zimbabwe that was implemented in 1994 (European Commission 1996: annex 3:2).

An entirely different field of operation is the support for civil society. Here individuals, grassroots movements and other social actors are supported directly, bypassing state institutions. In authoritarian systems or throughout the process of liberalisation this is the only involvement that does not entail the risk to stabilise undemocratic structures in the state. After the transition to a nascent democracy, that is, after the founding elections, support for actors and structures in civil society is still crucial to prevent a mere exchange of elites without substantial changes in the political and social life.

The latest framework of DG VIII (the Directorate General for Development, since 1999 abbreviated as DG DEV) identifies the following four subcategories within its operations to strengthen civil society: support for human rights awareness and conflict prevention, protection and support of so-called vulnerable groups, the provision of legal assistance and training, and the fostering of pluralist and responsible media and local associations (European Commission DG VIII 1998).

### *The significance of the EU in democratisation processes*

Today the earliest contributions of the EC to processes of democratic consolidation are taken for granted; yet they deserve being mentioned in this context. From their outset the European institutions must be seen as a major asset for the rather smooth and obviously sustainable shift to liberal democracy in Germany and Italy (Whitehead 1996a:18). In the 1970s, the economic gravity and political appeal of the EC also helped to stabilise democratic change in Greece, Portugal and Spain, where authoritarian systems collapsed in close succession (Linz and Stepan 1996: 113; Pridham 1991b:19).

With respect to the democratisation processes in South and Central America, the European Union is clearly less significant than the United States which strongly interfered with the politics of the countries in its 'southern backyard', yet not always in support of civil liberties and participation (W.Robinson 1996: 73). None the less, the EU still runs a number of programmes to assist Latin American countries with the stabilisation of democratic procedures in societies that often suffer from violent conflicts (European Commission, Directorate General 1B).

With the outset of what is sometimes called the fourth wave of democratisation (M.G.Schmidt 1995:312) in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the EU was and remains confronted with a major challenge in the promotion of democracy (Pinder 1994). In these cases the collapse of the totalitarian regimes made necessary a radical transformation of political, economic and social structures that is supported by the EU's Phare programme (European Commission DG 1A 1997a). The Tacis programme aimed at the New Independent States and Mongolia also contains measures to support the establishment of participatory democracy (European Commission DG 1B 1997b).

Massive funds are required to assist in the complicated transformation processes of the young democracies, some of which are aiming to join the Union early in the current decade. At the same time, the hope that the demise of the Soviet Union might result in a peace bonus in the budgets that could be invested in development cooperation did not materialise. As a result funds are sometimes considered to be missing in development budgets for other regions, particularly sub-Saharan Africa. With the Middle East rating higher on the agenda of Europe's external policy than sub-Saharan Africa as well (Frisch 1996:70), the suspicion has been expressed repeatedly that Europe is losing interest in the developments in Africa. However, as these developments seem bound to reduce the overall financial commitment for development matters, competition among countries in the 'Third World' for European funds is growing. Hence circumstances could entail the application of a more stringent and effective conditionality, positive and negative. Thus a strong impact in favour of democracy seems possible despite a reduction of resources.

The 1990s witnessed an increasing awareness of human rights issues and the people's demands to have more say in their social and political affairs, be it in Malawi or elsewhere. This popular demand had to be responded to by political elites in authoritarian and transforming countries, as well as by external actors in the form of the EU who committed themselves to the support of these claims. The democratisation policy towards Malawi will be dealt with according to the established analytical distinction between democratic transition and democratic consolidation, and illustrates many of the issues introduced theoretically in the earlier sections as practical realities in their historical and political context. In line with the general topic of this volume, the EU's promotion of democratic consolidation will, however, be looked at more closely.

## The EU's promotion of democratisation in Malawi

After independence in 1964, Malawi developed into a dictatorship under the rigid rule of Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda, still sometimes referred to as the *ngwazi,* the 'conqueror' who brought freedom to the people of Malawi (Wiseman 1998b). Banda governed by combination of a personalistic style of government (not unusual for sub-Saharan Africa), his Malawi Congress Party (MCP) as the only political organisation, the concentration of economic resources and a remarkable cruelty towards real or alleged opponents to the system. It was one of the countries that was least expected to liberalise let alone democratise, but when in the early 1990s the much quoted wind of change swept over Africa, things started to fall apart in Malawi as well.

In the complex succession of events that led to multi-party elections in Malawi, the pastoral letter of the Catholic bishops of Malawi, issued on 8 March 1992, is of prime importance (Posner 1995:136). The significance of this letter, which contained an explicit condemnation of the regime's human rights record and demanded democratic reform, cannot be overrated in a deeply religious society where the church congregation was among the few social networks that reached out to the mainly rural population, and was not entirely infiltrated by the dictator's system of control (Dzimbiri 1998:90). The letter drew upon the pre-existing desire for change, mainly for reasons of economic hardship, and catalysed this desire into open resistance. In the same month, a EU demarche to Malawi initiated by the UK tried to put diplomatic pressure on the Banda regime (Meinhardt 1997:407; Venter 1995:160). At the same time the first European countries, some of which were EU-members, reduced their aid commitments and at a donor meeting in May 1992 all non-humanitarian aid was frozen, although projects already in implementation were continued (Posner 1995:138; Venter 1995:161). Here we find a good example of the proposition put forward earlier, that democratisation processes cannot and do not occur by international pressure alone, but only in conjunction with domestic popular demand.

After the pastoral letter a massive mobilisation of social forces took place. The cities of Malawi, particularly the economic capital Blantyre, saw street riots unseen since independence (Kaspin 1995:595; Posner 1995:138). Simultaneously, opposition groups gained hope and stepped up their activities. Even the smallest space offered by the slowly liberalising regime was now filled by mushrooming independent newspapers and civil society organisations (Minnis 1998). In October 1992, Banda called a referendum to settle the question of whether the MCP should remain the only political party, or whether a multi-party system should be introduced. The scheduling of the referendum and the elections that were to follow prompted a period of intense international involvement. The European Union financed a number of measures, all of which were in some way related to the two polls. Its support for independent journalism made reference to the referendum and the election, too. Many different projects in the field of election monitoring and voter education were implemented by non-governmental organisations, most of which were based in Europe, and the EU also contributed to the UNDP-coordinated international observer group.

On 14 June 1993 about two-thirds of the Malawians who cast their votes in the referendum endorsed the change to a pluralistic political system, and parliamentary as well as presidential elections were scheduled for 17 May 1994. The two main opposition parties AFORD and UDF, who strove together for the democratisation itself, partly turned on each other and split the opposition vote. However, the UDF, mainly because of its dominance in the highly populated Southern Region, was able to secure a majority, if only a qualified one, in the parliamentary poll; this outcome prompting a confusing succession of alliances and coalitions in the aftermath of the elections.[11] The presidential race was won by the businessman Bakili Muluzi (UDF), the incumbent Banda came second and the union leader Chakufwa Chihana (AFORD), who had been in the forefront of the opposition for a long time, finished third with a mere 18.3 per cent of the vote.

### The EU's promotion of democratic consolidation in Malawi

The European involvement appears to have been of a high significance in Malawi's democratic transition; a point of view repeatedly expressed by those I interviewed. However, while Malawi's transition was complete after the first multi-party elections which saw power being handed over to a former opposition party, its consolidation is still underway.[12]

It was touched upon earlier when dealing with the promotion of democracy in general terms, that throughout the period of consolidation, outside support is still welcome if not necessary, that is, if one wants to protect what has already been achieved. But the consolidation situation poses new demands as well as opportunities for external promoters of democratic rule. As stated earlier, throughout the democratic consolidation, conditionality only makes sense in its positive form, as does the implementation of positive measures in cooperation with civil society as well as state bodies. With a legitimate democratic government in place, there is no need any more to circumvent state institutions and merely support non-state actors. In the Malawian case, however, the development of civil society organisations had difficulties in keeping pace with the dramatic developments. This made—and makes—it necessary to provide them with assistance in order to make obsolete the strong involvement of Northern NGOs at the time of the referendum and the first elections.

Immediately after the founding elections of the democratic Malawi, the bargaining for alliances began (Dzimbiri 1998). Apart from party-political issues, the installation of new governmental bodies that were introduced by the new constitution also had to be looked after (Banda 1998:322f.). After the second elections in 1999, in which the UDF was able to sustain its lead, violence, particularly against Muslims and Muslim facilities in the Northern region, broke out.[13] Worrying as it was, it was only a short interlude. Generally speaking the politicians as well as the population broadly acted within the limits of democratic rules—which is not to say that Malawi is (yet) a consolidated democracy.

In 1999 and 2000 the following positive measures of the EU supporting democracy and human rights were in operation. Two large-scale programmes were funded through the European Development Fund (EDF). One called the *National Initiative for Civic Education* (NICE), aimed at setting up and operating a network of civic education offices in all districts. It was launched with a focus on the upcoming 1999 elections and is now trying to broaden its scope into fields only indirectly related to democratic development such as HIV-AIDS or food security. The other EDF-funded programme looks after the rule of law and the improvement of justice in Malawi. A decisive feature of both EDF projects was that they were agreed upon via negotiations between the European Commission and the recipient country. Accordingly the presence of state representatives in the obligatory steering committees of those programmes is not only necessary but also very pronounced. In the case of NICE, with the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) as the organisation focusing on the implementation of the programme, at least one representative of civil society is included in the decision-making body of the programme, although it is not designated so according to the financing agreement.[14] The steering committee of the rule of law programme does not feature non-state actors at all.[15] Many civil society organisations object to this seeming preference for state institutions in the EU's promotion of democratic consolidation in Malawi.

Support for democracy and human rights from the Commission's budget lines is much more flexible, and can be provided without explicit acceptance by the Malawian government and the governments of the EU member states. The European Commission has for a long time supported the Malawi Institute of Journalism. The institute was set up in 1997 to improve the quality of journalism that, according to journalists themselves, still is too often a partisan tool instead of a balanced source of information. At the moment, the 'Civics for Malawi Schools' programme is the only programme not run by a domestic organisation. The London-based Malawi Education and Water Foundation (UK) was set up as a network of Malawian exiles and took up work before the transition to multi-party politics. While the London office takes care of administrative matters, the programme work as such, that is, the compilation of a book for human rights education to be used in Malawian schools, is done in close collaboration with the Malawi Institute of Education in Domasi in Malawi's Southern Region. In addition to the NICE-programme mentioned earlier, another area of cooperation was established with PAC: the EU provided funds for its training of monitors for the 1999 elections. Among these budget line projects there is also one that gives support to a state institution, the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC): a contribution to the voter registration exercise in the run-up to the 1999 elections.

It is quite obvious that election-related programmes are still dominant. In terms of sustainability a distinction needs to be drawn, however, between the funding of a short-term registration exercise and the establishment of a network of civic education facilities that can be utilised long after the election date for a variety of purposes. With respect to effectiveness, most respondents expressed their satisfaction with the international involvement, particularly that of the EU.[16] Nevertheless there has been harsh criticism as well. The main point of concern raised by the interviewees in Malawi who collaborate with the EU is the long delays in the processing of proposals and payments. Representatives of civil society organisations particularly stressed this aspect since their financial situation hardly enabled them to wait for the disbursement of funds. State institutions, despite having experienced the same difficulties, find it easier to juggle funds around until Brussels delivers.

From the point of view of members of the European Commission, however, these delays are partly owing to the bad quality of the proposals submitted.

Contrary to the previous assumptions, the funding available for democratisers does not seem to be problematic. In Malawi the EU is often seen as an organisation that gives out large sums of money as long as one complies with its administrative requirements. It was also repeatedly stressed that it is all but impossible to create a society of democrats when basic needs of the population are not met. The promotion of democracy, for instance by civic education, should therefore be augmented by a sustained effort to fight the causes of poverty, ill-health (especially HIV-AIDS) and illiteracy.

## Conclusion

After a close look has been taken at the external dimension of democratisation processes with a focus on the European Union's support for democratisation and democratic consolidation in Malawi, a number of insights can be suggested.

First, it has become obvious that the European Union is an exceptional actor in international relations and the international promotion of democracy. Its special institutional structure and supranational nature have a number of consequences when working towards the spread of democratic rule in Southern Africa or in other 'Third World' regions. Unfortunately, however, the expected synergetic effects of the pooled experience of member countries and the assumed European culture of cooperation did not seem to materialise. Major EU policy decisions were the result of a bargaining process which momentarily involves fifteen member states that each had their own vested national interests, and conducted their own development policy and promotion of democracy alongside that of the EU (Reithinger 1995: 387). Closer cooperation and more consultation among organs of the EU and its member states, and ideally throughout the whole donor community, would avoid redundant programmes and policies and facilitate the creation of synergetic effects. Lately, a re-nationalisation of development policy can be observed in contemporary European politics as well as on the part of the Malawian partners, some of which stated that they would prefer to work with member countries individually if those offered comparable support.

Second, the deplored slowness in dealing with project proposals can be attributed to a lack of manpower in the Commission. As pointed out by a former desk officer for a southern African country, a disproportion between funds and manpower has developed in DG VIII over the last few years. The European Parliament, traditionally a strong supporter of 'Third World' issues and human rights, uses its budget power to earmark as much money as possible for democratisation issues. The Commission then has to deal with a flood of project applications without being able properly to assess the quality of the proposals and select accordingly.

Third, the establishment of the common service for external relations (SCR), which was meant to facilitate project processing, dealt an additional blow to programmes in this field. In the SCR, desk officers were asked to give preferential attention to larger projects to ensure a more satisfying discharge of funds. For political projects, which in financial terms would never likely come close to those in infrastructure or agriculture, this practice resulted in further delays. Accordingly, the Commission staff was inclined to ask partner organisations to increase the financial demands in order to receive a better handling throughout the implementation phase.[17] Obviously there is still much technocratic thinking in development cooperation, and one can doubt if this is of particular help to the promotion of democracy.

If one considers Malawi, as most analysts do, to be a successful example of democratic change, it is vital not to end this chapter without trying to identify the external contribution to this success, ideally in order to improve the performance of external actors elsewhere. It appears that a combination of political conditionality and (subsequent) positive measures is the most promising strategy to nurture democracy in the 'Third World'. Malawi provides an example for the close interplay of both strategies. The well coordinated renunciation of financial assistance for the economically dependent country put pressure on Banda to call the referendum. In retrospect, this emphasised the importance of unified action on the donor side. The successful coordination was, of course, related to Malawi's economic marginality, as no donor country would have been able to secure great gains by sneaking out of the consensus. The immediate supportive involvement in the organisation of the referendum and the national elections made use of an evolving democratic momentum and protected the fragile process of democratisation.

Finally, there are still tricky tasks to fulfil for domestic as much as external democrats and promoters of democracy. Difficulties do not only evolve from the devastating socio-economic situation and its potential to derail the consolidation of democracy in Malawi. The regional pattern of party politics must also be addressed in order to avoid it developing into a system of clientelistic allegiances, a point made by Randall and Svåsand in their chapter. This would be a truly national effort that at least over the medium term would have to depend on international support.

## Notes

1 An overview of some of the earlier measures not dealt with in this chapter is given in Heinz, Lingnau and Waller 1995.

2 A very recent example demonstrating the advantages of a European approach can be seen in the attitudes of the president of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, who in June 2000 was prepared to admit EU monitors into the country in order to observe the parliamentary election, but refused to accept British citizens after an ongoing squabble between Mugabe and members of PM Blair's Cabinet.

3 The idea of 'waves of democratisation' (Huntington 1991) and related concepts imply that an underlying dynamic causes successive democratisation processes. It should be stressed once again that there has been no empirical proof yet to support this concept, and that it is rather of metaphorical than of analytical value to refer to 'waves of democracy' or a 'wind of change'.

4 A similar effect can be ascribed to the fall of the Berlin Wall after months of popular protest against the GDR's Communist regime which refused to follow Gorbachev's example of political reforms.

5 For a detailed discussion of political conditionality with respect to sub Saharan Africa see M.Robinson 1993.

6 Detailed classifications of positive measures are provided by Heinz, Lingnau and Waller 1995.

7 Another significant role is played by private foundations. For a detailed listing see Diamond (1997:324ff.).

8 The only way to install democracy from abroad without domestic demand for it is a military victory with successive occupation as in the cases of Japan or Germany, a procedure not seriously considered with respect to African countries.

9 A similar point is made by Gero Erdmann: 'Undoubtedly positive measures are a political interference in the internal affairs of a country. Those who take offence at that do not appreciate that every single development project, as however "economic" or "technical" it is conceptualised, means an interference' (Erdmann 2000:161) (author's translation).

10 This is not to indicate that I uncritically support ideas related to modernisation theories. Economic growth is neither a necessary, nor a sufficient requisite of democracy. When interpreted as a proof of the efficiency of the new democratic system, however, it will, under equal circumstances, most likely have a stabilising effect.

11 For details, see Dzimbiri 1998.

12 There exist a number of criteria to define when a democratic transition is complete and when a democratic state and society can be considered to be consolidated. The latter range from simple demands of a double handover of power or the passing of twenty years of uninterrupted democratic governance, to the approach chosen by Linz and Stepan (1996:5) who distinguish between different dimensions of democratic consolidation. A very valuable discussion of the concept of democratic consolidation is provided by Schedler 1998.

13 Since Muluzi is a Southern Muslim, Muslims in the North were, in the heated atmosphere, simply identified with the UDF and the Southern Region and thus targeted as political opponents regardless of their political orientation.

14 Other participants are the Ministry of Finance represented by the National Authorising Officer, the Malawi Electoral Commission, the Clerk of Parliament and the European Commission's delegation to Malawi.

15 The Steering Committee of the Rule of Law programme consists of representatives of the Prisons Service, the Ministry of Justice, the Malawi High Court, the Law Commission and the Faculty of Law of the University of Malawi.

16 It is highly complicated to evaluate positive measures in favour of human rights and democracy. A first large-scale evaluation of EC measures from 1991–3 reaches only tentative positive conclusions (Heinz, Lingnau and Waller 1995:72).

17 This was reported by a number of NGO representatives. Here we might also find an explanation for the perceived preference of the EU to collaborate with state institutions. Since the state administration is the biggest organisation in Malawi it can absorb much more money than NGOs, which are often run by a mere handful of people.

# 7

# Democratic transition and consolidation in Mexico

*Darren Wallis*

## Introduction

In 1988, the year before the revolutionaries of Eastern Europe laid waste to the Berlin Wall, the first hammer blows were being struck against Mexico's ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI).[1] When *ex-priísta* Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas left the party fold to challenge the authoritarian system, few gave him much chance of success. Yet within a few months he had constructed a left-wing alliance that took the PRI to the brink of electoral defeat and shook it from its hegemonic complacency. Only that most sturdy of Mexican political practices, electoral fraud, saved the day. The PRI would prove to be made of sterner stuff than the Berlin Wall, however, and it was another twelve years before it succumbed to the cumulative democratic pressures that had built within the country. On 2 July 2000, a remarkable chapter in Latin American political history was closed when the PRI lost a presidential election for the first time. After seventy-one years in which the personnel, policies and symbols of party, state and nation were fundamentally fused, Mexicans determined on a new political trajectory.

The size of the PRI's defeat in July—opposition candidate Vicente Fox gained 43. 3 per cent against PRI candidate Labastida's 36.9 per cent—was unexpected. Most polls had been predicting a close contest. Although a re-run of the events of 1988 was largely inconceivable, many sceptics feared that the party would have enough purchase over the population, especially in the malleable countryside, to squeeze home. As it was, even the voters susceptible to the greatest pressures failed to support the PRI in the anticipated numbers. That poorer voters in particular were prepared to vote against the party that signed the cheques speaks volumes for the commitment to change among the population in these elections. The result also says much about the success of the independent electoral machinery in securing free and fair elections—there were times during the campaign when that machinery was very much put to the test.

In one sense, the results of July 2000 remove any remaining ambiguities over the transition to democracy in Mexico. It is true that many observers were prepared to view the electoral process as ostensibly 'free and fair' in both the 1994 (presidential) and 1997 (mid-term) elections. And there is a case to be made that Mexico by 1997 had met Linz and Stepan's (1996:3) criteria for a completed democratic transition, that is, that there is consensus on the rules of the game for producing an elected government, and that an elected government can come to power through a free and popular vote. On this view, PRI victories were democratic, since the *process* was democratic.

On the other hand, it is easy to see why many observers adopted a more sceptical perspective. As Haynes suggests in his introduction to this volume, a non-democratic government leaving office helps us to identify a completed democratic transition, and in the Mexican case there have been real doubts over the willingness of the party to cede power. The PRI is well-versed in the dark arts of 'electoral alchemy' and most observers concur that it stole the 1988 election. As Foweraker puts it:

> A minimal definition of democracy requires two consecutive 'free and fair' elections, and a plausible claim that the outcome of the election can change the government. Most observers agree that Mexico, for example, cannot claim to be democratic, since it cannot yet satisfy the latter criterion.
>
> (Foweraker 1998:651)

That claim may not have been plausible in 1994, but was more plausible in 1997, and the proof of the democratic pudding has been in the ceding of power in 2000. On a procedural level at least, Mexico has at last joined the third wave of democracy (cf.Huntington 1991).

In another sense, however, the results of July 2000 represent the start of a difficult period of democratic construction. In focusing on electoral dynamics, it is easy to forget that democracy exists beyond parties and elections. In point of fact, some significant progress *has* been made in advancing democratic norms and practices beyond elections. But at best this process has been messy and non-linear. The 'slow-motion demise' of hegemonic party rule (Whitehead 1996b) is being mirrored in the slow-motion construction of democratic governance and norms, although in this at least Mexico is not unique.

Thus, even though Mexico scores favourably on certain 'pre-conditions' of democracy, some very real concerns remain.[2] Among these we may number issues relating to the quality of citizenship, the operation of the rule of law, widespread socio-economic inequalities, problems facing indigenous and *campesino* (peasant) communities, and the existence of an important number of non-democratic actors, including kidnappers, guerrillas and drugs-barons. There are parts of the country where life remains 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short' in Hobbes' famous aphorism. Mexico averages only 3.5 on Freedom House rankings for the years 1998 and 1999, and it is not improving.[3]

This contrast between 'democratic advances' and 'democratic shortcomings' underlies the analysis in this chapter. It is a useful contrast, since it reminds us, first, that while elections are a necessary condition for democracy, they are by no means sufficient, and second, that the transition to democracy is rarely as uniform or linear as it is sometimes portrayed. Indeed, there is a case to be made that democratic progress in some areas is necessarily associated with difficulties elsewhere. To take but one illustration, a necessary condition for democratisation in Mexico—limiting the president's vast range of powers—has been associated (to date at least) with a rise in the power of non-democratic actors, such as hard-liners at the state or local level. We will return to develop this point later.

Democracy in Mexico, then, has come a long way since the 1970s, but has been replete with tensions, contradictions and problems. The intention in this chapter is to explore some of the ambiguities of the Mexican case, and thereby to highlight some of the difficulties in applying the democratic label to regimes in a state of flux. In the first part of this chapter we examine the transition process itself, which culminated in the recent presidential and congressional elections. Our focus is largely on electoral processes, highlighting in a 'real world' context some of the theoretical issues Elklit refers to in his chapter. In the second section of the chapter, we explore the impact that more competitive elections have had on the operation of institutional checks and balances and accountability. Taken together, these two sections adopt a broadly 'optimistic' view of the spread of democracy and the inculcation of democratic practices at the elite level. In the third section, however, we present a more 'pessimistic' account, by focusing on issues of democratic consolidation. We take our cues here from some of the concerns raised in Haynes' introduction, which highlight many of the tensions and difficulties involved in embedding democratic governance. In the euphoria of a transitional election, it is important to remember that there is a difference between democracy as a transfer of power, and democracy as constitutionally, behaviourally and attitudinally 'the only game in town' (cf. Linz and Stepan 1996).

## Democratic transition

The Mexican transition process has been contested and ambiguous. Initial reform efforts of the 1960s and 1970s sought to 'square the circle' between a rapidly modernising Mexico and an inclusive dominant party system created in, and for, the 1930s. Such reforms were intended to accommodate an increasingly urbanised and educated Mexican population, without fundamentally altering the contours of a system that had largely functioned effectively until that point. Although the regime at its height did not meet Dahlsian standards of procedural democracy, it was responsive and there was participation within the parameters of the dominant party (Davis and Brachet-Márquez 1997). Social and economic rights, embedded in the 1917 Constitution, were advanced—albeit imperfectly—as the country benefited from economic growth. Corporatist representation, with labour, peasant and 'popular' sectors within the party, developed a system of patronage that provided some substantive (if arbitrarily distributed) benefits to the masses.

It was the exhaustion of the (protectionist) economic model and its replacement by a more competitive system that undermined the regime's popular supports. The slowdown of the economy from the 1960s onwards was followed by the 'lost years' of the debt crisis in the 1980s—this latter caused in part by ill-considered attempts to artificially inflate the economy in the 1970s. The political impact of economic crisis was to reduce the resources available for distribution, and thereby undermine the link between the party and its sectors. As it became increasingly evident that the party could not meet the demands of its core constituents, so those constituents deserted it at the ballot box. The regime was increasingly forced to resort to fraud to win elections. At the same time, the lack of resources and the need for fiscal discipline necessitated a concentration of decision making, ostensibly in the economic cabinet. Thus, as the economy declined, there were fewer opportunities for participation and influence over the government, and the electoral process became increasingly fraudulent.

The culmination of these developments was the 'watershed' election of 1988, which the PRI managed to hold following a convenient computer malfunction.[4] After 1988, pressures on the regime to democratise became intense. Pressures came from an increasingly mobilised society, in the shape of new social movements (such as urban and women's groups) operating alongside party political actors, and from modernisers within the regime itself. The party now faced competition from the right (the National Action Party, PAN) and the left (the Party of the Democratic Revolution, PRD). Ceding of positions to the PAN in particular was deemed necessary in exchange for that party's support for structural adjustment measures, and it also played well in the context of negotiations over the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the United States. Democracy in the early 1990s, however, was undoubtedly 'selective' and did not apply to the left in the same way that it applied to the right.

We do not have space here to consider the complex dynamics of all reform efforts between 1988 and the present. Unsurprisingly, one view of reform suggests that it simply served to legitimise the PRI's position by allowing opposition within established parameters (along the line of the reforms of the 1970s), and it is true that reform often appeared to be a case of 'two steps forward, one step backwards'. Unlike the 1970s, however, reforms soon developed a momentum of their own and slipped from the elite's grasp. By the 1994 election, much of the electoral machinery had been removed from direct government control and Ernesto Zedillo won an election that many observers were prepared to declare democratic.[5]

The most complete electoral reform, involving all major parties (the PRD had withdrawn from previous negotiations), came in 1996. That reform made the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE)—a 'model of its kind' according to the Carter Center—completely independent, under the control of nine 'citizen councillors', chosen by a two-thirds majority in the legislature. There was also a substantial levelling of the media and finance playing fields.[6] Most observers concur that the 1997 mid-term elections were both free and fair—a conclusion bolstered by the fact that the PRI lost its majority in the Chamber of Deputies for the first time, as well as losing the first direct election for the mayor of the Federal District to the renegade Cárdenas.

Thus, many analysts argued that the Mexican electoral machinery was ostensibly democratic by 1997. Respected domestic and international observers concurred that the elections were both free and fair, and the PRI had been forced from power in the lower house of the legislature, with significant consequences for presidential power (see later). Despite a seeming commitment to the democratic process by Zedillo, however, and serious doubts that the PRI possessed either the inclination or the capacity to deny the electorate's will as they had done in 1988, many still remained sceptical that the party would cede the presidency in the event of a defeat in 2000. Allegations of coercion, manipulation and inappropriate use of government resources were rife during the campaign, and there were some question marks raised over the ability of IFE to secure free and fair elections. It is the preponderance of these doubts, combined with close opinion poll forecasts, that made the size of Fox's victory in July 2000 remarkable. When put to the test, the electoral machinery was sufficiently robust to guarantee this victory.

Three points relating to Fox's victory are worthy of comment here, as they impact on issues of democratic consolidation. The first is that while Fox stood in an alliance (of the PAN with the Greens, PVEM), he preferred to stand alone rather than join with Cárdenas as an anti-system candidate. Opposition coalitions had defeated the PRI in a number of (relatively minor) gubernatorial contests in 1998 and 1999, and national-level negotiations in 1999 had sought to create a unified anti-PRI front. Those negotiations ultimately failed, largely because no agreement could be reached on a method for choosing the presidential candidate. Fox (rightly as it turned out) calculated that he could defeat the PRI on his own, but splitting the opposition vote was a very risky strategy. Despite the parties agreeing a minimum programme of government, they were subordinate to the wishes of their presidential candidates. Personalities outweighed parties.

The second, related, point is that Fox is in many ways a political outsider. He came late to the political fray (from a career with Coca Cola) and has often been regarded as something of a maverick. At best, he represents one wing of the party that he has carried to government, and there are evident tensions over his style and policies among some *panistas*. There is little doubt that it was Fox's coat tails that carried the PAN-PVEM alliance (Alliance for Change) to a plurality position in Congress. Much of the vote for Fox was mobilised by his own organisation, Friends of Fox, which gathered a membership base significantly more numerous than that of the PAN. The experience of political outsiders heading amorphous movements elsewhere in Latin America has not always been a happy one. The Mexican party system has 'deinstitutionalised' since 1988 (cf. Mainwaring and Scully 1995) and the result in 2000 has not made it any clearer what type of stable party system—if any—is going to replace the hegemonic system. There is still a large amount of flux, and, as Randall and Svåsand think likely under such conditions, there are some real concerns in Mexico over the meaning of, and attachment to, party labels. Such symptoms have been prevalent in 'delegative democracies' elsewhere in the region (O'Donnell 1994).

Third, we have already mentioned that Fox came to power as part of an alliance. Alliances have been increasingly frequent at local and state levels. By uniting the anti-PRI vote, the opposition managed to gain an increased number of mayoralities and governorships and thereby increase voters' experiences of the opposition in power. A four-party opposition coalition in the Chamber of Deputies from 1997 to 2000 was significant in cementing habits of cooperation and negotiation, and helped to bolster the image of an 'opposition prepared for government' that had been painstakingly constructed at the local and state levels. Two of the three blocks in the current legislature are alliances—the Alliance for Change and the Alliance for Mexico (comprised of the PRD and leftwing parties).

The question is how such coalitions will fare now that the objective of defeating the PRI has been secured. Fox has already intimated that he wishes to construct an 'inclusive' cabinet. Given a certain distance between himself and the PAN, he may be in a position to bring in a range of actors from different backgrounds and parties, including *priístas*. Given also that President Fox will potentially need opposition votes to get legislation through, cabinet seats may be a necessary *quid pro quo*. But Fox will also need to keep his own alliance loyal and that, of course, may mean not making too many concessions to the opposition. There are internal factions in the PAN, and the depth of the relationship with the PVEM is yet to be tested.

All of this adds to the democratic uncertainty. The experience of coalitions and alliances so far has been a largely positive one (though not uniformly so) and has helped to inculcate democratic values among party actors, including *priístas*. Given the lack of a majority, alliances will be a major focus of Fox's presidency. But alliances are also shifting, and to some extent unpredictable, and there is no absolute guarantee of deputy loyalty for any party—although the 'no reelection' rule helps in this regard.[7] How the complexities of 'divided government' are managed in the next few years will be crucial to the task of democratic construction. Already, developments in this area have made fundamental changes to presidential power, checks and balances, and accountability, and it is to a consideration of these issues that we now turn.

## Institutional checks and balances

If the PRI was one salient feature of the post-revolutionary regime, the presidency was the other. The presidency forms the foundation stone of the Mexican system: it is the 'one fixed element' around which all else is 'constantly being redefined' (Philip 1992:183). Conversely, other institutions, such as the legislature, have been marginal to the political process. 'Why does the legislative branch,' asked Roderic Camp as late as 1995, 'continue to play such a minor role in the Mexican policy process?' (Camp 1995:17). The stock answer would be excessive, or hyper-presidentialism, that is, 'the exceptional concentration of powers, constitutional and otherwise, in the hands of the Mexican president' (Weldon 1997:226).[8] On this view, increasing democratisation—as reflected in congressional gains for the opposition—would not be especially problematic so long as the ultimate prize of the all-powerful presidency could be maintained.

Increasingly, however, analysts have come to recognise that the sources of strong presidentialism in Mexico are partisan, not constitutional (Weldon 1997). Comparative work suggests that the constitutional powers of the Mexican president are not outside the Latin American norm, and are probably less than those of presidents in a number of other countries (Foweraker 1998; Mainwaring and Shugart 1997).[9] Indeed, Mainwaring and Shugart (1997:51) suggest that the powers of the president 'might seem downright weak' without the monolithic PRI behind them. Rather, presidentialism has rested on *some* constitutional powers, plus: 'unified government, where the ruling party controls the presidency and both houses of Congress…discipline within the ruling party; and…a president who is the acknowledged leader of the ruling party' (Weldon 1997:227).

It is clear that democratic competition has undermined each of these three conditions, and that Mexico's 'omnipotent' president today carries a fraction of his former powers. Thus, it is not strictly true, as Philip claims, that there is 'virtually no constitutional check on the power of a Mexican president' (Philip 1992: 167). There were, and there are, constitutional checks and balances, but the president's control of a monolithic and hegemonic party allowed him to sidestep those barriers. Mexican presidents have sometimes taken decisions that have been at best arbitrary and at worst downright unlawful; they have not, as Philip argues, generally expected to be held to account for such actions (ibid.).[10] Once the three conditions supportive of presidentialism began to break down under the impact of electoral democracy, however, the all-powerful presidency also began to break down.

Mexico has experienced 'divided government' since 1997, in which the president's party has not enjoyed a legislative majority with which to guarantee passage of his programme. Between 1997 and 2000, the four-party opposition alliance acted in unison to enact important changes to the organisation of the Chamber of Deputies, control of its agenda, and committee membership and chairs. Fewer legislative proposals emanated from the executive as a percentage of the total, bills were more heavily monitored and amended, and scrutiny of the executive has become more intense (Amparo Casa 1999). The legislature, in other words, has begun to act like a legislature. On a number of key policy issues, Zedillo was forced to negotiate passage with the opposition, and several concessions were made, especially in the budgets of 1998–2000 and legislation relating to the rescue of the country's banking system. To be sure, the executive still possessed impressive bureaucratic resources in dealing with Congress, and it was able to divide the opposition pact on specific policy issues. But dividing oppositions still requires concessions to be made.

Fox will face exactly the same type of dilemmas in attempting to push his policy agenda through. While the PAN and the PRD acted in concert against the PRI in the previous legislature on political issues, they are no ideological bedfellows, and are very far apart on a number of issues. There is some prospect of the PRI and the left uniting on economics questions, potentially giving Fox a problem in pursuing his commitments. Either way, what appears certain is that the legislature will continue to flex its muscles and act as a block on an unwieldy executive. And, as we have mentioned, no group appears certain of the loyalty of its members.

There is, in short, greater evidence of 'horizontal accountability' (O'Donnell 1994) and the legislative check functioning effectively. Much the same point could be made with respect to sub-national government. By the time of the 2000 election, some eleven of thirty-two governorships were controlled by the opposition. The 2000 election appeared to increase this number to thirteen, but of course the PAN's victory has turned the equation around.[11] Such developments have forced an element of negotiation into a process that was heavily centralised in Mexico City and the presidency. Even PRI governors have proven less willing to toe the centre's line—although this does not always imply that they have been forces for democratic change. To be sure, states and municipalities do not do that much still in the Mexican system, but this is changing as recent budgets have increased the allocations at sub-national levels. Moreover, the PAN has a longstanding commitment to the process of decentralisation—a commitment that may present some interesting dilemmas when it meets recalcitrant *priístas* at the local level. Fox has promised to move in the direction of allowing states and municipalities autonomy in their tax-raising capacity, though this will probably not be achieved during his presidency.

The important point is that Zedillo could not demand unconditional loyalty down the system and Fox will have a partisan influence over only ten of the thirty-two states. As with the legislature, the ability of the president to 'steam-roller' other institutions is diminished. Hence, capricious presidentialism is in decline. As we have said, this retreat was a necessary condition for democracy to proceed. It has not, however, proven to be a sufficient condition, and in the following section we explore some of the key questions and dilemmas facing democratic reformers in Mexico at the present.

## Issues for democratic consolidation

So far we have explored some largely positive developments in the general arena of 'political society', that is, 'the arena in which the polity specifically arranges itself for political contestation to gain control over public power and the state apparatus' (Stepan 1988:4). In other arenas, however, there is still much work to be done before we could talk of democratic consolidation with any degree of confidence. In this section we highlight just a few of the most important areas of concern for the maintenance and spread of democratic norms and values in Mexico.

### *From election victory into government*

At the time of writing, in the immediate aftermath of the election, a number of concerns relating to the transfer of power from the outgoing administration to the incoming administration have been raised. The transition period of five months is long for any political system. (Fox did not take over the presidency until December 2000.) Even when the transfer was from *priísta* president to *priísta* president there were tensions and difficulties and a substantial amount of political manoeuvring for advantage took place. Effective government suffered as a consequence, and it is no coincidence that crises in Mexico have occurred fairly uniformly in transition years. These problems would likely be exacerbated with a transfer from the PRI to another party. Many sceptics argue that the PRI will try to make life as difficult for Fox as possible through, for example, hiding or destroying information, relaxing fiscal discipline, or engaging in 'last-chance' corruption. To date, however, much of the lead has come from Zedillo, and he has generally been good to his word on democratisation; in appointing respected Finance Minister José Angel Gurría to head a transition team, Zedillo has sent a further signal on the probity of the process. Nevertheless, there are probably some government officials who view the prospects of Fox's anti-corruption 'Transparency Commission' with horror, and some 'cleaning of the records' before December was probable.

There are two issues related to transition that are likely to remain on the agenda for some time. One is the future of the PRI itself, now that it has largely lost its *raison d'être*. There have been internal reform efforts in the party over many years to enable it to compete in democratic elections more effectively. (Some of these have contributed to electoral successes.) Now that it has been removed from power, further reforms are likely. The party is factionalised among a number of different currents, while the glue that bound them all together—control of government and its resources—is no longer pertinent. Some splits should occur. How extensive the splits are, and which faction manages to gain control of the party, will be critical to its own and Mexico's future. A modernised PRI could provide an important centralising balance in a system which is otherwise based around a broad left and a broad right block. Conversely, any implosion of the party, Italian Christian Democrat style, may leave the centre ground fragmented and encourage centrifugal competition.

A second concern is the bureaucracy. Despite some efforts to separate party and state, the Mexican state is a PRI state, and public sector unions are PRI unions. The party's tentacles reach down deep, so that distinguishing government and party at the grassroots level can be nigh on impossible. With 3.5 million state workers, Fox faces some serious dilemmas in dealing with the bureaucracy. He has promised only to replace the most senior officials and leave others in place, but doubts about the loyalty of many of them must remain. In this sense, it may be necessary that Fox make his cabinet as inclusive as possible in the short run to try to maximise support. In the longer run, the development of a fully fledged career-based bureaucracy is essential, although in truth the current arrangements are 'culturally embedded' and will not easily be altered. And dealing with PRI-controlled public sector unions should provide a stern test of Fox's presidential qualities and his capacity for compromise and negotiation.

### *Declining state authority*

We have argued already that a decline in the extraordinary and arbitrary powers of the president was a necessary condition for democratisation, and we have also seen that there is evidence of institutional checks and balances on that power functioning more effectively. An obvious corollary here is that the president's ability to 'get things done', with or without reference to legislation, is diminished. Not only has the president's 'infrastructural power' declined, that is, his ability to achieve policy objectives through the mobilisation of resources, but so has his 'despotic power', that is, the power to command and control (Philip 1992). While a positive development in many senses, this could also be argued to have deleterious effects on democracy. The decline of presidential power, argues Serrano, has created:

> a vacuum of power, which has not only been filled by legitimate actors—political parties, mass media, NGOs, trade unions, etc.—but also by illegitimate groups including armed organisations and various forms of organised crime, such as drug-trafficking and the industry of kidnapping.
>
> (Serrano 1998:10)

Several analysts have identified a number of 'authoritarian enclaves', acting beyond the president's writ. In an oft-cited example, President Zedillo was unable to overturn an obviously fraudulent election result in the southern state of Tabasco in 1995, and was eventually forced to reach an accommodation with its governor, Roberto Madrazo. A 'club of governors' of Southern states formed to challenge interference from Mexico City in their 'fiefdoms', and further examples of governors denying executive authority have been prominent. Somewhat ironically, modernising reforms to the PRI in the 1990s largely succeeded in enhancing the power of governors over the functional sectors, and the commitment of some governors to democratic government has been questionable (Hernández Rodríguez 1998).

In good measure, some of these difficulties derive from Zedillo's attempt to divide the party from the state. From an early stage in his presidency, Zedillo spoke of the need to create a 'healthy distance' between the government and the party. This move had beneficial effects for democracy, but it also divided and weakened the PRI and meant that the president was in a problematic position when it came to enforcing discipline.[12] In point of fact, discipline was maintained on a number of key occasions, as with sharp tax increases in 1995, but there were significant examples of *priístas* denying the national government.

The problems of a decline in state authority, however, run beyond PRI politics. President Fox will find effective establishment of the state's writ to be a key challenge. In Chiapas, Oaxaca, Guerrero and elsewhere we have seen the resort to violence by rebels to achieve political ends, demonstrating that serious non-democratic actors are in existence, and that sections of society feel sufficiently frustrated with existing politics, even under democratisation, to look beyond those institutional parameters.

It is unclear whether a transfer of power at the national level will be sufficient to dissuade from violence those who question the legitimacy of the electoral process.

Moreover, there are highly significant nondemocratic actors in the form of paramilitaries and organised crime syndicates. In states such as Chiapas, the federal government has a 'low state presence', and 'real power is exercised through extra-legal means, including private armies'—usually run by landowners who have much to fear from rebel demands, including indigenous autonomy and land claims (Harvey 1999:244). Examples of conflicts, human rights abuses and massacres involving such groups abound, and it has not been clear to date that the federal government has either the inclination or the ability to tackle such reactionary forces.

A similar point can be made in connection to the narcotics industry. Mexico is now the major conduit for narcotics into the United States and its drugs trade is well organised and established. With a throughput of several billion dollars, there are substantial vested interests to protect. In the main, this is accomplished through the seductive power of money—with all that implies for corruption of the government, judiciary and law enforcement agencies, and the rule of law and state authority more generally. Evidence of the degree of penetration of the political system by the narcotics trade has been astonishing. Where such measures fail, however, narcotics syndicates can, and will, resort to violence.

President Fox, and whichever cabinet he constructs, will face severe difficulties in countering this power. There is a very real risk, therefore, of Mexico's transition from an overly strong, authoritarian state resulting in a weak, democratic one. Establishing the democratic state's 'monopoly of legitimate force' in the context of significant and powerful nondemocratic actors will be a major challenge ahead. If the dysfunctions of recent years continue unchecked, it is difficult to see how a democratic state could easily maintain its legitimacy.

### *Corruption*

Corruption is a related concern. To a large extent corruption has been a constant in Mexican political life, as marked before the revolution as after. The *mordida* ('little-bite', therefore 'bribe') is an essential component of the culture, as any motorist will testify. Corruption has been a part of the glue that held the system together, as it appears to have done in many other dominant party systems, such as Italy and India. Corruption in Mexico is, therefore:

> less a sickly deviation from Weberian health than the cartilage and collagen which holds a sprawling body politic together…[and] less a case of egregious enrichment of individuals and their cronies—though some of this occurs—than a more 'democratic', 'popular' and 'inclusive' corruption that entails some benefits for masses as well as elites
>
> (Knight 1996:231)

Nevertheless, the maintenance of this system has suffered as a consequence of economic crisis and neoliberal restructuring of the state. There are fewer opportunities for patronage and graft. Opposition victories have removed the PRI from the positions of power where they could acquire resources and distribute benefits with impunity. At the same time as the more 'democratic' form of corruption has suffered, cases of 'egregious enrichment' have soared. The scale of corruption revealed in the past few years has been impressive indeed. Coming amidst an economic crisis in 1995 and 1996, corruption revelations did not play well with voters, and they fuelled the desertion of the PRI in 1997. Foreign bank accounts, suitcases full of hard cash, political assassinations, internecine warfare within the elite, mysteriously buried bodies and drug barons have made great cover in the past few years, but they do not augur well for either citizen engagement with the political process or the construction of a supportive legal framework. Making examples of a few individuals would, in particular, do little to reverse the corrupting power of narcotics finance.

## *Citizenship and the rule of law*

As in much of the rest of Latin America, citizenship and the rule of law are the principal concerns for democracy in Mexico. Academics who initially enthused over democratic transition and consolidation now express alarm at the manner in which many democracies are simply 'limping along' (Hagopian 1998:99). There is evidence of citizen disengagement and disillusionment with the democratic process and a real fear that this disengagement is opening the door to hard-liners and ambivalent democrats. In the light of the euphoria of Mexico's democratic transition, it may seem perverse to raise concerns of citizen disengagement, but many of the problems identified in Latin America are paralleled in Mexico, and potentially do not augur well for the longer run.

The crux of the matter, as O'Donnell (2000) encapsulates it, is one of 'low intensity citizenship'. Mexico, like the rest of Latin America, has never managed to embed an effective, dense network of civil rights. Indeed, the presumed 'natural path' of rights, from civil rights to political rights and thence to social and economic rights, has not been replicated outside of Western Europe and the USA. In Mexico, social and economic rights came first: they were a fundamental component of the revolutionary corporatist conception of citizenship, with civil and political rights subordinate to those imperatives (Domingo 1999:161). The pursuit of socio-economic rights, however, was fundamentally tied to the performance of the economy, and the collapse of the economic model from the late 1960s onwards undermined the capacity to accommodate demands.

In responding to economic crisis through structural adjustment and opening the economy, the regime facilitated the decline of the populist, corporatist system.[13] Such forms of representation were replaced by looser 'associative networks', many of which mobilised previously marginalised groups such as women and indigenous communities for the first time in the 1980s. The 1985 earthquake in Mexico City dramatically emphasised the extensiveness of such networks and their ability to shape the policy agenda. But it is not clear that the momentum of social movement activity in the 1980s was maintained in the 1990s, and there has been evidence of increased repression.

As Harvey argues, citizenship in the post-revolutionary regime was based on two key state-society mediations—'*lo nacional* and *lo popular*' (Harvey 1999: 244–5). The former entailed a sense of national independence (especially *vis-à- vis* the United States), while the latter emphasised programmes of distributive justice. Both provided the principal linkages between the government and the population in the absence of a third key mediation, liberal citizenship. In the modern period (c. 1985 onwards), however, *lo nacional* and *lo popular* have largely been rent asunder by neoliberal administrations, with no 'sufficiently secure mediation of citizenship' to replace them. In other words, the population has been exposed to the winds of neoliberalism without the windshield of effective citizenship.[14]

In surveying the Latin American legal scene, Anglade (1995) demonstrates that civil and political rights are highly unequal, that minimum socio-economic rights are not met for large groups of people, and that accountability is largely a fiction, especially as concerns the executive and the military. His arguments resonate strongly in Mexico, even if accountability by some yardsticks is improving. Despite social movement activity and the development of a rights discourse, and despite substantially increased *political* rights, a sizeable proportion of the population lives a life that is poor and full of the fear of violence—a life, as O'Donnell (2000) has it, that is 'materially poor and legally poor'.

Underlying human rights abuses, paramilitary activities, repression of political activists, and generally increased levels of crime of various hues, has been a legal system which seemingly offers few protections to the average citizen, while offering succour to the perpetrators of such crimes. The very organisations that are responsible for law enforcement are 'generally held in the public esteem with great distrust and outright fear' (Domingo 1999:184). Latino barometer surveys from 1995 show that only 4 per cent and 5 per cent of Mexicans respectively express *mucha confianza* in the police and judiciary respectively—the lowest figures in the eight countries surveyed (Turner and Martz 1997). There is, in short, a biased—and seen to be biased—system of law and justice. The law does *not* apply equally to governors and governed, to the powerful and the powerless, to the rich and the poor.[15]

For these reasons, judicial reform has been a recent priority. Changes in 1995 altered the composition of the Supreme Court, gave the Senate a greater degree of control over nominations, and opened up possibilities for constitutional review by the Court if prompted by 33 per cent of either Chamber or by a state of the federation.[16] But such reforms have made few inroads into public fear and mistrust, and there are no signs of equitable access to justice emerging. Already, further reforms—including giving the Courts a right of legislative initiative—have been pushed up the agenda, and there is a consensus among many Mexican analysts that building an effective rule of law is *the* key task facing the new government. The paradox here, however, is that judicial reform and the embedding of civil rights and citizenship, require the type of purposeful state action that is currently being constrained as a consequence of democratisation.

### *Socio-economic constraint*

Problems of access to justice derive from, and reinforce, wider socio-economic inequalities. The point has been well made, and does not need to be laboured here, that persistent poverty and inequality create problems for democracy, although some countries, such as India, have managed largely to maintain democratic practices in such circumstances.[17] Poverty and inequality have been constant factors in Mexican politics, but they have been accentuated by crisis and restructuring. The dismantling of subsidies under neoliberalism, for example, and the negotiation of NAFTA, have adversely affected large parts of the countryside. It is estimated that two-thirds of rural Mexico lives in poverty, and this underpins the constant flood of migrants to the United States. The opening of the economy to global competition resulted in massive unemployment and bank-ruptcies, although some would argue that the economy is much more productive as a result.

Dealing with serious structural issues under conditions of democratisation may present special difficulties. The competitive process raises expectations, promotes 'out-bidding' and encourages short-termism. There was ample evidence in the 2000 campaign of political 'leap-frogging'.[18] The danger, of course, is that once structural problems prove to be intractable, populations become disaffected with the democratic process and disengage from it. This makes nondemocratic forms of political activity more likely.

Currently, the neoliberal consensus among the elite finds little resonance among marginalised sections of the population. Violent protests such as those of the *zapatistas* and the Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR), alongside spectacular protest movements such as the debtors' union *El Barzon,* have sought to challenge existing economic inequalities. Yet perhaps the striking facet of the Mexican situation is how infrequent protests of this nature have been. Mexico has experienced severe economic problems since at least 1982, yet no alternative economic agenda has been forthcoming. Even the party that originally articulated such an agenda, the PRD, relocated towards the centre ground in order to attract support in the 1997 elections. And events such as the *zapatista*-organised 'Conferences against Neoliberalism' have attracted much attention, but made little headway in changing policy.

Indeed, there is little prospect of economic policy in Mexico changing significantly, no matter who wins an election. The constraints on economic policymaking—institutional 'locks' such as NAFTA and an independent central bank, structural obstacles such as a very low tax base, the reliance on speculative capital, a porous border, and the attitude of the business elite—make any major change in economic policy very difficult to conceptualise. There is a real risk, therefore, that voting will not change that much in the medium and long term. The PRI may be removed from power, but the full social picture is likely to remain as it is. In such circumstances, citizen apathy, disaffection and withdrawal may be real possibilities. Of course, memories of the disastrous economics of the 1970s still exist, and it is by no means clear that disaffection can translate into effective organisation, but democracies need committed citizens. Citizen engagement with the democratic process seems comparatively high at the moment (McCann 1998), but may be more difficult to maintain in the longer run if pronounced inequalities endure.

## Conclusions

After more than twenty years of the ebb and flow of the democratic tide in Mexico, the country finally took the plunge in the new millennium and voted out the party that had governed it since 1929. The wave of support that carried Fox to a historic—and unambiguous—victory was based on the strong underlying current of free and fair competition. This current is likely to be strengthened in the coming years as democratic norms become yet more firmly entrenched in the electoral arena. Parties seeking power will need to compete effectively in the democratic game and ensure that they are responsive to citizen demands—although there are concerns about how meaningful party labels are at the moment. The PRI in particular faces a testing and uncertain transition.

Furthermore, the fragmentation of representation at all levels—between the executive and the legislature, between the centre and the states—enhances checks and balances in the system and prevents the type of arbitrary presidentialism that previously characterised the system. More powers look likely to flow down to states and municipalities. Constructing coalitions and alliances will be essential to the work of government at the federal and state levels. Both 'accountability through the ballot box' and 'day-to-day accountability' have been enhanced.

On the other hand, there is a real sense in which the events of 2 July should be viewed as a democratic beginning, not a democratic end. There is still much to be done to translate the democratisation of electoral contests into the democratisation of everyday life. With this in mind, we should exercise due caution in contextualising Fox's victory. Fox won because of what he was not—a PRI candidate. This was a vote *against* the party that had governed Mexico for seventy-one years, not a vote *for* a particular constellation of policies. Some, indeed, in Fox's coalition came from the centre-left, and view many of his policies—on abortion, for example—with distaste. But because this was a vote for change, any change in policy direction may well be viewed favourably in the short run. There seems little doubt that Fox will benefit from a honeymoon period while the euphoria of democratic transition endures.

On the other hand, precisely because this was a vote for change, expectations of the difference that a new government can make may run high. Here the parallels with Eastern Europe and the former Soviet bloc may run strong: democratic transition creates expectations that are simply difficult to fulfil in societies facing serious structural problems. If problems remain unresolved, or worsen, the door opens for the return of uncommitted democrats, or the hard-liners of yesteryear.

As Vicente Fox made his victory speech in front of a jubilant crowd in the early hours of 3 July, he was drowned out by a spontaneous chant: ¡No nos falles! —'Don't fail us!'—the crowd implored. That simple message spoke volumes for the hopes invested in President Fox and his new government, yet warned of the dangers that may lie ahead. As Mexicans reflect on the closing of a remarkable chapter in their political history, let us hope that the authors of the next chapter can take up the challenges thrown down by the Mexican electorate in July 2000.

## Notes

1 The party was formed as the National Revolutionary Party in 1929, changed its structure and name to the Party of the Mexican Revolution in 1938, and adopted its current guise in 1946.

2 In terms of pre-conditions, Mexico is a country that 'ought' to be democratic: it scores 15.9 on Vanhanen's (1997) power resource index—substantially above the 6.3 'required' for democracy. It had a GDP per-capita of US$4,938 in 1999, fitting comfortably into Huntington's (1991) 'middle-income' bracket for probable democratisers. Mexico has modernised rapidly since the 1940s, and urbanisation and education have increased substantially. There is a sizeable middle class and a relatively dense civil society. Significant correlations exist between indices of modernisation and voting against the PRI (Klesner 1997). There are ethnic cleavages, but they have not generally been to the fore, at least until recently. Nevertheless, the point has been well made that there is no one-to-one correspondence between such pre-conditions and regime type; besides, as Haynes argues in the introduction, pre-conditions can just as easily be seen as *outcomes* of democratisation processes.

3 Taken as an average of the score for civil rights and political rights in 1998 and 1999.

4 See Domínguez and McCann (1996:152) for Arturo Nuftez's admission that the computer had been 'forced to fail'. The results of 1988 are unknowable since the uncounted papers were subsequently incinerated.

5 Zedillo was the PRI's second choice candidate, following the assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio in March, 1994. Zedillo's victory in good measure reflected divisions on the left and a generalised fear of political change, especially in the context of the *zapatista* rebellion, even if some doubts over the process itself remained.

6 Although Zedillo's victory in 1994 may have been 'free', there were serious doubts over its 'fairness'. The 1996 reform removed many of the PRI's structural advantages, in part through a massive increase in public financing (giving a bill of approximately US$300m in election years in 1997 and 2000).

7 All significant electoral positions in Mexico are subject to a bar on immediate reelection. This prevents deputies from building up a constituency base and from developing experience and expertise with which to challenge the executive.

8 There is much debate over the sources of *presidencialismo* in Mexico. Some see a basic continuity in authoritarian rule stretching back to the Aztecs and embedded in Mexican culture; others blame more recent experiences of dictatorship such as that of Porfirio Diaz (1876–1910); while still others blame the 'presidentialist' Constitution of 1917, designed in the midst of a bloody revolution and which had the establishment of order as a key objective. As we shall see, however, presidentialism has declined

quickly in recent years, indicating that its supports have probably been party-based and rather more contingent than the cultural-historical account would allow.

9 Thus, while it is true that 'the constitution confers upon the president a central role in the political system' (Weldon 1997:234), there are no provisions for decrees, dissolution of congress or vetoes on the budget or constitutional amendments.

10 Illustrations of arbitrary decision making abound: the most 'celebrated' (or infamous) was the decision of the president and a handful of advisors to nationalise the country's entire banking system in response to a developing economic crisis in 1982.

11 The PAN controls eight governorships and is in coalition in a further two. The PRD controls three and the PRI, nineteen. Relations between a Fox administration and the nineteen PRI governors, in particular, will reveal much about the direction that the PRI is taking and the depth of penetration of democratic norms. It is worth recalling that the first governorship was only ceded to the opposition in 1989.

12 Precisely because of the problems for party and government that this stance was believed to have created, Labastida's campaign looked towards an 'healthy closeness' between the PRI and the presidency.

13 It is worth noting, as Hagopian (1998:122) points out, that the dismantling of corpo ratism in Latin America did not necessarily lead to the dismantling of clientelism: in some countries 'political clientelism' has survived the initial phases of redemocratisation and market oriented reform, and in some it even flourishes. The point would apply well to Mexico.

14 One consequence of this is that many groups, especially indigenous groups, have sought to promote a culturally specific rights discourse, with its attendant implications for the advancement of universal rights. To the extent that there is consensus, argues Domingo (1999:157), it is based on 'discontent and dissatisfaction with things as they are'.

15 The point could be made for most countries, but the distortion of the rule of law is rarely as systematic or consistent as it is in Mexico.

16 This is an important development, since the previous protection offered to citizens, the *amparo* writ, applied solely to the claimant.

17 Poverty and inequality are especially problematic where they reinforce existing cleavages, as they do for most of Mexico's indigenous population. The result is the type of conflict witnessed in the south of the country since 1994.

18 President Fox, for example, will have to meet a commitment to GDP growth of 7 per cent per annum. This is below the growth rate for 1999, but rates since 1996 have been high as the country pulled out of the deep recession of 1995, and they have been bolstered by strong oil prices and a healthy US economy. These conditions are unlikely to last. Growth in the last two *sexenios* has averaged substantially less than 7 per cent.

# 8

# Taking stock of democracy in Zambia

*Peter Burnell*

The climate of optimism that initially greeted the advance of democratisation around the world from the late 1980s has turned to a significantly more sober assessment of the achievements and future prospects. For example, there is Diamond's (1996) assessment that many of the new democracies are at best only electoral democracies, his concern that a 'hollowing out' of democracy could ultimately presage a new 'reverse wave', and Zakaria's (1997) view that half the 'democratising' countries are illiberal democracies. While valuable for certain purposes, such categorisations cannot avoid giving a simplified picture. They do not reveal the variable geometry of democratisation, whereby the several dimensions move not just at different speeds but in different directions, the full implications of which need to be assessed over different, if overlapping, periods of time.

Zambia is just such a case. Of all the countries embarking on democratisation or redemocratisation in the 1990s, especially in Africa, the trajectory exhibited by appraisals of Zambia's politics is a bellwether of assessments of how democratisation has fared more globally. At first, the 1991 presidential and parliamentary elections, which brought in a new government against the background of a reinstated political pluralism, drew wide commendation. Zambia was seen as a pacesetter. By the time of the 1996 general elections critics inside and outside the country began saying the country was well on course to fit the paradigm case of a political rake's progress: democracy regained followed by democracy lost. For instance in 1996, Freedom House rated Zambia 5 for political liberties and 4 for civil liberties (on the scale 1=most free, 7=least free). Identical figures are repeated for 1999 and the latest survey (Karatnycky 2000), in contrast with the 1991/92 scores of 3 and 2 respectively.

The circumstances surrounding the 1996 elections (see Burnell 1997), which returned President Chiluba and the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) for a second term, placed the legitimacy of both the proceedings and the outcome in doubt. The circumstances, which included a change to the constitution that rendered former president Kenneth Kaunda ineligible for the presidency, in May 1996, led Bratton to conclude that electoral democracy is slowly dying in Zambia (Bratton 1998:65). Joseph (1998:6–7) argued that Zambia had reverted to the worst features of authoritarian governance formerly displayed under Kaunda. It is true that the country has retained a strongly presidential system, contrary to expectations about the MMD in 1991. One consequence is that much attention has continued to be trained on the presidency, giving a highly personalised focus to Zambian political debates and to assessments of politics in the Third Republic. While some recent analyses appear close to situating Zambia in the camp of 'facade democracies', none claim that liberal democracy or 'full democracy' has been achieved. Not even Chiluba has tried to persuade us that *sustainable* democracy is in view, because of the underlying economic weaknesses, although he called the December 1998 local elections, in which all the main parties participated (unlike the boycott of the 1996 elections by some small parties and the main opposition, the United National Independence Party, UNIP) a 'landmark in Zambia's democratic history' (*Zambia Daily Mail,* 1 January 1999).

In order to take stock of democracy in Zambia this chapter goes beyond electoralism to draw on a variety of approaches and a broader range of evidence. The different approaches to studying democratisation start from different points and are not predetermined to generate one simple conclusion. On balance, this chapter takes issue with the fashionable view that we should be disappointed with Zambia's progress. Nevertheless, structural conditions of the kind that underpin democracy's long-term prospects do not look favourable. And human agency's impact in the meantime also appears to have been ambiguous. The foreign donors are well placed to exert a positive influence, precisely because of the country's financial and economic weakness. But Zambia's case demonstrates that there are limits to what can be expected from international forces.

## Approaches to studyingdemocratisation—and its reversal

### *Absent conditions*

Social science has identified a number of 'conditions' associated with successful democratisation. It is unclear how far they relate more to some particular stage(s) or phase(s) than to others, for example democratic consolidation rather than democratic transition, or whether they refer more to some dimensions than others, such as stability rather than 'deepening'. The precise nature of the connections—as being essential or enabling forces, or instead merely facilitators—is disputed, as are the explanations. For instance what is it about economic development that improves democracy's chances? Notwithstanding this lack of clarity there is a common thread: democracy is contingent, it is a dependent variable. Hence if the 'conditions' are absent or only weakly present, then the odds are stacked against democratisation. Three sets are investigated below.

#### *Economic and socio-economic*

Economic growth and development together with associated measures like industrialisation and social attainments offer widely endorsed sets of 'conditions'.

Diamond's (1992) finding that physical quality of life is a better predictor of democracy and political freedom than just per capita incomes is representative, alth ough other accounts place stronger emphasis on social equality. Economists consider educational attainment, possibly in conjunction with economic freedom, a significant force for development (schooling and literacy feature in the standard measurements of human development); political analysts maintain that education enhances the democratic prospect *directly,* as well as through raising income levels. We lack convincing statements about what the thresholds of achievement must be, and how to measure them, but Zambia's situation on any reckoning is desperate—more unpromising now than at almost any previous time. This is true both of absolute levels and the trends of crude economic indicators, average incomes and physical quality of life.[1] Real per capita Gross Domestic Product declined by more than 20 per cent in the first half of the 1990s and currently stands at around US $340—among the dozen or so poorest in the world.

The deterioration in social indicators that gathered pace in the late 1980s continued through the 1990s. Around 98 per cent of Zambians are reckoned to be trying to survive on the equivalent of under $2 a day. Absolute poverty is most widespread in rural areas. Inequality is very high and the gender gap appears to have widened in the last decade. At minus 8 per cent, Zambia's performance in improving life expectancy at birth was the second worst in the world for the period 1970–95 (only two other countries recorded a minus figure). Average lifespan has fallen considerably—possibly to as low as 37 years, below almost anywhere else. Zambia is the only country to report a deterioration in under-5 mortality between 1970 and 1995 (the figure for 1996 was 202/1000 live births). UNICEF estimates that 40 per cent of the children are chronically malnourished. A third of all children (half in rural areas) do not attend school in the appropriate grade. The Health Ministry reckons that half the population will eventually die from AIDS. Zambia has proportionally the highest number of orphaned children in the world (possibly over 750,000). Even so Zambia's total population (over 10 million people) is growing at over 3 per cent a year. Half of all Zambians are aged under 18 years, which means a dependency ratio to working age population exceeded by only two countries. Whatever the prospects for economic revival, the chances of it translating into an early increase in mass consumption are poor.

In reality the economic outlook is unpromising, or at best highly uncertain. First there is the problem of foreign debt inherited from the previous regime and still standing close to US$7 billion. In relation to GDP only the Democratic Republic of the Congo was more indebted in 1995. Annual foreign debt service liabilities of almost twice the government's combined budget allocations for health and education mean that actual debt service payments have been consuming the equivalent of 70 per cent of new foreign aid. Second, although the MMD government has removed significant macro-economic policy distortions, and the majority of inefficient state owned enterprises has been privatised (234 para-statals privatised out of a target of 280), the state has devised no solution to serious market weakness and market failure, including weak entrepreneurialism and low savings.

On the industrial front, removing protectionism more rapidly than some other economies in the region, and foreign exchange shortages, have undermined manufacturing. Industrial production is down a third on 1990. The failure to complete the privatisation of Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM) until March 2000 had many adverse effects. Mining, principally copper, is responsible for over two-thirds of the country's foreign exchange earnings. But at copper production of around 260,000 metric tonnes in 1999—the lowest level since independence—the industry is in dramatic decline, causing damage to its suppliers. It has become a significant drain on the government's purse, incurring annual losses as high as $250 million and eroding the country's tax base. The state retains the liability for ZCCM debts of $800 million even after privatisation. While the economy must become more diversified in the future, economists say that substantial improvements in agricultural productivity and thus incomes can be expected only over the medium to long term. In the meantime the rural poor are enduring increased food insecurity, partly a direct consequence of the liberalisation of agricultural markets for inputs and purchases of the nation's staple crop, maize. This has severely hit the more remote producers (in 1997–8 total maize production was a third of 1988–9 output). Agriculture's vulnerability to climatic fluctuations means that production can plummet by over 30 per cent in a year like 1998.

In sum, the present and prospective economic and socio-economic conditions look very unpropitious for meaningful and sustainable democracy however we interpret those conditions' political significance—whether the important issue is the absence of a sizeable property-owning middle class independent of the state, or the severe contraction of the industrial working class, or the wretched conditions of the majority of people, especially women, or the few financial and human resources available to contribute to a dense civil society. A positive gloss would be that the 'conditions' can only improve. But such optimism could be misplaced. Against this background even the maintenance of electoral democracy could be considered a significant achievement. However, there is far more to democracy than elections. Equally, for democratic transition to be sustained a great deal rests on qualities of political leadership and human agency, to the extent that they compensate for adverse structural forces rooted in the economy and social conditions.

### *Political culture and political behaviour*

Political culture (beliefs, attitudes and sentiments concerning politics), like civil society, is a contested concept whose significance for democratisation is the subject of much disagreement. There is a consensus that both must feature in the long run. But must a democratic political culture and vibrant, benign civil society be present early on in the process of democratic reform? One view may not fit all countries equally.

Electoral participation provides a potentially significant clue to the political culture as well as being an important indicator of democracy. Zambia's recent record here has evoked disappointment. In 1996 only 2.3 million voters were registered out of a potential electorate of possibly 4.4 million. Voter turnouts are low (possible only a third of eligible voters in 1996, and around 27 per cent of *registered* voters in the 1998 local elections), with some evidence of lower participation by women. The reasons range from the complexities of the registration process to speculation about the lack of impartiality and fairness of the electoral process. UNIP's boycott of the 1996 general elections has undoubtedly been a factor. Some researchers have detected a widespread 'culture of silence' and a continuing attachment to the notion that the state and ruling party are one and the same (Bratton and Liatto-Katundu 1994; Mphaisha 1996:79).

Chiluba claims that a fundamental change of attitudes has taken place: Zambians are shedding their previous disposition to look to the state as provider—something the Second Republic encouraged. For the poor, self-reliance has indeed become an imperative, as a result of the state's penury and commitment to economic liberalisation, while small, politically well-connected circles continue to benefit from the exercise of public patronage. Nevertheless, if Chiluba's claim is accurate then the consequences for the relationship between government and society could ultimately be profound. Just as statism is 'uniquely toxic to democracy at low levels of development precisely because it places such a high premium on control of the state' (Diamond 1992:483), so a reduction in the economic dependency of citizens should reduce their political dependency. This enhances liberty in the form of autonomy. It does not advance freedom in the more positive sense of participating in determining the common weal—something many theorists argue is integral to democracy. It also seems fairly hollow for people living in abject poverty.

## Civil society

Civil society, the public associational space existing between state and family, along with social capital—trust, norms and networks that facilitate social coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit—has acquired a central place in the literature, although their significance and relationship to one another and to political culture are disputed, especially in Africa. Allen (1995) for instance argued that political progress in Africa is most likely to come from within civil society, but later reported that analytically civil society is 'vacuous, and concepts such as class or gender contribute far more' to understanding recent political change (Allen 1997:329). In Zambia, however, what are called non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have figured prominently in political debate.

There are over 9,000 registered NGOs of all descriptions (but under 1,000 submitted annual returns to the Home Affairs Ministry for 1998–9); the origins of 'Zambia's rich civil society' are said to date back to colonial times (*Courier* July—August 1999:17). Many NGOs are dedicated to welfare and related services, and generally have a good working relationship with government. The advocacy NGOs, few in number and urban-based, include the Lusaka-based Inter-Africa Network for Human Rights and Development (Afronet) and the Legal Resources Foundation, as well as such election monitoring groups as the Zambia Independent Monitoring Team (ZIMT) and Foundation for Democratic Process (FODEP).

Civic associations played a major role in bringing about the reforms that ended the Second Republic and brought Chiluba and the MMD to power, in 1991. The trade union movement, churches, students and intellectuals all made notable contributions, as did the business people who funded the MMD, at a time when UNIP monopolised public patronage. Since then the government has been very sensitive to criticism by NGOs, especially their growing demands that it become more accountable and permit a level playing field for political competition. Punitive steps were taken against the monitoring groups after the 1996 elections; verbal warnings continue from time to time. In August 1999 the cabinet decided to initiate legislation for a regulatory framework for NGOs, reminiscent of its earlier unsuccessful attempt to introduce a Media Council Bill requiring the licensing of journalists.

The trade union movement including the mineworkers (the Zambia Confederation of Trade Unions or ZCTU under Chiluba's direction as Chairman-General from 1974–91 behaved as *de facto* opposition to the UNIP government) has been largely neutralised as a political force. Trade union membership declined by 55,000 during the first MMD administration alone, as has employment in the formal sector (down from 400,000 in 1991 to possibly around 150,000; total unemployment is over 40 per cent) (Simutanyi 1996:836). The mines are due to shed a further 8,000 jobs, under the terms of privatisation. The public sector workforce, down from 139,000 in 1993 to 110,000, faces further rounds of retrenchment, driven by a public sector reform programme advised by the World Bank. The ZCTU's leader, Fackson Shamenda, was one of the few notable voices outside the ruling circle to support the declaration of a state of emergency in 1997. The unions have become deeply divided among themselves, and their members are demoralised. The tiny 'Labour Party' lacks the defining properties of a political party, such as resources and organisation. UNIP and some smaller parties hint that they would reintroduce protectionism and pursue social democratic type policies, but have failed to convince the voters that there is a realistic alternative to the government's neoliberal agenda.

In the 1990s the churches proliferated (there are over 9,000 churches and over 13, 000 religious organisations) and 'there is now a cacophony of voices speaking different things in the name of the Church' (CCJP 1998). Some, close to Chiluba's 'born again' version of spirituality, enjoy patronage from the Presidential Discretionary Fund. Others are strongly critical, including such politically active figures as Pastor Nevers Mumba. The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) is especially vocal about the government's failings, including corruption, and repeatedly draws attention to the plight of the poor. The Women's Lobby Group is also active, but government has procrastinated over pledges to take affirmative action on gender issues. At the time of writing only 11 per cent of parliamentarians and one cabinet minister (out of twenty-four) are female. Traditional obstacles to women's access to credit and land ownership persist.

According to United Nations Development Programme figures gender disparity is worse than in all but around thirty countries. A 'lack of mobility, lack of security, lack of (self-) respect and recognition, lack of autonomy, and lack of (leisure) time' are the 'defining characteristics of women's lives in Zambia' (World Bank 1993:69).

Finally, the media. Probably under 10 per cent of the population read a newspaper every day. Two of the three daily newspapers are controlled by the government. The independent press has been subjected to repeated harassment by the law enforcement agencies. Editors and journalists have faced legal prosecutions on several occasions. In the early years of the Third Republic *The Post* (originally *Weekly Post*) often fell well below professional standards of journalism, so enthusiastic was it to expose government failings at a time when political opposition to the government from parties was so weak. A European commentator claimed the *Weekly Post* was 'harder hitting than would be possible under the libel laws of certain longer established democracies in the industrialised world' (*Courier* March-April 1992:32). Unfortunately this made it easier for the authorities to begin threatening press freedoms when it suited their political purposes. Once learned, this pattern of behaviour has become embedded, such that in November 1999 a report by the New York-based Committee for Protection of Journalists placed Zambia among the region's worst offenders against press freedom (a freedom that is not explicitly guaranteed by the constitution). In March 1999, *The Post* was for the first time prevented from appearing on the capital's streets (but only for one day). Moreover it regularly appears on the Internet, alongside sites presenting critical material from the CCJP, Afronet (which carries *The Monitor For Human Rights and Development*), and for example detailed reports by the New York-based Human Right Watch (Africa).

Zambia is an acknowledged leader in Southern Africa for Internet usage (at 0.27 computers with a permanent Internet connection per 10,000 people, in 1997, it exceeds most low income countries). The Internet makes life more difficult for the censor. Political developments in Zambia have become much more immediately visible to the outside world. In a highly donor-dependent country, political leaders must factor that into their calculations about possible external responses to their conduct. The resources now lavished on the State House web site are a testimony. Needless to say few Zambians have the means to access it, and in rural Zambia, where around half of the population lives, wireless is the main source of information. There are an estimated 820,000 radio receivers, one in more than half of all households, compared with 267,000 television receivers. The television service is state-run. So far the only independent radio services to be licensed are ones like *Christian Voice* that are politically safe for the government.

To conclude, we should not underestimate the political acumen of the Zambian people. Government has been unable to ignore civil society and has seen fit to respond by a variety of strategies, including co-option, persuasion, harassment and coercion. This suggests that 'NGOs' are not a negligible factor in Zambia's democracy, just as they are not unimportant to the delivery of basic welfare services for many ordinary people.

## The influence of history

The problems that beset democratisation often predate democratic opening. This is sometimes described as a form of path dependence. The degraded economy and large debt are illustrative, although not unique to Zambia. They destroyed the authority of the one-party state, but they are now legacies that impede the new polity's ability to acquire performance legitimacy.

Another troublesome inheritance, specific to Zambia, has been the rivalry between Kaunda and Chiluba, which dates back to the 1970s. What for the purposes of democratic consolidation should have been a collective application of constructive energy to institution-building (democratic norms as well as organisations) was supplanted from the outset of the Third Republic by a highly personalised, destructive form of political struggle, encouraged on both sides by close associates whose own interests were at stake. Perhaps if Kaunda had retired permanently from politics after 1991 the following years would have witnessed a smooth transition to democracy. Instead, the exaggerated sense of political insecurity felt by Chiluba and/or close political colleagues at times provoked them to a high-handed use of power. Certainly they feared both the national economic and political consequences of allowing power to revert to Kaunda. And business interests close to senior MMD politicians had much to lose, too. But it is also true that retirement by Kaunda might simply have made it easier for MMD politicians to behave *as if* they were fully committed to liberal democracy without fearing that they might lose office in consequence, without necessarily generating such a commitment in practice.

Democratisation can succeed in spite of a burdensome legacy from the past, just as it sometimes fails even in places even where the omens look good. History's significance is not like passing on parcels. Instead it is the persistence over time of patterns and practices, both formal and informal. Here the evidence is mixed. First, the good news.

### *History as good news*

Zambia in the 1990s set out to redemocratise, having had a previous experience of multi-partyism before and during the First Republic (1964–72). Competition for election to the National Assembly took place regularly throughout the Second Republic in general elections (1973, 1978, 1983, 1988) with ministers often losing their seats. According to Maipose (1996:35), the legislature was lively throughout the first two republics. Bratton and van de Walle's (1997:273) conclusion, that getting to a state of democracy where there is a tradition of competition but little participation is easier than where there is a tradition of participation but no competition, is a finding that suits Zambia well. The Second Republic's 'one-party participatory democracy' was participatory in name only.

Next, unlike many African countries Zambia has never experienced a successful military coup. The attempted coups have been instigated by very few discontented soldiers. Moreover, as has been mentioned, there is a tradition of independent activity by civic organisations. The people's awareness of their country's record of tolerance among the various communities and *comparatively* little civic unrest provide good reason to maintain political peace. The incentive is present to resist major new assaults on the democratic fundamentals, given recollections of how power was abused in the Second Republic. These elements of the national consciousness are difficult to weight, but that does not mean they are insignificant.

### *History as bad news*

A less favourable reading of history, mindful that old habits may die only slowly, notes that the political executive's urge to subordinate state institutions, including the legislature, go back a long way. Tordoff (1980:7) portrays an unbroken tradition of presidentialism dating from the colonial model of governor's rule. Neo-patrimonialism too has deep roots, predating even colonial times. Although the state's fiscal problems and close supervision by the Bretton Woods institutions now serve to limit clientelism, they do not eliminate it. Patronage continues to operate as an instrument of political influence, especially around the time of election campaigns (see Burnell 2000a). The Presidential Discretionary Fund of around Kwacha 12 billion annually (one US dollar equals about Kwacha 3,200 at time of writing) is one such vehicle and far from transparent. Local government remains heavily dependent on central funding, further centralising power. The slogan 'it pays to belong to UNIP' of more bountiful times has a contemporary analogue: it costs the constituency if the MMD candidate is not returned. The dismantling of state enterprises, particularly by private treaty sales, and the marketisation of economic activities have produced visible material benefits for a select group of the political elite.

The faction-ridden nature of elite politics is another enduring characteristic of all three republics. In fact, the cement binding political parties has never looked particularly strong, once the African nationalism evident during the independence struggle lost its initial relevance. Kaunda's decision to banish multi-party politics (or its timing) can be understood as a stratagem to counter the threat factionalism posed to UNIP and his own power. But far from eliminating personal rivalries, the one-party state provided one central place for it to continue—inside UNIP—thereby consolidating this aspect of elite political culture. It continues to frustrate the institutionalisation of stable and disciplined political parties even now. In common with some other African countries the reluctance of opposition political groupings to coalesce around a recognised leader(s) and their failure to develop distinct programmatic identities remain limiting factors for Zambia's democracy.

Connected with this is the general disenchantment with politics and politicians—perhaps only to be expected where one party predominates and none of the opposition parties seem able to provide a credible alternative. The disenchantment is evident in the remorselessly negative tone of public debate carried by the independent press. The following, from a letter in *The Post* speaks volumes:

> Now, what shall I say about Zambia—a country without food, medical care system, education, security, jobs, and hope, a country where the only news you hear is sad?… A country where leaders do not hear the cries of the citizens… Zambia—a country that belongs to no one.
>
> (*The Post,* December 1998)

The despair is understandable, not least because of twenty-five years of uninterrupted economic decline and falling incomes, and the failure of the politicians satisfactorily to address the causes or the consequences. There is awareness of being in almost constant thrall to the international financial institutions. A 'stabilisation package' of financial support was first broached with the International Monetary Fund as early as 1973. Subsequent rounds of negotiations issued in five successive agreements up to 1991. The period 1966–9 to 1990–3 saw no less than eighteen adjustment loans from the World Bank. The 1990s saw seven adjustment operations by the International Development Association. The Bank's assessment is that barely 45 per cent of its forty-five 'operations' in Zambia between 1980 and 1996 performed satisfactorily. Structural adjustment especially has become an easy target for criticism. Even Chiluba acknowledges that despite years of adjustment the economy 'is not doing well and our people are suffering', and has publicly blamed the IMF (*The Post,* 30 December 1998).

Yet a lack of creative thinking by the opposition and ensuing weakness of policy debates render government that much more reliant on the international financial institutions for policy initiatives. This is certainly not a new story. Saasa and Carlsson (1996) linked the consistent failure of the Zambian authorities to determine priorities, procedures and plans when dealing with the donors, to the absence of a supportive local environment—one where potential stakeholders participate in a constructive dialogue. Both a responsible approach from opponents or critics of the government, and openness and transparency from government are required if this is to happen.

To sum up, while history does not have the power to determine Zambia's political future, we can find some positive, some negative, and some neutral elements that persist into the present day, helping us to make sense of the current political condition and illuminating the possibilities. The legacy has been ambivalent. Could it be that the *process of political change in the 1990s* has exerted a more significant influence on the course of events and will be a stronger influence on future prospects?

## The path and pitfalls of change

*The Challenge of Change* is the sub-title chosen by President Chiluba for his book about democracy in Zambia (1995). Democratisation, a process of change, introduces opportunities for things to go wrong, for mistakes to be made. On the one side there is the 'birth defect theory': democracy will be doomed if difficulties are experienced in the early stages (how early is not clear). A narrow version of path dependence maintains that the outcome of transition is contingent on the mode of transition, turning such matters as the structural location of changemakers and their choice of tactics into crucial determinants.

On this score, Zambia's Third Republic enjoyed a flying start, so inflating expectations about the future. The legalisation of political pluralism in December 1990 was conceded without much violence (albeit after an unsuccessful coup attempt on 30 June 1990). The 1991 election campaign was fairly orderly and the ballot peaceful. The transfer of power was smooth. The new government came to office with much international goodwill, but the changes were made in Zambia, by Zambians. However, the factors requisite for stabilising and developing a new democracy are not identical to those that helped bring it about. The forces most functional for full democratic transition may differ from those that undermined the previous regime.

## *Institutional matters*

One school of thought stresses the importance of institutional design: decisions and non-decisions, good and bad crafting. Once choices are made they can be difficult to reverse. Vested interests accrue around them, giving rise to enduring consequences. Zambia in 1996 provides a good example of constitutional revisions designed to suit narrow political advantage. The development of formal mechanisms for establishing greater governmental accountability, particularly horizontal accountability to independent judicial and quasi-judicial entities, has been slow and halting, usually made after donor pressure. The retention of the first-past-the-post electoral system (another link with the colonial past) exposes the political system to the weaknesses of the 'winner-take-all' mentality (Chiluba often likens electoral contests to games of football, with the express connotation of winners and losers). This has long been identified as a cause of the earliest democratic reversals in post-colonial Africa. It occasions only little debate in Zambia, but its distorting influence on the pattern of political representation is clear, giving citizens a further disincentive to register or vote. Thus the opposition parties have seen little prospect of sharing in power, which affects their incentive to make a constructive contribution to democratic politics. Party institutionalisation is retarded. Mainwaring (1998) rightly notes that high levels of party institutionalisation are not *necessarily* good for democracy; but there is equal certainty that personalism and patronage (which might help stability in the short term) offer few guarantees of political accountability in the long run. No-one can be sure that MMD would survive if it lost a general election, or, indeed, whether it will remain a cohesive force after Chiluba leaves State House, as he is committed to doing at the time of the 2001 elections. The chances that another coalition of associational forces will form, comparable to MMD's emergence in 1990–1, are poor. Zambia's experience of the MMD in office, disappointing many political and socioeconomic expectations, has probably queered the pitch.

The path of political transition has created, in an unbalanced party system, a democratic weakness and obstacle to further progress. The opposition's limitations exposed throughout the 1990s mean we cannot assume that if the MMD lost power that would be a better omen for Zambia's democracy than its continued predominance. But some observers believe the second outcome would not serve democracy well either, although the personality of Chiluba's successor (yet to be known) could make a difference.

## Present problems

This final approach to making sense of the current situation is the most direct, by identifying the principal problems currently besetting the democratic agenda. For convenience they could be classified in several ways: problems that are 'made in Zambia' versus ones whose origins are external (or strongly influenced by the international environment); and problems arising within, or conversely outside, the political system or democratic framework (for example economic difficulties and the strains thrown up by economic liberalisation—a politically-induced project). It is not simply the problem that is important, but the manner of political response and its impact on democratisation. But first, the issue of structure and agency.

### *Structure versus agency?*

In political studies there is a well-rehearsed debate about the relative importance of structure and agency in explaining outcomes. Unsurprisingly it has been applied to democratisation. In Africa, Bratton and van de Walle (1997) argue the merits of applying contingency as an analytical lens that focuses on actors and their choices as they react situationally to the dynamic of events. In Africa especially, the absence of 'conditions' favourable to democracy increases the premium placed on good political leadership as Ottaway states, 'political organising must make up for the unfavourable underlying socio-economic conditions' (Ottaway 1997:4).

The view that a potentially greater threat to the survival of new democracies is posed by ineptitude, misconduct or subversion by the political elites than by the majority of ordinary people is another prominent feature. The elites carry enormous responsibility; the dire poverty of most Zambians inhibits strong political activism by the mass. The elites have the power of veto, as well as the power to destroy, even if it is true that democratisation can only make significant progress or be placed on a higher plane by a growing and meaningful participation of the many. (On the asymmetry of forces behind democratic progress and regress, see Burnell 1998.) In Zambia many politicians create the impression of being more interested in personal aggrandisement than in serving the public good or their constituents' interests. There is a responsibility deficit, which connects with the shortcomings of political accountability. Trust is in short supply among politicians, and between politicians, civic associations and the people. Huntington calls disillusionment with rulers a 'foundation' of democratic stability and 'an essential first step in the process of democratic consolidation' (Huntington 1991:262–3). But if elite-level politics is discredited in spite of the presence of formally democratic institutions, then there is a danger that public confidence in those institutions will recede. The elites must show that democracy can make a difference in terms of delivering transparent and accountable government, *especially* if they cannot transform the people's material circumstances. For if the intrinsic legitimacy that democratic procedures should command becomes frustrated, a democracy's fate will be rendered more uncertain, in the continuing absence of grounds for crediting it with performance legitimacy.

### *The state as a problem*

The state can pose problems by being overbearing *and* by being weak and ineffective. A strong administration can help democratisation in many ways, such as by strengthening the rule of law, establishing impartial bureaucratic processes and undermining the logic of personal power. A combination of statism and low institutional capacity, as in the Second Republic, is doubly harmful to economic development and political accountability, by reducing the chances of acquiring performance legitimacy and a widely shared sense of efficacy.

Zambia's state clearly has some capacity for internal repression (indeed, the police have a reputation for arbitrary brutality), but it is weak in respect of other capabilities associated with the modern idea of the state. Its capacity to defend the territorial borders has been questioned; it is unable to protect citizens from a rising tide of economically-motivated crime (financial constraints mean the police service has under half the required number of officers). The state cannot fund its core activities and deliver essential public services. The IMF says the public service's cost-effectiveness has 'declined significantly over the last ten years' and 'is generally unresponsive to the country's needs' (International Monetary Fund 1999). The World Bank also routinely highlights managerial weaknesses, while repeated encouragement to hasten public sector reforms have gone unheeded. Both Christon Tembo, Zambia's Vice-President, and Katele Kalumba (Finance Minister) have voiced concern about the 'self-serving mindset' in the civil service and inertia: 'our enemy is ourselves' (Katele Kalumba in *Times of Zambia,* 7 February 2000). Of course capable governance and democracy are not synonymous. But the point is that aside from the brake that governance weaknesses applies to aid disbursements, such weaknesses prompt doubts about the practical worth of the democracy and whether the opportunities democracy provides for exercising electoral choices have any real value.

### *Society*

National unity has long been considered an essential requisite of democracy. But a democratic opening can bring underlying divisions closer to the surface of politics. That is not necessarily problematic. Such mechanisms as a stable, representative party system and an inclusive approach to government should provide channels for orderly political competition and responsive government. But the freedoms associated with liberal democracy can give vent to non-negotiable demands. If they are not satisfied, escalating conflict may result. This is borne out by the inter-communal violence experienced elsewhere in Africa and also in many other regions. In these circumstances democratisation can exacerbate problems for democracy.

In fact Zambia, with seventy-three different ethnic groups and seven officially recognised indigenous languages and thirty different dialects, is remarkably stable. Of course there are politicians even now who make appeals to their own 'group'. They seek to discredit opponents on the grounds that they are tribalist, and sometimes deploy both arguments simultaneously. But so-called 'tribalism' does not appear to be a *major* threat. This is possibly a tribute to the sense of 'one Zambia, one nation' built during the Kaunda years. It also reflects the unifying force of poverty as a generally shared condition. There is, however, one exception. There is an aspiration in Western Province, formerly Barotseland and a separate protectorate of British rule, to see the reinstatement of the terms of the London Agreement (1964), which recognised a certain degree of autonomy, later removed by the Zambian state. The new pluralist environment of the 1990s has given a new lease of life to campaigning on this issue. It could become more problematical—and provoke an authoritarian response—if it becomes increasingly entangled with the outbreaks of violence on the neighbouring Caprivi strip. There, ethnically similar groups seeking self-rule from Namibia have won support from Zambia's Barotse Patriotic Front.

## *External problems*

Generally speaking, the prospects for sustaining emerging democracies in the post-Cold War world are enhanced by the increased number of democracies in existence, and by international 'democracy assistance' (see Burnell 2000b). But for Zambia, the external environment impacts in both positive and negative ways on domestic politics.

### *Regional politics*

Zambia has borders with eight countries, including Namibia. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC, formerly Zaire) has descended into civil war, in what according to United States Under-Secretary of State for Africa, Susan Rice, could turn into Africa's 'first world war' (*Financial Times Weekend* 14–15 November 1998:1). In 1999 Chiluba worked hard to broker a diplomatic solution, but the disturbance is not at an end. Angola has not known peace since before independence (1975), and Zambia now hosts over 210,000 refugees including 170, 000 Angolans. Zimbabwe, whose troops are involved in the DRC conflict, is becoming less stable, due to growing economic hardship and impatience with President Mugabe's increasingly autocratic rule. Malawi looks more stable, but politics there has been called 'ideologically and intellectually bankrupt' (Banda 1998: 326). The Namibian constitution has been amended to allow President Nujoma to serve a third term, making him virtually life president. So, even where developments in the region do not seriously threaten Zambia's security (suspicions of Zambian complicity in gun-running to rebel forces in Angola have sparked threats of retaliation), the country's immediate neighbours do not offer encouragement to Zambia to democratise further—let alone apply pressure to refrain from backsliding. (Regional networking by human rights groups is one possible exception.) Also, the deteriorating political situation surrounding Zambia means that stability in Zambia has become increasingly important to the international donors, who were previously—especially around 1996—more exercised by what they considered ominous signs of democratic reversal there.

### *International political economy*

The timing of the collapse of Zambia's Second Republic was influenced not just by the events in Soviet bloc countries but also the growing disaffection of the external donors. The World Bank suspended disbursements for nearly three years starting in 1987, and again in 1991 prior to the elections. The attitude taken by these institutions has subsequently become even more important to the country's politics. The declining production of copper has coincided with a fall in copper's value (in November 1998 copper's internationally traded price fell to its lowest level for over eleven years). The world market is one of structural oversupply. The regeneration of the mines depends on attracting large new inflows of foreign direct investment. Significant tax concessions have had to be offered to the new owners in return for promised investment. That will constrain public sector finances for many years to come.

Thus Zambia's dependence on foreign aid—in 1996 equivalent to over 87 per cent of central government expenditure (only three countries were more aid-dependent in that regard) and approaching 70 per cent of GDP—will continue, and is particularly crucial to social spending. This meant that as the country's strategic importance waned after the end of the Cold War and South Africa's loss of pariah status, so the donors' potential leverage via aid increased to exceptional levels. The annual Consultative Group (CG) meetings of the World Bank became a focal point of political dialogue, with the Bank pressing its concerns about *economic* governance and liberalisation and advancing indirectly the bilateral donors' concerns about aspects of *political* governance, such as political and civil liberties. These meetings and the donor governments have been lobbied directly by Zambia's advocacy groups, as well as by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (Africa), for instance over alleged human rights abuses, harassment of the media and political opposition. Following the government's introduction of a state of emergency in October 1997 in the wake of an abortive military coup, the CG advised the government that it would convene only after the emergency was lifted (which was done in March 1998). In May 1999 it pressed the government to consult intensively with civil society over proposals for improving governance, following an approach by ten Zambian NGOs. Even so, the most serious suspension of international financial support was occasioned, in 1998–9, by the government's procrastination over privatising ZCCM, rather than over political concerns. Following the government's agreement to sell the remainder of ZCCM (completed in March 2000), and also impressed by Chiluba's decision not to stand for a third term as president (which would have required changing the constitution), the donors became much more forthcoming. The May 1999 CG meeting committed a total of $630 million in new support. There is an expectation that Zambia will soon qualify for exceptional debt relief under the enhanced HIPIC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) Initiative. What, then, is the net effect of all this on Zambia's politics?

Such a simple question cannot be answered easily, for several reasons. There are the difficulties of comparing the different types of aid and aid-related 'intervention' (project aid; programme aid; relief aid; governance assistance; external financial and diplomatic support to NGOs and the media), their political consequences and the threatened and imposed conditionalities. There are methodological conundrums over the time horizons that should be selected for measuring impact (different aspects of the aid relationship command different periods, some being so long range that we cannot yet anticipate the results). It is virtually impossible to establish causal connections and separate out the influence of other variables and their complex interactions with aid. Finally there is the 'anticipation effect'—actions, deliberate inaction or postponements by Zambian actors in anticipation of what the donors' likely response would be—which often lies concealed.

The MMD's chances of remaining in power would presumably have been much reduced if the donor community had not provided substantial assistance. In the first half of the 1990s Zambia was one of the largest recipients of official development assistance of any African country, both in absolute terms and proportional to GNP. The counterfactual implications cannot be known. Later on the Bank became torn between pressures to sanction aid on political grounds and wanting to push forward with its support for poverty-alleviation measures in one of the world's poorest countries, in accordance with the high priority it now gives to poverty in its global mission. A similar point now applies to the Bank's keenness to sponsor governance capacity-building.

Some of the government's gestures towards liberal democracy have probably been influenced by donor pressure, for example in 1996 making the Electoral Commission formally independent (though appointed by the president) and establishing a Permanent Human Rights Commission (which has been outspoken, but has inadequate resources and no power to enforce its recommendations). The leadership's contention that the donors are inconsistent and continually move the 'goalposts' suggests a lack of enthusiasm for making the reforms. Compliance with the political conditionalities could be interpreted primarily as a means to the end of gaining vital financial assistance. This is but a replay of past events. Saasa and Carlsson (1996) amply demonstrated in the context of aid's *economic* conditionalities that in these circumstances there will be no 'ownership' of the proffered solutions. If economic policy and institutional reforms rarely succeed unless governments are genuinely committed to them and see them as their own, then the same applies in matters political. While the MMD government has 'owned' the programme of economic reform its acquiescence in a political reform agenda has looked half-hearted at times. The donors' strategy of supporting selected 'NGOs' is not risk-free, either. It encourages external dependency. It allows the government an opportunity to undermine the advocacy NGOs' claims to be authentic. They are portrayed as being involved in a non-transparent relationship with the donors, in addition to being unaccountable (unelected). However, so far such charges have not been confirmed, Baylies and Szeftel acknowledging that the donors' interests have 'served to encourage opposition elements and activists in local civic organisations in their protests' (Baylies and Szeftel 1997:125).

The historical record of the West trying to plant sustainable democracies in post-colonial Africa is unconvincing. There are no persuasive grounds for believing that a similar exercise would work better now. The democratisation literature is largely agreed that the crucial role that international forces *can* sometimes play in tilting the odds in favour of democratic *transition* is not replicable for democratic *deepening* and *consolidation*. In the long run, forces of a structural nature *internal* to the country must supply the main positive ingredients. In the interim, however, an *adverse* external environment could significantly increase the chances of democratic decay. In Zambia's case, the transition was largely driven endogenously. The international community's power to *advance* democratisation further forward now is less than its power to *reverse* it, or retard reversal. Once again, we see an asymmetry in the capabilities to promote or constrain, to create and destroy. In particular, whatever weakens the country's economic prospects, or places more power over its future in the hands of foreign financial institutions and their sponsors, must be problematic for democracy.

## Looking ahead

In Africa, Ottaway's judgment is that it is far too early to talk of democracy because the most difficult part of democratic transformation—moving from an initial opening to a sustained process of change—has yet to occur (Ottaway 1997:4). That is as true of Zambia as anywhere on the continent. The democratic opening in the early 1990s was greeted at first with an optimism that was excessive. The dismay that has greeted subsequent developments, especially around the time of the 1996 elections, probably magnifies the true nature of the *dénouement*. Because economic matters predominated in the attention paid to Zambia throughout much of the 1980s, it was the MMD's economic agenda that captured the imagination in 1991. Our understanding of how challenging democratisation can be was more superficial then than it is now. So, the initial euphoria over Zambia should not be judged too harshly. In future there should be less scope to be disappointed about democracy's progress, because our expectations have been tempered by more recent developments.

Democratisation is multi-dimensional. The constituents move at different speeds. There can be progress on some fronts even while stagnation or backward movement characterises certain others, blurring the dividing lines between the different stages on the way to democratic transition and consolidation. Thus democratisation is best understood as a form of variable geometry. Some elements of consolidation may come into view (for example, a resilient independent press and vocal civic associations) even though some aspects of transition are barely in place or remain unfinished business (for example, an effective multi-party system and a well-managed electoral process that commands everyone's confidence). Zambia has not yet fulfilled the most commonly touted benchmarks for democratic *consolidation* (Huntington's double turnover test for example), although two rounds of multi-party elections at the national and the local level have been held (both the 1991 national and 1998 local elections were contested by all the relevant political parties). But neither the 1996 general election nor the 1998 contest harboured much uncertainty about the overall winners.

Institutionalised uncertainty over electoral outcomes is a widely accepted hallmark of democracy. Distrust and suspicion compounded by administrative errors have marred the electoral process. The Electoral Commission's performance in 1996 was censured in the Supreme Court's *Petition Judgment* (1999). But the *Judgment* denied the electoral system had been comprehensively managed or predisposed to grant an unfair or any other advantage or disadvantage to anyone in advance. Moreover the defects did not seriously affect the result. So again, the verdict is a mixed one. The next general elections in 2001 will be nothing if not interesting. Just as the completion of ZCCM privatisation and approach of HIPIC debt relief could start to turn the corner for Zambia's economic fortunes, so the departure of Frederick Chiluba and Kenneth Kaunda from the presidential contest will open up a new chapter in its politics. At the very least the principle of constitutionalism will have been preserved.

Nevertheless, elections can never provide the full story. Moreover, the overall direction of movement towards or away from democracy, and the full significance of individual events, may become fully apparent only with the benefit of hindsight. Snapshots taken at discrete intervals can present a series of images but do not accurately portray the continual flux of an open-ended process. In Zambia the organisational architecture of accountable government is gradually taking shape, through a series of formal institutional reforms, although the informal norms and practices lag some way behind (thus the Anti-Corruption Commission and Drugs Enforcement Agency are both accused of being undermined by inadequate resources and political interference). Ultimately the construction work of the 1990s could bequeath a significant legacy, as the new organisational environment begins to impact on the behaviour of the next generation of politicians.

Over the years not only do new facts emerge, but the way in which we interpret the evidence sometimes changes too. Take party politics. Far from seeking to co-opt all leading political actors into the ruling party and inhibit opposition, Chiluba has encouraged disaffected colleagues to leave MMD. One perspective suggests that the intended effect has been a more compliant ruling party, united behind the leader and stripped of internal challengers. If this has been the case, the result has been a proliferation of small, ineffective parties (there are twenty-four registered parties, but many are defunct; only twelve submitted annual returns for 1998–9). All of MMD's rivals are at a major financial disadvantage. So, MMD has not had to face a major external challenge. In the short term the situation looks unhelpful to democracy. Although disagreements within MMD have caused the government to withdraw some potentially illiberal legislative proposals, an even greater executive accountability to the legislature might have been expected if all of the fault lines originally encompassed within the parliamentary party had persisted. Nevertheless, in the long run the consolidation of MMD together with the emergence of alternative parties that eventually do become viable is preferable to either the Second Republic's *de jure* one-party state or the continuing political predominance of a heavily factionalised MMD. Responsibility for making progress lies partly with opposition politicians and partly with a greater willingness by the government to respect a level playing field in political competition (for example equal treatment of applications to hold political demonstrations).

By mid-1999 there was some evidence of a learning process concerning the need to form a united opposition. On this, Guy Scott, leader of the former National Lima Party (and a minister in the first MMD government) called the December 1998 local elections a major catalyst. Subsequent local and parliamentary by-elections reinforced the message, with MMD winning seats often on a minority of votes. But it is too early to predict whether the Zambia Alliance for Progress (ZAP), formed in mid-1999 by the leaders of some minor parties, the United Party for National Development (a new party), or UNIP under new leadership (Kaunda has been replaced by Francis Nkhoma as party president) can mount an effective challenge to MMD. For the time being, the party system remains unbalanced. In any case the dearth of realistic economic policy options and the undesirability of moving to a party system aligned along regional and 'ethnic' lines leave few obvious alternatives to a perpetuation of the personalist and neo-patrimonial hue to party politics. In that regard Zambia is similar to some other, and much larger, new democracies and its future will not be very different from the past, even if a more competitive party system emerges and general elections secure an alternation of parties in power.

Zambia is in transition, but that is not to say it has enjoyed or will soon complete a transition to 'full democracy'. If the yardstick for democratic achievement follows the sorts of indicators of democracy and freedom that for instance either the Freedom House surveys or David Beetham's (1994a) democratic audit indicate (discussed by Baker *vis-à-vis* Africa in his chapter), then Zambia clearly still has a long way to go. But contemporary trends in democratisation in other comparable countries in Africa and elsewhere place Zambia neither near the front nor at the back of the field, irrespective of how we measure comparability (by reference to socio-economic conditions, previous experience of democracy, and so on). Indeed, Zambia's combination of a fairly ineffective state, lively but compact 'civil society', under-institutionalised parties and party system, and weak economy may be no more harmful (and possibly less inimical) to democracy's chances than a situation where some of these are in poor shape and one is over-bearingly strong (for example, a command economy, or a market economy dominated by foreign private capital which overawes all politically relevant actors). High positive scores for all these variables would seem ideal, but few countries can claim that distinction. Zambia's recent jagged progress in the political sphere may even be viewed quite positively when compared against its own unfavourable background and with trends in wealthier 'mature' democracies like the United States, where Putnam believes a decline of social capital is responsible for growing 'democratic disarray' (1997:62).[2] Such comparisons do not make Zambia a 'full democracy'. But then any expectation in 1991 that the country would reach that goal by 2000 would have been a triumph for hope over reason. Moreover, it would be wrong to assume that the same grounds that explain why democratisation has not proceeded more rapidly or more smoothly since 1991 will ultimately produce a complete unravelling of the democratic transition. The influences at work on democratic progress and decay are not that symmetrical.

Finally, if every stock-taking must conclude with a forecast, then it is that Zambia will continue to muddle along. The probabilities range from modest further progress to significant but not fatal erosion. That is consistent with John Wiseman's (1999) inquiry into democracy in sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. He found no convincing grounds for strong and unambiguous support for a 'demo-optimist' position, but was just as unimpressed by excessive pessimism. In that respect Zambia's tale does indeed fairly reflect the predicament of many states in Africa.

## Notes

1 Economic and social data taken from various published World Bank reports.

2 In contrast, field research by Bratton *et al.* (1999:813) found 'a relatively full store of social capital' in Zambia.

# 9

# Political parties and the development of Indian democracy

*Andrew Wyatt*

> Short of a threat to the integrity of the national political system, the major threat comes from the possibility of the disintegration of the governing party. That the stability of the central government seems to depend so heavily on a single leader dominating a weak party is a cause for concern.
>
> (Weiner 1989:37)

The fate of India's democratic political system and the strength of Indian political parties have often been linked (Weiner 1989). As important changes to these parties have taken place it seems an opportune moment to re-assess the contribution of political parties to sustaining democracy in India. The development and maintenance of democracy have frequently been credited to the nationalist movement led by the Indian National Congress (INC) and its successor, the Congress Party. Other parties have also helped to maintain the conventions and procedures necessary for the functioning of democracy in India. These parties have become more important since the Congress Party ceased to be a dominant party. The 1989 general election was a watershed as it marked the beginning of a period of more open and plural party competition (Nikolenyi 1998). Thus, the ability of non-Congress coalitions to win general elections and form governments has shaped politics and policy since then. In this chapter, I will assess the contribution of parties to the Indian experience of democracy in three phases: the two decades of Congress monopoly until 1967, the subsequent period that was dominated by the Congress Party led by Indira Gandhi, and the period of party proliferation since 1989. Before that I will discuss the role of political parties in giving form to democracy in India.

## Democracy and political parties

Some conceptual clarification is required about what I take the term 'democracy' to mean in the Indian context. I use the term to refer to liberal representative democracy unless otherwise stated. Among the conditions that have to be fulfilled for Indian democracy to qualify for this label is a fairly and directly elected assembly to direct the activity of the state. Also critical is the protection of political freedom and civil liberties that enable individual participation in a democratic system (Beet ham 1993:56–7). Some writers, most notably Ayesha Jalal, have expressed reservations about using the term 'democracy' as a shorthand for the liberal representative variant. She prefers to use the term 'formal' democracy for that purpose. Jalal uses 'democracy' to refer to what she describes as *substantive* democracy; a form that enables people to pursue 'their interests with a measure of autonomy from entrenched structures of domination and privilege' (Jalal 1995:3).

While I accept the normative view that democratic development is incomplete and the autonomy of citizens needs expanding in India (and elsewhere), I also follow Rueschemeyer *et al.* (1992:43) in taking the view that liberal representative democracy brings with it important advantages that make it a worthwhile project in spite of any failure to eliminate socio-economic inequality. There is also the possibility, with Jalal's approach, that India's considerable achievement of maintaining a representative democracy, though marred by the lapse into overt authoritarianism during the Emergency (1975–7), is excessively diminished. Even in the case of the Emergency the defeat of the Congress Party in 1977 and the smooth accession to power of the first non-Congress government indicated the resilience of the democratic tradition in India. This tradition was cherished by many ordinary voters and adhered to by the opposition elite.

The history of democratic failure in many other post-colonial political systems suggests that India, at the very least, has been a relative democratic success. However this cannot disguise serious shortcomings in either the quality of representative democracy, the accountability of the institutions of the state to elected representatives, or the protection of civil liberties in India. It could further be argued that in addition to the shortcomings in the preservation of liberal democratic rights, these rights have been interpreted in an uneven fashion with regard to gender. The arrangements intended to guarantee group rights for religious minorities in the area of personal law have resulted in a legal system that fails to uphold equality for women across a range of issues (Menon 1998:243–4). By this I do not suggest that liberal representative democracy is an inappropriate project, but note the need for its re-articulation in a more inclusive manner (Phillips 1993).

My main concern in this chapter, however, is with the contribution of political parties towards sustaining liberal democracy in India. In doing so I do not argue that parties in India are generally in decline. While there is evidence that some parties are in decline, in other cases parties are becoming more effective. Thus it is appropriate to talk about *changing* parties when discussing the general picture (Mair 1994). In keeping with the concern with the role of parties in sustaining democracy I concentrate on the ability of parties to mediate between voters and government rather than taking a more general view of the functions of parties.

The role of political parties in strengthening democratic political systems is much discussed in the growing literature on democratisation (see Randall and Svåsand's chapter in this book). The relationship between parties and democracy was also debated in the early literature on modern democracy. Elite theorists, such as

Michels, saw parties as inherently elitist and likely to frustrate the control of government by the mass of ordinary people. This view was paralleled by the aspirations of the Populists and the Progressives in the United States who deliberately tried to limit the role of parties with reforms to encourage direct democracy and limit the power of party bosses (Lipow 1996:46–7). Others have taken a less pessimistic view of parties and noted that they structure democratic politics. Schattschneider reflected this high view of parties when he asked the rhetorical question 'How else can the majority get organised?' (Schattschneider 1942:208). Parties are considered to do this by aggregating and articulating mass preferences as they compete to win elections. In addition, parties reconcile conflicts as they endeavour to win support from a wide selection of groups (Pomper 1972:47–53). Following an election victory the winning party translates mass preferences into policy. After a period in government the party becomes a focus of accountability for actions while in power. Parties become the vital link between the people and government and thus facilitate popular sovereignty.

The literature on parties and democracy in India tends to endorse this positive view of parties and, in an ironic counterpoint to Michels, the nationalist elite is credited with responsibility for setting liberal democratic norms and disseminating them among the wider population (Sisson 1994:37). In what follows, I will assess the contribution of parties in the following categories: aggregation of preferences, policy implementation, conciliation, commitment to liberal rights and as a focus of accountability. This is not an exclusive list of the functions of parties, but I have selected those functions that are most apposite to the development of democracy (King 1969:119–20). The development and maintenance of regime legitimacy could also be added to the list. This is closely linked to the survival of democracy but its inclusion would introduce another conceptual dimension to an already crowded chapter, and it is a theme that has recently received thorough treatment in the context of India's party system (Mitra and Enksat 1999).

This chapter concentrates on the role of parties in shaping *national* democratic politics. India has a federal system and the connections between parties and government at the state and district level are an important element of India's democratic political system (see, for example, Manor 1995; Manor and Crook 1998: 22–84). However capturing the rich diversity and complexity of politics in India's twenty-eight states is beyond the scope of this chapter. Furthermore India's states possess discrete party systems. The consequences of party proliferation have not always been felt at the state level. The emergence of an extra party at the state level may not produce coalition government in the state, but the accumulated proliferation of parties has had important national consequences.

It should be noted that the functions listed in the last paragraph are not carried out exclusively by parties, as other actors and institutions contribute to the maintenance of democracy. In particular the opportunities offered by the proliferation of social movements and civil society organisations have been regarded by some as one way of revitalising Indian democracy (Kothari 1994). However Indian political parties remain the key to accessing state power, and so concentrating on the contribution of parties to democracy is a subject worthy of commentary in its own right. In the contemporary period it has—inevitably—led to a highly pertinent question: how do democratic governing arrangements work when a coalition of parties are in government?

## The Indian National Congress (INC) and democracy

A number of scholars have argued that the nationalist movement led by the INC created a critical institutional basis for the development and sustenance of, democracy in India (see, for example, Das Gupta 1989; Manor 1990; Weiner 1989). The protracted process of constitutional reform under British rule, leading up to India's independence in 1947 and designed to give limited representation to Indians, is often given credit for successful democratisation. However Varshney argues that a better explanation lies in the complex relationship between the democratically inclined nationalist movement and a retrenching colonial regime (Varshney 1998a; 38–41). This view accords the nationalist movement much greater responsibility for democratising the political structures that were bequeathed by the departing colonial power. The democratic path adopted by the nationalist elite was consistent with its liberal orientation. Sisson notes the 'powerful *liberal persuasion of a nationalist political class* that achieved and maintained dominance in the nationalist movement' (emphasis in the original, Sisson 1994:37). This included a commitment to the liberal political rights and freedoms vital to the success of democracy.

Gandhi's leadership helped unify the nationalist movement and restrain the less disciplined elements that threatened to sully the moderate image of the movement (Guha 1997). While he was less enamoured of Western political ideas than some of his nationalist colleagues, he certainly prevented extremists from dominating the movement and kept the path clear for the liberal elite that was to lead the Congress Party after 1947. The pre-Independence experience of the nationalist movement also shaped an organisation that could be transformed rapidly into a political party. Its early success as a political party was congruent with the demonstrated ability of the nationalist movement to mobilise disparate groups into a unified coalition. The devolved nature of the Congress organisation, required for the successful articulation of a national movement in a regionally diverse country, meant that the Congress was well prepared for the transition to a federal system and the associated state-level party systems (Manor 1990:28). The prominence of the INC and its leaders in the nationalist struggle gave the Congress Party a powerful aura of legitimacy (Kothari 1964:1166). However the legacy was not entirely benign, as the cumbersome coalition assembled before 1947 inhibited sweeping social reform and proved difficult to sustain over time. Under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, the Congress Party was not only profoundly influential on the institutions and norms of the new Indian state but also important in orchestrating the drafting of the new Constitution from the 'representative' elections to the conclusion of the Constituent Assembly debates (Austin 1966; Khilnani 1993:198–201). This process embedded the values of the nationalist elite—democracy, secularism, economic development, social and economic reform—into the rhetorical structure of the Indian state, even if the policy consequences of this commitment proved to be uneven.

The foundational role of the Congress Party has encouraged some observers to describe the Indian state as 'a party-based state' (Das Gupta 1989:71). The Congress Party not only added more than the legal basis to Indian democracy but also did much to propagate the conventions and values that determined the pattern of democratic behaviour required by the new constitution. Congress also promoted the unity of a very diverse nation in the making. As a nationalist movement, Congress strategy was to emphasise the unity of India in the face of British colonial dominance. After Independence, Nehru continued to promote the idea of a composite national identity that drew in the diverse strands of cultural identities observable among the population of the newly independent state. The institutions of independent India reflected this concern for unity. A federal system was adopted but was weakened by the retention of strong central powers. This enabled the central government to act to preserve the unity and territorial integrity of India. It has been argued that the federal system has operated in an uneven fashion. This is important because federalism is one way of accommodating the political aspirations of a diverse population. The Congress leadership succeeded in dealing with tension over the language issue by reorganising states along linguistic lines. However the federal system was not adapted to acknowledge religious identity or the aspirations of groups in sensitive border regions (Adeney 2000). This contributed to serious tension in the states of Kashmir, Punjab and the Northeast (Brass 1994). Tension in these regions has spilled over into civil conflict that has placed a great strain on India's liberal democratic institutions.[1]

The Congress Party was able to exploit its dominance of the nationalist movement, and emerged as the dominant political party after Independence. It won comfortable parliamentary majorities in the face of a diverse array of opposition parties until 1977. Congress was not the only party committed to democracy, and a variety of opposition parties participated in and legitimised the democratic political system. The main Communist parties committed themselves to a democratic path and thus removed a possible anti-system party (Eashvariah 1987). The rise and decline of the dominance of Congress is illustrated in Table 9.1. The dominance of Congress—in terms of parliamentary majorities detailed in the table—was somewhat exaggerated by the single member single plurality electoral system, under which the Congress Party never won a majority of the popular vote.

The electoral strength of Congress in the early years of the new republic has been ascribed to the institutional strength of the party. Kothari famously described the Congress 'system' that allowed district leaders to distribute patronage and incorporate social groups at the local level. This was built up in pyramidal fashion with links to the state and national party. The national leadership had the power to intervene in local matters but generally left state parties to organise their own affairs (Randall 1988:81). Activities such as candidate selection were carried out locally. The organisation provided space for factions within the party to compete for influence and so 'an intricate structure of conflict mediation, bargaining and consensus was developed within the framework of Congress' (Kothari 1964:1163–4). The party also carried out the critical function of conflict mediation within its organisation, as demonstrated in the state of Punjab. The potential for ethnic conflict in the region was high given its turbulent history. However the Congress Party helped to contain tension in the state as it 'often resembled an intra-consociational coalition, vertically organising and accommodating hostile ethnic groups' (Singh 1993:86).

It is easy to depict the era of the Congress system, with a vibrant mass party, as a golden age for democracy organised by a political party. However by looking at Congress performance in the areas identified before, we get a more nuanced picture. The early Congress Party was successful in terms of aggregating and articulating mass preferences. The party responded to the interests of its diverse constituency and was able to offer policies to suit all. The commitment to planned development, secularism, national unity, constitutionalism and moderate nationalism represented a distinctive and popular framework within which to develop particular policies (Brass 1968:1177). In ideological terms this allowed Congress to dominate the centre of the political spectrum and exclude competitors.

When it came to policy implementation the Congress record was mixed. Representing a broad spectrum of groups with potentially conflicting interests influenced policy outcomes. Thus policies that ran contrary to the interests of wealthier party members were not effectively implemented. The federal division of responsibilities meant that vested interests could block progressive reforms, such as land reform, that required state-level legislation. Furthermore local elites could determine the extent to which national policies were implemented at the district level. Some reforms were accepted, such as the prohibition of untouchability and the associated scheme of compensatory discrimination, but many wider socio-economic problems were unresolved. The social revolution promised to the large indigent minority, who disproportionately backed the Congress Party at successive elections, remained largely unfulfilled (Jalal 1995: 45). This outcome was also determined by the nature of the Congress system itself. The tendency towards non-interference meant that the national leadership was aware of state-level shortcomings but felt unable to resolve them. The preservation of institutional pluralism and party unity were accorded priority over policy concerns expressed by Congress leaders at the centre. The record when analysed in terms of gender was also uneven. The 1950 Constitution extended a range of impressive rights and equalities to women. This was followed shortly afterwards by measures to reform Hindu personal law to enhance the status of women, though this legislation has been criticised for curtailing many of the liberal elements of local customary practice (Menon 1998:244–6). The 1974 report, *Toward Equality,* challenged the commitment of the government to promoting equality and suggests that the parties aggregated women's votes but were less willing to articulate their interests (Forbes 1996:226).

*Table 9.1* Indian general elections—leading party (by seats)

| *Year* | *Leading party* | *Seats* | *Total seats* | *Percentage of the vote* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1952 | Congress | 357 | 489 | 45.0 |
| 1957 | Congress | 359 | 494 | 47.8 |
| 1962 | Congress | 358 | 494 | 44.7 |
| 1967 | Congress | 279 | 520 | 40.7 |
| 1971 | Congress (R) | 352 | 519 | 43.7 |
| 1977 | Janata | 295 | 542 | 41.4 |
| 1980 | Congress (I) | 353 | 527 | 42.7 |
| 1984 | Congress (I) | 415 | 542 | 48.1 |
| 1989 | Congress (I) | 197 | 529 | 39.5 |
| 1991 | Congress (I) | 227 | 510 | 36.4 |
| 1996 | Bharatiya Janata Party | 161 | 543 | 20.3 |
| 1998 | Bharatiya Janata Party | 182 | 543 | 25.6 |
| 1999 | Bharatiya Janata Party | 182 | 543 | 23.8 |

Sources: 1952–80: Butler *et al.* 1984:104; 1984–91: Brass 1994:76–7; 1996–9: Election Commission of India (www.eci.gov.in/).

The early Congress Party can be judged more positively when assessed in terms of its ability to act as a conciliator and as a focus of accountability. Congress proved able to contain conflict and in particular succeeded in negotiating workable compromises over language. As the only party in government, it provided a clear focus of accountability. The institutional strength of the party at the local level also provided another avenue for feedback. In terms of a commitment to liberal democratic rights the Constitution is an impressive achievement. The nationalist elite's rhetorical commitment to the freedoms of speech, the press, conscience and assembly was carried over into matching constitutional rights. The strength of these rights was technically diminished by other constitutional measures used to create a strong state at the centre. The existence of emergency powers and the power of preventive detention provide two relevant examples. However the sparing use of the powers of a strong state stand in the Congress Party's favour here. The weak commitment of some state leaders to the secular principles of the constitution provides further evidence of a qualified commitment to liberal values (Hasan 1998: 21–4). Once again, the outcomes permitted by the Congress system demonstrated its ambiguous consequences for democracy. Having said this, the national leadership did make strenuous efforts to encourage a conciliatory and liberal approach to politics. This constituted a political context conducive to the exercise of political freedom and was matched by an inclusive approach to politics at other levels of the Congress system. In summary the early Congress era can be considered a qualified democratic success, but the potential for deterioration was evident prior to the accession of Indira Gandhi to the post of Prime Minister and party leader.

## Indira Gandhi and the demise of the Congress system

The ruling style of Indira Gandhi has been identified as a critical factor in determining the move away from the early Congress system. The outcome of a contest for absolute control of the party between senior party leaders and Indira Gandhi was a split in 1969 into the Congress (R) faction under the leadership of Mrs Gandhi and the Congress (O) faction. The latter maintained control over the formal party structure and the former dominated the parliamentary party. By 1972 the Congress (R) had achieved supremacy with a series of significant election victories. Congress (R) became known as Congress (I) after another split in 1978 (all references to the Congress Party hereafter refer to the faction led by Mrs Gandhi). Mrs Gandhi increasingly relied upon direct appeals to the voters and did not rebuild the old system. In 1971 she fought the general election campaign in a highly personalised fashion with the slogan *garibi hatao* (abolish poverty). Attempts were made to rebuild the organisation but central dominance robbed it of its old vitality (M.Singh 1990:60–1). Das Gupta observes that Mrs Gandhi 'increasingly transformed the nature of the organisation from an institutional mode of accommodation to an electoral instrument beholden to a ruling leadership' (Das Gupta 1989:70).

Kohli (1991:42–7) provides an account of the hollowing out of the Congress Party at the district level in Gujarat that resulted in a virtually defunct organisation by the mid-1980s. He observed that the Congress 'party' remained as a symbol used by candidates to further their electoral ambitions. These candidates had some links to the local population and reflected a coalition of dominant groups among the electorate. The old dominant castes had been successfully challenged by upwardly mobile castes. However candidates' nominations remained the gift of the central leadership, and the local party had ceased to aggregate and conciliate the concerns of disparate groups. Congress continued to win elections but its institutional weakness meant that its eventual electoral nemesis was never in doubt.

The Gujarat illustration highlights the interesting relationship between elite agency, mass participation, social change and the role of political parties. So far the discussion has emphasised the role of party elites in securing democracy and then weakening the party as an institution. The question needs to be raised as to whether changes in the parties are elite-determined, or can be traced to wider structural factors. There is also the issue of the role of the electorate in interpreting and adhering to democratic values. Since 1947 the trend has been one of increasing participation in elections and demonstrable sophistication on the part of ordinary voters. Popular attitudes towards parties have become markedly less positive since the 1960s, although voters continue to expect the government to have an important function in society (Sisson 1994:45–6). One sign of a strong-willed electorate is the retribution visited upon governments that it perceives to have failed to govern effectively. This trend is particularly clear in India at the state level (Manor 1995:68). The point is that the nationalist elite may have set India on a democratic trajectory but ordinary voters have used democracy for their own purposes.

The growing assertiveness of a variety of social groups challenged the ability of the Congress Party to aggregate the interests of a broad cross-section of social groups. Bardhan identifies growing awareness of the implications of democracy among the general population as another source of change. He links the 'demand overload that has short-circuited the Congress system' to the popular perception that democracy should open up opportunities for as many people as possible (Bardhan 1998:192). Upwardly mobile groups that were not accommodated by the Congress system took a while to organise effectively, but once they had reached a certain point on the political learning curve they proved to be formidable opponents even if they were not always able to displace the dominant party. For example in Uttar Pradesh the increasingly prosperous middle castes, excluded from patronage and political office by the upper caste ruling elite, began to challenge the Congress hegemony from the mid-1960s onwards (Hasan 1989:175–8). The former untouchables or dalits took longer to assert themselves in Uttar Pradesh but when they did so in the late 1980s they severely weakened the Congress Party. The dislocation caused by social change continues to have an impact on the relationship between political parties and democracy that will be discussed later in the chapter. For the moment it is sufficient to note that Congress had lost its monopoly position as the mediator between the ordinary people and the national government by the mid-1970s. Meanwhile, other parties were making strong claims to be considered as alternatives to the Congress Party at the national level.

In terms of its democratic functions, the Congress Party led by Indira Gandhi showed marked differences when compared with the earlier period. The process of interest aggregation was carried out differently. The ability of the party to aggregate preferences weakened as the party at the district level became less active. The pattern of central interference meant that state party leaders were obliged to be more responsive to the dictates of the central party leadership than local citizens and party activists. Preferment proceeded on the basis of loyalty to the party leader rather than a strong local following. Aggregation was conducted by the central leadership in search of an electorally viable strategy. For example, in the early 1970s Indira Gandhi articulated a policy programme, much more than hitherto, in line with the needs of the rural poor. Sensing public disaffection with the ineffectual Janata government she campaigned on a platform of stability and won the 1980 general election. Having regained office she articulated policies that were in keeping with the perceived sensitivities of the Hindu majority population of north India (Manor 1988:80–1).

In the area of policy implementation Mrs Gandhi recognised the inertia created by over-dependence on the devolved party structure and attempted a more direct approach. However this strategy did not work, and public frustration at a lack of progress with the redistributive policies of the 1971 manifesto fed into the crisis that precipitated the 1975 Emergency. In terms of gender the Congress Party did not advance the cause of women in the fashion that might have been expected of a party led by a woman. Indira Gandhi displayed ambivalent attitudes in this area of policy. She claimed to have a special interest in the needs of Indian women while distancing herself from what might be called a ‘feminist approach’ (Forbes 1996:231–6). Finally, in 1980 more modest socio-economic goals were proposed by the incoming Congress administration. After another nine years in power the Congress Party continued to make a much weaker claim to be a party committed to development and poverty eradication.

The post-system Congress also demonstrated a limited capacity to conciliate competing groups. Its institutional decline diminished the ability of the political system to manage disputes in a democratic manner and thus contributed to the intensification of civil conflict in India. Weiner (1989:33) argues that the failure of state Congress parties in Assam and Punjab to negotiate settlements to local disputes was a prelude to a deterioration in political stability. The Congress Party became less interested in accommodation and more concerned with staying in power. Thus conflicts were exacerbated as Mrs Gandhi sought to destabilise opposition parties in the states. For example in the Punjab, extremist elements were encouraged in order to weaken the moderate Akali Dal opposition (Singh 1993:86–7). The move away from conciliating and mediating politics also opened up the way for other forms of political mobilisation. The use of caste and religion became much more apparent in this changed environment. It is ironic that the Congress Party in the 1980s, disoriented in the absence of a strong federalised party organisation, played the majoritarian Hindu card and thus legitimated a strategy that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) could use with much greater credibility (Hasan 1998:196–205).

The commitment to liberal rights was weakening at the highest level of the Congress Party during the 1970s and 1980s. The period of Emergency rule demonstrated this as press freedoms were curtailed and the courts put under pressure to conform to the requirements of the Emergency. The abuse of civil liberties was further demonstrated as aggressive slum clearance and forced sterilisations were carried out. The detention of political activists and opposition leaders provided further evidence of illiberality. The Congress Party was careful to distance itself from the excesses of the Emergency by 1980. However the diminished commitment to secularism, and instrumental use of religion for the purposes of electoral mobilisation, provide evidence of an attenuated commitment to liberal norms of political conduct in the 1980s.

Accountability was one area in which it could be argued the Congress Party made some democratic progress. The 1971 general election was called early and de-linked from the state elections which had until then been held at the same time as the national ones. This separation reduced the possibilities of a confused mandate emerging as elections were clearly distinguished. The direct appeals to the voters made by the national Congress leadership from 1971 onwards encouraged a straightforward verdict on policy performance. However any advances in terms of electoral accountability were tempered by the reduced ability of the party to serve as a conduit for voter feedback between elections. In sum, the changing role of the Congress Party in facilitating democracy in India should be understood as a consequence of both altered elite attitudes and broader socio-economic changes.

## The proliferation of Indian political parties

The Congress Party was defeated in the 1977 general election by a unified opposition that combined to form the Janata Party. The Janata Party included the Hindu nationalist Jan Sangh, elements of the Congress (O) and the Bharatiya Lok Dal. The latter party had strong connections with the middle castes of Uttar Pradesh who had chafed at the Congress dominance in the state. Janata also attracted a number of Congress leaders who defected just prior to the election (Jaffrelot 1996:282). The Janata Party proved to be more successful at winning elections than governing: pre-existing tensions between the members of former parties surfaced and cabinet divisions became irreconcilable. However the principle of anti-Congressism had been established as electorally viable and some of the constituent parts of the Janata Party were able to re-establish themselves during the 1980s. The BJP, formed in 1980, inherited the nationalist mantle of the dissolved Jan Sangh but remained in the political wilderness until the late 1980s. The Lok Dal element of the Janata Party retained a following among the middle peasantry of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The weakening Congress Party was given an appearance of rude political health by a landslide result in the 1984 general elections, but the sympathy vote in the wake of Indira Gandhi's assassination disguised its organisational fragility (Hewitt 1989:161). The weakness of the post-system Congress Party opened a space for competitors. In October 1988 the political legatees of the Lok Dal joined with leaders of the former socialist parties and a new group of Congress defectors led by V.P.Singh to form the Janata Dal (JD) (Fickett 1993: 1151). While the JD had pretensions to national status it realised its limitations and entered a limited electoral alliance with the BJP to fight the 1989 general election.

The Congress Party, after a disappointing spell in government, was defeated in 1989. In contrast to 1977 no party emerged with an overall majority and the JD minority government was unable to complete a full five-year term. It also followed the Janata pattern and split in spectacular fashion while still in office. It was at this point that the fragmentation and proliferation of political parties accelerated. The Congress Party emerged as the largest party after the 1991 election, but still short of a parliamentary majority. It had clearly not recovered the dominant position it enjoyed before 1989. The BJP emerged as the largest opposition party but its support was regionally limited and it could not make a convincing claim to be a national party.

Regional parties began to challenge Congress successfully at the state level from the 1960s onwards. This resulted in a greater number of non-Congress governments at the state level but did not make a significant difference to majorities at national level. The national consequences of this were seen indirectly as Mrs Gandhi interfered at the state level to maintain Congress supremacy. It is only in the 1990s that the full significance of the regional parties for national politics became apparent. The current influence of regional parties at the national level was previewed by the occasional support extended by a regional party from Tamil

Nadu, the AIADMK, to the minority Congress administration between 1991 and 1994. The inability of a national party to win a clear majority meant that regional parties became important partners in coalitions and electoral alliances. The strength of the regional parties also explained why national parties could not win majorities in the Lok Sabha (Chiriyankandath 1996).

The 1996 general election result was inconclusive but it established the trend away from national party dominance. The Congress Party looked set to lose on a wave of anti-incumbency sentiment but it was further undermined by splits and a lack of party discipline. In Tamil Nadu the state party rebelled when the national leadership ignored local advice and entered into an electoral pact with the AIADMK. Most of the Congress Party in the state broke away and formed the Tamil Maanila Congress (TMC). The TMC allied with another regional party, the DMK, and together the alliance won all of the seats in Tamil Nadu. In Maharashtra the presence of rebel Congress candidates, disappointed at being denied nominations, helped the BJP, in alliance with the regional Shiv Sena Party, to sweep the state. In Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh leaders who had split from the Congress Party and formed their own parties undermined the already weak parent party. The BJP was not completely immune from this trend as the dissident leader Vaghela formed the Rashtriya Janata Party and ran candidates against his former party in the state of Gujarat. Table 9.2 illustrates the proliferation of parties and the extent of party fragmentation.

Following the 1996 election, the BJP, as the largest party, made an unsuccessful attempt to form a coalition government. The United Front (UF) coalition of regional and left of centre parties proved able to form a minority government in June 1996 but were dependent on 'outside support' from the Congress Party. By December 1997, Congress had withdrawn support from the UF government and fresh elections were called. The process of party fragmentation continued while the government was in office with the JD splitting. The Rashtiya Janata Dal emerged as the party backing the Chief Minister in the state of Bihar. The impending elections were a catalyst to further party splits: the Lok Shakti Party in Karnataka and the Biju Janata Dal in Orissa split from the JD and formed electoral alliances with the BJP, while in West Bengal a breakaway section of the Congress Party led by Mamata Banerjee formed the Trinamul Congress that also aligned with the BJP. A number of senior Congress figures also decided to run as independents. Only after Sonia Gandhi decided to campaign on behalf of the Congress Party did the high-profile defections end.

## Consequences of partyproliferation and coalitions for democracy in India

The proliferation of parties meant that government by coalition at the national level became a fixture of Indian political life. Fragmentation also resulted in volatile electoral outcomes while diminishing the power of national political parties to determine the political agenda. This may be seen as a useful corrective given the

*Table 9.2* Party fragmentation in the Lok Sabha 1993–8

| *Year* | *Percentage of seats controlled by the two largest parties* | *Number of parties* | *Number of Independent MPs* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1993 | 70% | 26 | 1 |
| 1996 | 56% | 29 | 8 |
| 1998 | 59% | 37 | 6 |

Source: author's calculations based on the following sources: 1993: Government of India 1993: v; 1996: www.indiavotes.com; Chiriyankandath 1996:3; 1998: www.indiavotes.com

weakened institutional structure of the Congress Party. The parties that gained influence at the expense of Congress present a mixed picture in terms of performing a democratic function. Many of the regional parties and the newer splinter parties are even weaker in terms of organisation than the Congress Party. Some of the splinter 'parties' can only make weak claims to facilitate democracy and are organised with the intention of securing influence for the notable who launched the party. The 'influence' may be as little as securing a parliamentary seat for the party leader. Thus the veteran Congress leader, Jagannath Mishra, floated his own party, the Bihar Jan Congress, to contest the 1998 election (*Asian Age,* 24 November 1997: 2).

The dominance of the leaders of some of the newer parties suggests few institutional constraints on their actions. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) provides a useful example. Within the BSP the writ of the leadership is absolute (interviews, 25 January 1997). In early 1997 Delhi party officials did not know if the party was going to field candidates in the next municipal elections as they were waiting for instructions from the national party leader, Kanshi Ram. Furthermore they expressed no wish to have the decision made at the local level. The dominance of the BSP leaders has also been commented on in the party in Uttar Pradesh (Mendelsohn and Vicziany 1998:229–33). Other leaders, such as Mulayam Singh Yadav of the Samajwadi Party, were also keen to give the impression that they have strong control over their parties. In sum, these elite-dominated parties illustrate a trend towards parties as vehicles for leadership contests rather than as organisations for aggregating mass preferences.

One consequence of the demise of Congress as a national party was the emergence of the BJP as a contender for the position of the national party. The rise of the BJP had many causes but among them was the political space created by Congress decline (Basu 1996:67–8). It needs to be emphasised, though, that the BJP has yet to emerge as a full national party. In the 1998 election the party fielded only 383 candidates—a figure that fell well short of the 543 candidates a national party could field. The Congress Party, still nursing national ambitions, came closer to full coverage by fielding a total 471 candidates (www.indiavotes.com). Furthermore there were entire states, such as Tamil Nadu and Kerala, where the BJP gained negligible electoral support. It remains to be seen whether India's electoral geography is a structural constraint on the BJP, or if it is simply a case of the slow accumulation of momentum that would eventually see the party achieve effective all-India strength (Manor 1992).

That the BJP is an exception to the trend towards weak party institutions in India can be explained by the facts, not only that it can draw on a strong network of activists, but also that it possesses stronger party discipline than its competitors. However this has to be qualified by locating the BJP in the wider Hindu nationalist movement. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is an important source of the BJP's organisational strength. The BJP was formed at the behest of the RSS and it retains close links to it. Close ties with the RSS provide the BJP with activists, funds and an ethos that encourages discipline. The RSS, describing itself as a cultural rather than as a political organisation, aims to transform Indian society into one that reflects its religious nationalist ethos (Akbar 1999:8). Thus its political ambitions are construed more broadly than the narrower electoral concerns of the BJP. While the party includes many who are not members of the RSS, the influence of the parent organisation is profound. For example, most of the BJP members of the current union cabinet are RSS members. However the influence of the RSS and the BJP has been limited by the pluralism encouraged by party proliferation. The consequences of these changes for political life in India have been mixed, but some of the changes have reinvigorated aspects of democratic practice.

## *Aggregation*

The process of interest aggregation and articulation has been modified by the electoral decline of the Congress Party and the rise of its competitors. The BJP with its dense network of activists and local organisation is the closest rival to the Congress Party when it comes to aggregating interests nationally. Even if we discount the lack of a full national presence, the ability of the BJP to aggregate effectively has to be qualified because of the association of the BJP with the RSS. The BJP is an element in a wider project and though it has to be responsive to the voters, a frequent source of tension inside the party and between the party and the RSS, it has other responsibilities. The BJP, to the extent that it is an agent of the RSS, has to balance its aggregative function with its mission of social transformation. It has been observed that the BJP has engaged in a process of instrumental mobilisation that has involved the party in a process of dissemination of religious nationalism that inhibits the aggregation of mass preferences (Basu 1996). As indicated earlier, most of the other non-Congress parties perform the task of preference aggregation at the leadership level. This is in keeping with the pattern set by Indira Gandhi. However the trends are not altogether negative. The emergence of new parties, such as the BSP, means that parties are more likely to represent a more homogenous constituency. Accountability for non-performance is much clearer in these circumstances, and the incentives to favour one part of a party's constituency are reduced. These circumstances are more conducive for the articulation of the interests of a well-defined constituency. However, it must be emphasised that the quality of aggregation is still impaired by the reliance on leadership-based interest articulation and the lack of party institutionalisation in most cases.

The regional and other smaller parties are unable to perform the task of national aggregation and articulation individually. However they can perform this function collectively. The Congress system could be described as a process of endogenous coalition formation. It was one that was difficult to observe in action because the coalition was serviced inside the institutions of the party. This lack of transparency may have given the outcome a deceptive air of coherence. The conduct of coalition politics was less discreet in the 1990s because compromises were negotiated between parties and the press was relatively well informed of the positions of different parties. In contrast to the earlier period it was more appropriate to talk about an exogenous process of interest aggregation and articulation between parties in government.

The limitations of endogenous interest articulation are illustrated in the state of Uttar Pradesh. In the past, the state Congress Party took responsibility for aggregating the interests of the three main groups that supported the party: the Brahmin/upper castes, the former untouchables or dalits, and the Muslim minority. The latter two groups benefited least from this arrangement, as the upper caste interests tended to prevail. As the Congress Party was de-institutionalised from the 1960s onwards, it became even less effective as an institution for carrying out the aggregative task (Stone 1988). At the same time, the subordinate groups in this electoral coalition became more assertive. The identification of the Congress elite in Uttar Pradesh with Hindu nationalist causes encouraged Muslim voters to look to other parties, such as the JD and the SP, to articulate their interests. In the case of the former untouchables, this disaffection resulted in an assertiveness that took shape around a growing sense of dalit identity (Pai 1997). The label 'dalit' identified the former untouchables as oppressed and prepared to mobilise in order to rectify this situation. The BSP offered a new channel for the articulation of dalit interests in the state and further undermined the Congress Party's electoral strength. Part of the democratic equation was thereby restored to equilibrium, with the failure of the old arrangement to express the views of two important minorities being addressed.

The willingness of the parties to aggregate the interests of women appears to have increased in recent years. A growing number of women have achieved leadership positions in the smaller parties and in state governments since the mid-1990s. Interest has been growing in legislation to guarantee 33 per cent representation for women in the Lok Sabha on a similar basis to the current arrangements for reserved representation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The UF government committed itself to the principle in 1996 but it did not enact the policy. The legislation was introduced in the Lok Sabha by the BJP-led government in 1998 and achieved cross-party support but progress was blocked by smaller parties. The unwillingness of the larger parties to proceed with the legislation on the basis of their combined majority suggests that the party leaderships appreciate the symbolic value of the legislation rather than its substantive provisions. The Congress Party under Sonia Gandhi, however, has become more attuned to certain gender issues. In addition to backing reservations in the Lok Sabha the party has approved changes to its organisation to increase the number of women occupying party posts by means of quotas (*Asian Age,* 4 December 1998:1). It has been noted, though, that Sonia Gandhi has not been averse to exploiting traditional notions of appropriate gender roles in the projection of her public image (Varshney 1998b).

### *Policy implementation*

Platforms were only partially implemented during the period of national government by coalition between 1996 and 1999. The BJP-led coalition that took office after the 1999 election had a majority and it remains to be seen how effective the government will be, though the initial evidence is that far more legislation is being passed. One reason for poor implementation between 1996 and 1999 was that coalition governments proved unstable and were unable to complete their full term in office. In addition, minority governments found it difficult to pass legislation based on cross-party consensus, as opposition parties were reluctant to be seen to be cooperating with an electoral opponent. Furthermore, the compromises required by the exigencies of coalition government have resulted in *ad hoc* outcomes. This constraint remains in place with the diverse coalition headed by the BJP. Lastly, policy implementation was, and continues to be, complicated by the ongoing process of party proliferation and electoral re-alignment (Wyatt 1999b: 13). Thus we can observe members of the BJP-led coalition who are only prepared to give limited support to cabinet decisions. For example, Mamata Banerjee and the Trinamul Congress have only provided erratic support to the BJP-led government of which they are members; Banerjee seeking to dilute the negative electoral consequences of associating with the BJP. Membership of the coalition has brought a package of benefits to Banerjee's home state of West Bengal, but the membership of the coalition is less about participating in policy implementation and more about the outcome of the 2001 state assembly elections (*Asian Age,* 11 February 1999). It is not that coherent policy is unachievable under the conditions of coalition government, but rather that the circumstances under which national coalition governments were formed after 1996 were not conducive to stability or coherent policy implementation. In contrast, the present BJP-led government appears to be stable even though it is structurally weak (Wyatt 2000:292). Even so, it is not possible to rule out a return to short-lived minority coalitions, as the proliferation of parties and India's complex electoral geography make national majorities difficult to achieve.

### *Conciliation*

The institutional arrangements used to mediate local conflicts under the Congress system have not been replaced by the new parties in most cases, although the intense ethnic conflict of the 1980s is not matched in the era of party proliferation. The ongoing conflicts in Kashmir and Assam are, in part, rooted in the period of Congress centralisation, with the tension in both of these regions in the late 1990s notably less intense than observed prior to this period. It is also less likely that new tensions will emerge in the context of coalition government. An important development following the onset of party proliferation has been a new equilibrium in centre-state relations; the abuse of central government power for partisan ends having been a contributing factor to the tensions in Kashmir and Punjab. This included peremptory use of the constitutional provision, Article 356, to dismiss opposition-controlled state governments considered 'unstable'. Regional parties, frequent victims of the abuse of this power, now have direct influence at the national level and are reluctant to be associated with the abuse of this power. This restraint strengthens democracy by preventing the arbitrary reversal of state election results by national leaders. States are also taken more seriously in negotiations with the central government when regional parties are part of the national coalitions. The dynamic of coalition politics has thereby resulted in a more flexible and conciliatory approach to politics, with an acceptance that compromise is necessary and that deals will have to be struck. Prime Minister Vajpayee acknowledged that coalition politics requires a different rule of political life when he stated that he has to work with the '*dharma* (order) of coalition' (*India Today,* 19 April 1999). Senior members of smaller parties have frequently taken on the role of mediators of intra-coalition disputes: Jyoti Basu performed this function for the UF governments and George Fernandes has acted as a troubleshooter for the BJP coalition. The replacement of a single dominant party by a variety of smaller parties has made Indian politics more plural, which in turn encourages conciliatory behaviour on the part of party leaders.

### *Commitment to liberal democratic values*

Evidence of the commitment to liberal democratic values in the context of party proliferation is mixed. The liberal values that are the basis on which democracy must be built only command selective support from the BJP. The mobilisation of political support around communal issues has at best been damaging to the status of minorities, and at worst endangered civil peace. An example of this was the pattern of local violence that was associated with the rise of the BJP in certain areas of Uttar Pradesh during the late 1980s (Hasan 1998:212–13). Similarly the ambivalent response on the part of the BJP to attacks on Christians since the 1998 election demonstrated a weak commitment to some of the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution. However electoral considerations have encouraged the party to take a more moderate line, and Muslims have been more secure from communal violence in recent years. The realities of coalition have also obliged the BJP to leave several of its more extreme policies unimplemented. The BJP is not alone as other political parties have also demonstrated a casual attachment to liberal patterns of behaviour and have made instrumental use of violence. However the broad elite commitment to the freedoms of speech, conscience, assembly and the press remains in place. As implied at various points earlier, the potential for the arbitrary abuse of state power is reduced as pluralism is promoted by the presence of diverse parties in the ruling coalition. The reduced potential for the abuse of political authority has also allowed state institutions greater freedom to perform their constitutional roles: the rule of law has been strengthened, as enforcement officers at the national level are better able to resist political interference; the courts have also been more assertive and prepared to proceed with corruption cases against senior political figures, as well as having also been receptive to growing use of public interest litigation as a means of protecting the rights of ordinary citizens.

### *Accountability*

In some respects what the parties lose, the voters gain. The increasing frequency of elections gives citizens more power over parties, with voters having opportunities to express their preferences more often. The expectation of an early election also makes parties reluctant to pursue policies that lack widespread public support. Thus the pace of economic liberalisation slowed between the 1996 and 1999 general elections, whereas the Congress Party, considered to be secure in power for a full term, was able to push on with reforms until 1995 when impending elections resulted in a policy slowdown. In other respects, party proliferation and the associated coalition governments dilute accountability. The actions of regional parties may influence policy outcomes while not being subject to accountability by the national electorate. The issue becomes more salient when a regional party is also a pivot party able to extract a high price for its participation in a coalition (Laver 1997:138–9). Thus the AIADMK attempted to exploit its status as the pivot party in the BJP-led coalition government formed after the 1998 general election. The leadership of the AIADMK was able to make demands that destabilised the government, secure in the knowledge that they would only be held accountable by voters in their home state of Tamil Nadu. Accountability is also obscured in the case of minority governments. One of the reasons that the UF government (1996–7) was able to achieve little while in office was that the Congress Party, as an outside supporter, was able to exert a quiet veto over policies and appointments. This strategy suited the Congress leadership who could influence policy outcomes without being directly associated with the reputation of the incumbent government. The consequences of party proliferation for democratic accountability have been mixed. Parties are more responsive to the extent that they are free to act, while at the same time accountability is diffused among coalition partners with national parties bearing a greater burden than regional parties.

## Conclusions

Indian political parties make an important contribution to India's democratic infrastructure. To varying degrees they have aggregated mass preferences, implemented policy, promoted conciliation, supported liberal democratic values and acted as a focus for accountability. Contemporary Indian political parties carry out these functions more effectively than the post-system Congress Party led by Indira Gandhi. The obvious exception to the generalisation lies in the area of accountability, where regional parties in coalition governments cannot be brought to account by the national electorate. In terms of interest aggregation, commitment to liberal rights and conciliation, Indian democracy has been strengthened in recent years. The comparison with the earlier period of the pre-1967 Congress system produces a less emphatic judgement. The comparison is worth making not because a return to the system is possible, or even desirable, but because it draws issues into relief. Groups that were previously neglected by the Congress Party now have parties that speak on their behalf in government, but with the caveat that the process of interest aggregation is regulated from the top down. In the area of policy implementation, it is difficult to discern any overall difference. Early Congress governments failed to act effectively on behalf of the poor, whereas recent minority coalition governments have been reluctant to implement unpopular policies and have been unable to legislate comprehensively. The actions of the BJP-led majority coalition government have established that policy implementation is possible under conditions of party proliferation. Coalitions are not of necessity prone to instability and legislative immobilism. The commitment to liberal rights is weaker in the case of some contemporary party leaders but these leaders have fewer opportunities to abuse state power. The strong conciliatory institutions present in the Congress system are matched by the pluralism generated by coalition politics. Thus parties look set to continue to structure and develop Indian democracy for the foreseeable future.

## Interviews

Mr S.R.Varun, President, Delhi State Unit of the BSP, 25 January 1997
Mr P.Chandra, Advocate and BSP activist, 25 January 1997
Mr D.C.Yatav, Advocate and BSP activist, 25 January 1997

## Notes

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1 I am indebted to Katharine Adeney (LSE) for drawing this point to my attention.

# 10

# Indonesia's democratisation

*Olle Törnquist*

In Europe, people often say that the twentieth century came to an end with the turn of the tide in Berlin in 1989. In Asia it took another ten years. Here it was not state-socialism that was defeated but the West's own authoritarian growth project that imploded. Now there is another historical chance. In Indonesia, the world's third largest democracy is emerging. How shall we understand its problems and dynamics? How shall we go beyond the mainstream focus on Jakarta's elitist political theatre? This is difficult. At the time of writing (early 2000), there continue to be more decisive reports in a week than had previously emerged in a year. In addition, they are unusually hard to sort and interpret. Many of the common perspectives contained within are subject to substantial revision as they are less than helpful in reading the unfolding of the crisis (not to talk of predicting it).

The following is instead an attempt to analyse ongoing processes on the basis of ongoing research, focusing on research about popular politics of democratisation through repeated case studies over a decade in three different contexts (Kerala, the Philippines and Indonesia).[1] The draft version of the Indonesian study was concluded just before the crackdown on the democracy movement that took place on 27 July 1996.[2] This was when things began to change the way the research had indicated—but so fast that even though the study had to continue, it was only possible to publish brief 'instant' essays.[3] So before turning to the more comprehensive and time-consuming book-writing, the following is an attempt to use results from the analysis of popular politics of democratisation to both discuss approaches to the study of the democratisation and analyse Indonesia's elections and their aftermath.[4] For presentational reasons, however, we begin by addressing the approaches to the issues and conclude with the elections and the recent turbulent developments.

## The new consensus on democracy is not good enough

Until 21 May 1998, mainstream analysts claimed that Indonesia's basic problems were Financial and economic. The focus was on weak market forces, a strong state and a weak civil society. The actions of the market and its supporters, however, proved politically disastrous, contributed to a socio-economic catastrophe, obstructed democratisation, and only accidentally helped do away with Suharto. The economic crisis did not result from excessive state regulations and despotism (which had been there for decades), but from the combination of bad regulation and deregulation (Suharto's nepotistic monopolism and the IMF-sponsored technocrats' neo-liberalism), and from (both parties') containment of popular influence as a basis for checks and balances.

Too late, then—only as Suharto's own aides dumped him in face of a revolution—analysts agreed instead that the problem was political. Nothing would improve without legitimate government, which called for some democracy. With this I agreed, of course, having insisted since the mid-1996 clampdown on first Megawati and then the democracy movement in general, that a major political crisis would develop as soon as there was a triggering factor (which then happened to be financial), because Indonesia's essential problems were its weak regulations and its inability to handle conflicts and reform itself.[5]

Yet, I would argue, the new general consensus is not good enough. To ask for democratic governance is fine, but what of the problematic context of disintegration of Indonesia's second attempt (since colonialism) at authoritarian nation-state development? What of the socio-economic context of a crisis with some winners, many losers and surging unemployment? What of fading trust, the rise of 'goon' politics and crime and violence? What of the instant general elections supported by the West, the elitist horse trade election of Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) as new president, and the appointment of a conservative pact cabinet? What of the fact that while analysts suddenly realised the importance of certain aspects of democracy, there is little knowledge of what kind of democracy the various actors aim at, the problems of getting there, and what could possibly prevent failure? And what of the declining interest in the deepening of democracy to include ordinary people's capacity to make use of its institutions—now that sections of the elite have been legitimised through elections and have found a way of handling their conflicts through peaceful horse trading? So let us begin by discussing how to approach the dynamics of Indonesia's democratisation.

## Biased definitions

In Indonesia, since mid-1998, most leading actors who claim that they are serious democrats tend to agree on the universal essence of democracy in terms of freedom of speech and organisation, constitutionalism and free and fair elections—including Golkar's ex-president and then-second-best Muslim alternative Habibie, and the new president Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur). This is not the main problem. Within the new democracy discourse we can almost forget about Mahathir's and Lee Kuan Yew's 'Asian values' and Huntington's 'clash of civilisations'. Of course those constructs may become politically fashionable again—especially if the Indonesian democratisation derails—but the current problem is rather that internationally-reputed scholars on democracy, and so-called friendly governments and organisations, insist on the universality of more elaborated conceptualisations. What are on offer are primarily ideological packages—complete with ideals about civil society and civic virtues, special constitutional arrangements and electoral laws, technically-oriented voters' education, unregulated market economies and enlightened compromises—on the basis of rather self-congratulatory readings of European and especially American experiences.[6] Indonesia, however—with its long-standing symbiosis between strong state-based patrons and bosses and private big business, in addition to weak middle and working classes, and even weaker secular popular organising—is not Spain, Hungary, South Africa, Chile, the Philippines or any other cases that are often used to form generalisations. When bad comes to worse, even bright Indonesian activist-scholars tend to forget about the situation; this is true of those who supported the compromises of Megawati, and especially of Amien Rais and Gus Dur. So the trouble is no longer the question of whether or not the essential principles of democracy are universal, but the ideological neglect of the fact that application and development of these principles are always contextual and vary both over time, and with the social forces involved. Actual democracy changes. There is no end of history.[7]

## Actors' views of democratisation

To begin with, therefore, we have to ask for the significant actors' more elaborate perspectives on democratisation. Even if they agree on many principles, they do disagree on how and what to use them for. For instance, any reasonable understanding of Indonesia's future presupposes more knowledge of why certain forms of democracy and new political institutions suddenly make sense to many of Suharto's old followers. Further, there are different views on what preconditions should be present with regard to citizens' actual capacity to make use of democratic institutions before one is prepared seriously to bet on democracy; for example in terms of guarantees for free and fair elections only, or also substantial knowledge of political alternatives and the presence of ideologically and socially rooted parties. Finally, we have the quarrels on how far democracy should extend, including the basic question of for how long and to what extent the armed forces should retain political and economic privileges. In other words: the forms of democracy, their utility, their preconditions and their extension.

But let us not expand on this here, because there is a lack of space and it is probably even more important to know *how and in what way* the actors would like 'their' democracy to become real, that is, how the process of democratisation should take place.

## Elite manoeuvres

On the surface this is well understood. Distinctions like Samuel Huntington's between the three common pathways of changing the system—of transforming it, replacing it, or compromising and 'transplacing' it—help us identify the triangular conflict that dominated until the recent presidential race.[8] This prevailing discord among the elite was centred on, in the one corner the then president Habibie, armed forces chief Wiranto and their collaborators, who preferred 'guided democratisation' from above; in the second corner the radical students, who argued that democratisation presupposed the replacement of the incumbents; and lastly, in the third corner, the dominant moderate opposition, the Ciganjur four.[9] This last group comprised pragmatic and often liberal-oriented Muslim leader Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) (widely respected within the elite and with a strong mass base among rural Muslims in East and Central Java), nationalist party symbol Megawati Sukarnoputri (the daughter of the late President Sukarno), modernist and semi-liberal Muslim leader Amien Rais (with a mass following among urban Muslims), and the incarnation of 'the good Javanese ruler', the Sultan of Yogyakarta; all of whom tried to domesticate and yet benefit from the radicals' protests, while basically focusing on negotiating and winning reasonably free and fair elections, and then subsequently forming pragmatic coalitions and striking the best possible deal with sections of the establishment.

This synopsis, however, is very general and not unlike asking for the actors' ideal scenario of how various contending parties should behave and what the general process of democratisation should look like. So how can we get below the surface to analyse the ways in which the actors themselves, first, fight for their ideal models when confronted with the harsh realities, and second, try to increase people's ability to make use of democratic institutions when up against the resourceful elite? How shall we, in other words, analyse the actual politics of democratisation?

Of course we may try the common political science method (pioneered by scholars like O'Donnell, Schmitter and Przeworski) of distinguishing in each camp between 'hard-liners' and 'softliners' and then analysing their interplay. Habibie and Wiranto, for example, often leaned towards the hawks and have now been outmanoeuvred. Adi Sasono (Muslim leader and Habibie's Cooperatives Minister who subsidised 'indigenous' Muslim business to promote a 'people's economy') kept his options open and tried to be more successful than Malaysia's Anwar Ibrahim but failed miserably. The interesting doves included Bambang Yudhoyono (armed forces reformer and the new Minister of Mines and Energy), Marzuki Darusman (Golkar party deputy leader, until recently chairman of the Human Rights Commission and the new Attorney General), and at times even Akbar Tanjung (Golkar party leader). Further, among the moderate opposition leaders, Gus Dur (until the presidential race in an alliance with Megawati) paved the way for a conservative pact through reconciliation (and may now revive his links with the nationalists), while Amien Rais was fishing for various partners until losing the elections and betting on Gus Dur to gain influence within the coming executive (but may now emerge as a main contender for power). The students, finally, kept discussing what kind of demands could keep them together, how to face the elections, and whether to remain a 'pure student moral force' or to call on urban poor and others to link up, until being marginalised within the adjusted institutional framework and then, from the outside, 'only' being able to prevent the total derailment of the process.

## Capacities and contending forces

This way one may easily continue, mapping the actors and their followers, discussing their intrigues, and making the picture increasingly complicated. The established recommendation of separating the radicals, marginalising the hawks and negotiating a pact among the rest—in order to promote 'limited but safe and steady' democratisation—may also be considered. Of course, we know by now that this is exactly the elite game that became dominant; and that it was won by the most skilful pact-builders Gus Dur, Amien Rais and Akbar Tanjung (while Megawati only won the elections), whereafter Wiranto lost out, Megawati's administrators have gained some influence, and Rais began to contemplate an oppositional Muslim block. But where does it take us? We are confined to central-level politics and to the elite. We may analyse its ideals and its manoeuvres in much more detail; that would be the easy part. But what of the players' room for manoeuvre? What of their capacities? International factors, then, are very important, but we will not understand much of the elections—and we do not even know much of the roots and prospects for the new moderate pact among the establishment—if we do not look into the actors' bases beyond the political theatre of Jakarta, at the local level, both in the Jakarta area and in the provinces. And perhaps even more important: if we are interested in the possibilities for further development of democracy beyond liberal electoralism (on the basis of people's involvement and actual capacity to make use of 'formal' democratic institutions) it is indispensable to look at the potential of alternative social and political forces.

So before we return to the elections, the presidential race and the new 'Pact Order', we need to ask how the central level elite tried (and continue to try) to renew its position and win support among wider circles, as well as how contending forces tried (and continue to try) to make an impact. The so-called political opportunity structure continues to change rapidly. Suharto's attempt at a second and increasingly authoritarian Indonesian state-led development project is in shambles. The central rulers, including the armed forces, are weakened. There was a power vacuum lasting one and a half years and the old institutions and rules of the game deteriorated. The new 'Pact Order' may now begin to change this picture, but alternative institutions are yet to be established. There are many new freedoms and opportunities, but the question is: who can make use of them and how?

## Little knowledge of the most important processes

The irony, however, is that we know embarrassingly little about much of this. For years, attention was directed at the centre and the elite. Most of Suharto's 'New Order' was dictated in the leader's close circle with attached clients. Thereafter the bureaucracy and the 'dynamising' armed forces shared the control of the state apparatuses and its resources on each and every level, down to the very grassroots. Politics, in effect, was primarily about elite networks, with court politics surmounting it all. Dissidents prevented from organising people were also elitist;

relying on personalities with some integrity, many contacts, and foreign funded non-membership-based NGOs. But much of this is history now. Of course, history is important. The territorially organised army, for instance, is weakened but still there. More than thirty years of demobilisation, top-down control of almost any society-based grouping and movement, and little if any widespread knowledge among the poor masses of how democracy works will take long to compensate for. And politics, to a large extent, continues to be a matter of 'admission and circulation of elite networks'.[10] But to extrapolate from what we know of Indonesia until the fall of Suharto is not enough.

## The new primacy of local and mass politics

Rather, I would argue, there are two new major trends that call for special attention. First, while the politics of elite networks may remain, the centre has lost its grip, and more power (and the struggle for it) is now spreading to the provincial and local levels. This, therefore, will also be the time of local politics. Second, any new regime and elite network need popular legitimacy. Hence, within the framework of more localised politics, this will also be the time of mass politics and elections.

Local politics is not only about the actors who, in the process of democratisation, dispute the mainstream definition of what constitutes the demos, the Indonesian people, and instead give priority to the fighting against Jakarta's domination (thus suggesting various forms of disintegration, like those until recently seen in East Timor, and still in Aceh, and West Papua). Perhaps more decisively, the growing importance of elite-dominated but local and mass-related politics is a general trend. As in the Philippines, for instance, the fall of the authoritarian regime and attempts at restoring democracy are combined with the decentralisation of politics and administration, and privatisation and deregulation of business, all of which together, I would argue, pave the way for local bosses (in terms of local powerbrokers), to—within a formally democratic framework—enjoy a monopolistic position over coercive and economic resources within their bailiwicks.[11]

Bossism in the Philippines, of course, is characterised by the long history of American colonialism, partially-elected government, and more private control of resources than in Indonesia. Within this framework, however, Indonesian-like primitive accumulation through political and administrative means has also been important and sometimes even decisive.[12] In contrast, the Philippine-like liberal electoralism, decentralisation, privatisation and deregulation are now definitely entering into the Indonesian context as well. So while most local Indonesian bosses are likely to be comparatively 'petty' in terms of less private wealth and more dependency on public resources, and though there may be wider space for patrons than in the Philippines—in terms of bosses with more benevolent and reciprocal relations to their subjects—there are basic similarities.

The Indonesian patrons and bosses, as well as their local associates, have both links to outside superiors and sometimes factions of the central elite—national political struggles are often localised—but also access to the voters and direct control of many resources, including much local administration and business, the territorially-organised Indonesian armed forces, and vigilantes. This is likely to be an important focal point in Indonesia's political economy, especially now that Gus Dur's 'Pact Order' will enable the establishment to adopt revised rules of the game. In the absence of broad interest-based popular organisations (like unions) and related parties (prohibited for decades), this is how electoral campaigns may be financed and voters mobilised over a long period of time. And this implies the usage of both private and public gold, 'goons' (thugs), and guns, in tandem with religious and ethnic communities. Such networks become increasingly important in times of economic crisis, disintegration of state patronage, and have as little respect for rights as for law and order. For example, as we know from India, and as is detailed in Wyatt's chapter in this volume, religion and ethnicity may not be a problem as such, until becoming vital parts of economic and political networks and contestation, as in the case of the Moluccas, among other hard-hit Indonesian areas.

This is not to deplore the breakdown of authoritarian central rule in Indonesia, but instead the lack of strong democratic public institutions, with a non-partisan army and police under its command to handle conflicts and prevent clashes. This framework has proved comparatively efficient in democratically solid Indian states with all kinds of ethnic and religious groups.[13] In Indonesia, however, there is still little chance for previously subordinated but now more important and distressed minorities, communities and regional and local interests, to voice their demands within the formal political system (for example through federative arrangements and local parties) or by referring to special rights and regulations.[14] Hence they turn to other means of protection. Therefore, conflicts between local patrons/bosses, their collaborators (internal and external), and their thugs—who can all draw on exceedingly vulnerable sections of the population—have probably been behind much of the so-called religious and ethnic violence that has been reported on an almost daily basis. This, then, is the fertile ground on which increasingly the majority of the national political battles between various Muslim, business and military factions takes place.

## Popular politics of democratisation

From the horizon of studies of conflicts and opposition, this is the complicated context within which struggles for democracy have to be fought out. But how shall we, within this framework, go about reading the processes and understand the problems? Since the late 1970s, students of both the rise of capital and neo-patrimonialism in Indonesia, in emphasising continuity, have tended to regard studies of popular movements for political change as idealistic and a waste of time. In addition, the West was uninterested in supporting democratic forces 'that couldn't even offer a realistic alternative'. However, during the first part of 1998 things began to change, and some months later, legitimate government—through democratisation —was put at the top of the political agenda. This interest is likely to diminish within business, media and diplomacy circles now that Gus Dur's relatively legitime and stable 'Pact Order' is installed and Wiranto is outmanoeuvred. But as already mentioned, given an analytical (and normative) interest in development of democracy, we still have to look into the potential of alternative social and political forces.

Ideally, we should be able to base an assessment on empirically and theoretically well-grounded comparative studies of the actors' politics of democratisation in local settings. In reality, however, much of the knowledge is lacking and time is short. Hence we begin by asking the three most vital questions: what are the actors' views of the new political situation and opportunities? What ideas and interests do they try to bring up on the political agenda, and how do they go about it? How do they try to mobilise and organise people in support of those ideas and interests?[15]

Regarding the crucial period of 1995–9, such questions and their answers would require more space than is available in the current chapter.[16] As a result, we shall limit ourselves here to a few summarising notes, before moving ahead, on the basis of them, to special analysis of the elections and their aftermath.

## Background

The basic problem for the democracy movement in Indonesia has long been that most dissidents have been isolated from the people in general. This is because of the destruction of the broad popular movements in the mid-1960s and the authoritarian rule during Suharto's 'New Order'. Until recently it was forbidden to form membership-based autonomous organisations, and even now, apart from religious organisations, those few movements that exist are weak and difficult for many people to relate to. The same holds true in terms of critical ideologies and historical consciousness. Most of the dissident groups have had to work from above, and out of the main urban centres where a certain level of protection has been available from friends and temporary allies with influential positions. As a consequence, layers of fragmented dissidents have developed over the years.

The expansion of capitalism may indirectly promote democratisation, but it is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the expansion is related both to authoritarian state intervention and to a division of labour that often breaks down old class alliances while giving rise to a multiplicity of interests and movements. On the other hand, even limited liberalisation has created some space which may allow certain people to try partially to improve their standard of living by different local efforts, instead of having always to grab political power first, and thereafter relying on state intervention. For many years, this local space and the need to overcome socio-economic fragmentation spurred on Indonesian pro-democracy work from below. Thus, despite everything, it has been possible for many development-oriented NGOs to relate to new social classes in society, and for a new generation of radical students to relate to peasants (hard hit by evictions) and new industrial workers. Hence the new movements were potentially significant many years before the students did away with Suharto. They were more than a product of the global wave of democracy and some quarrels within Jakarta's political theatre, they were (and are) also conditioned by the expansion of capital and the new classes thus emerging.

Moreover, there has been a tendency since the early 1990s to link up alternative development and human rights work in civil society with politics. Major groupings tried their best to relate specific issues and special interests to more general perspectives. But in doing so they tended to get stuck either in their limited kind of politicisation—with some social foundation among the grassroots—or in their attempts at broader perspectives without much social basis. The result was that they were never able to generate a democratic opening. Instead, 'external' rallying points gave rise to a more general movement for transition from authoritarian rule. And within such a broader movement many of the outright democrats related to legally accepted populist democrats, while others either held on to fragmented activism and development work or insisted on 'consistent' top-down party building.

## Popular politics of democratisation, 1996–9

The development of this pattern was able to be discerned between 1988 and 1996.[17] And as previously indicated, this is almost exactly what happened in mid-1996 when the government ousted moderate opposition leader Megawati Sukarnoputri. Many genuine democrats tried to relate to the recognised political system by mobilising as much as possible behind her before the 1997 elections. But the regime displayed an incapacity to reform itself by cracking down on demonstrators and the democracy movement in general with brutal force (thus ironically generating ethnic and religious riots instead). Yet, simultaneously, the basic weakness of the movement itself became equally obvious: its fragmentation and its separation between top-down activists who tend to 'run offside' and grassroots activists who have not yet been able to generate interest-based mass organisations from below.

To understand this, we need also to take a close look at how the movements themselves read the conditions and found it most reasonable to work and go about their activities; in other words, to discuss popular politics of democratisation. Since we are short of time (and impatient), let us begin with some of the more exciting conclusions and only thereafter discuss how we have arrived at them. Two processes and one policy conclusion seem to be especially vital for an understanding of the general lack of substantial convergence (despite 'our' pro-democratic factors) between fragmented interests, ideas, groups and actions, and the very different outcome of pro-democratic politics.

### *Single issues and special interests*

No sphere of activity and way of mobilising people proved especially favourable with regard to democratisation. The students were very important but 'only' did away with Suharto. Rather, at both national and local levels, the common problem seemed to be the focus on politicising single issues and special interests, both within explicitly political activities and in the work of civil society.

Furthermore, many vital questions and social forces could not be incorporated even when there were attempts at deepening the politicisation by picking a strategic single issue like corruption and then broadening it to other areas. Alternatively, when explicit attempts were made to bring together issues and special interests, they were mainly added, not integrated (and prioritised between) within an ideological and collective framework. Hence, as a result, there was no focus on an alternative project in terms of government, governance and development of the society as a whole at different levels, only on promoting or resisting this or that.

### *Civil versus political society; central versus local levels*

A fundamental problem in both contexts was the lack of coordination between actions in the civil and explicitly political society, as well as between the central and local levels. Even at times of intensified pro-democratic work (as when trying to form a broad front in early 1996 or going ahead from the fall of Suharto), it was possible to see how political and civil society activists on various levels (usually perfectly understandably) tended to follow different logic and agendas, not combining each other's strengths and compensating for each other's weaknesses.

This remains a major problem. While the democracy movement was (and is) unable to link work in both political and civil society, and between the central and increasingly important local level, this was (and is) instead, accomplished quite 'efficiently' by so-called moderates through populism and clientelism, and on the basis of, on the one hand, religious (plus to some extent ethnic) communities, and on the other, political clout. The result, of course, is even more divisiveness: dangerous conflicts between various communities, patrons, bosses, thugs and followers, and an even weaker democracy movement.

In Indonesia, the typical way out has been for the activists to look for shortcuts (to the seemingly hopeless attempts at integrating people) by way of alternative (and if possible charismatic) patronage. As there is no closely organised and hierarchical party, it has mainly been a question of finding 'the Leader' (or powerful NGO) and 'the Loyalties' that can be used as a node and entry point.[18]

## The elections and their aftermath

The parliamentary elections of June 1999, the crisis in East Timor, the appointment of Gus Dur as new president (with Megawati as vice), the rise of his 'Pact Order' and its conflicts are all turning points which call for special analyses. In many ways those events were dominated by the top-level actors. But let us set aside the elite game as such and read instead the election and its aftermath from below, from the point of view of the basic dynamics of the democratic forces that have just been outlined.

### *The birth of the world's third-largest democracy*

The June 1999 elections were boring, for parachuted journalists. Too little violence and cheating to report, and too little knowledge to explain why. Comparatively democratic rules of the game, and the inclusion of most parties involved, forced much of the elite temporarily to compete by mobilising votes rather than manipulating in closed circles and provoking religious and ethnic groups only. That was a victory of sorts. In addition, much of the frequently-reported delay in the counting was less because of successful cheating, than time-consuming checks and balances to counter this, plus frustration, of course, among elite politicians who had lost their real or imagined old constituencies but remained within the new Election Commission. Except in East Timor, Aceh, West Papua and a few other places, some 100 million people finally felt that their vote did matter and patiently waited for the results. In a way we witnessed the birth of the second rather than the third-largest democracy in the world (as so many Americans don't even bother to cast their vote).

But while the very elections were rather free and fair, the context was not so just and the substance was shallow. There was a lack of reasonably equal opportunities to make use of the political liberties, and many fundamental problems continued to be swept under the carpet. These factors will reappear, and this, therefore, is what we should focus on, if we are interested in the prospects for stability and substantial democratisation.

First, *the unjust electoral system*. One single result was not delayed: that the armed forces would receive 7.6 per cent of the seats in the parliament (or four more seats than *reformasi* leader Amien Rais' party got in the open elections). Further, 34 per cent of the delegates who then elected the new president in October were not elected but appointed by the military and political elite in closed, smoky metropolitan and provincial rooms. Also, beforehand, ex-communist as well as local parties were prohibited, and remarkably many seats were allotted to provinces where Habibie's Golkar-party machinery remained intact.

Second, *the unjust preconditions*. While Golkar made good use of the state apparatuses and control of foreign funded credits for cooperatives and social safety net programmes, especially on the outer islands, self-appointed Western democrats gave priority to stable government through instant elections of 'legitimate' rulers, rather than democracy in terms of people's rule and stability through acceptable chances for everyone to influence politics and keep track of elected politicians. Foreign support for democratisation was limited to electoral arrangements, technical information, and some promotion of civic virtues through NGOs. Meanwhile critical voters' education about the actual political forces involved was scarce, and promotion of democratic organisations among labourers, farmers, civil servants and employees was almost absent—not to talk of potentially important parties on the basis of ideas about how societies work and may be changed. Such priorities may be in line with a shallow version of democracy where parties are just machines for the election of elite politicians, and people can only make some difference through a myriad of single issue and special interest groups. But they differ from a more informed understanding of the dynamics involved, as well as from European, Indian or South African experiences where broad popular organisations and parties were essential for the birth and growth of democracy.

Predictably, on the one hand, the Indonesian outcome was top-down mobilisation of votes on the basis of populism and clientelism through the established political machines of Golkar (22.4 per cent of the votes and 120 seats), PDI-P, Democratic Party of Struggle (33.7 per cent; 153 seats), PPP, the Muslim Democratic Development Party (10.7 per cent; 58 seats), and the established socio-religious organisations of NU with its major party PKB, National Awakening Party (12.6 per cent; 51 seats), plus Muhammadiyah in support of 'modernist-Muslim' candidates. On the other hand, the exciting attempt to form a new liberal middle-class party, PAN, the National Mandate Party—with secular centre-left politics, Muslim values and *reformasi*-leader Amien Rais as a locomotive—proved much more difficult (7.1 per cent; 34 seats). Aside from the armed forces' 38 seats, the remaining 46 seats (13.5 per cent of the votes) were shared by minor parties, which were primarily Muslim-based. The students, moreover—who forced the elite to do away with Suharto, were in the forefront of the reformation process, and put pressure on the traditional politicians—lost momentum and were marginalised. Veteran development, human rights and democracy activists often said that their attempts to help people themselves to organise were distorted by the neo-traditional political competition.

Third, *the shallowness of the elections*. This is not to agree with the many observers who talked of excited masses in support of a weak woman and a blind man without real programmes. The largest and second-largest democracies in the world, India and the USA, have elected and survived equally qualified leaders. Moreover, aside from PAN's educated middle-class programme, certain issues did play an important role in terms of people's expectations and trust in Megawati of PDI-P and Gus Dur of PKB. They were symbols both of dignified resistance against Suharto and of peaceful improvement without religious and ethnic conflicts, according to the old ideals from the struggle for independence. No, the major problem is rather that it will be very difficult for the essentially traditional and conservative politicians who were elected to live up to the expectations of ordinary people, especially of the broad and essentially unorganised social movement around PDI-P and Megawati. While there might be a rather long honeymoon for the new leaders, the fact is that voters in the new instant democracy were mobilised through old perspectives, loyalties and machines which did not correspond, and may not be able to cope, with the new major conflicts and ideas in society.

Let me turn now to four areas that are all related: first, the economic and social problems; second, East Timor and the centrifugal tendencies; third, the role of the new middle classes; and fourth, the established parties and the future of the anti-monopolistic struggle. I analyse these issues one by one in the sections that follow, before concluding with a discussion of Gus Dur's 'Pact Order' and the political violence, neglected democratic preconditions, and (thereby) the democratic vacuum.

## The major hidden crisis

The major issue for most Indonesians was a non-issue—how they should be able to cope with the most severe economic crisis since the birth of the nation. Corruption, of course, was at the top of the agenda. Nobody denies the importance of fighting it and of totally reforming the relevant legal and economic institutions. But what were the interests involved? What were the social and political forces that could enforce efficient checks and balances? Some honest top-level politicians are not enough. The IMF's fundamental structural adjustment programme was kept outside the election campaign, and even the *Asian Wall Street Journal* (21 June 1999) questioned the fact that the Indonesian people were not allowed to take an independent stand on such a vital issue in the elections. But the depoliticisation of the crisis was a good illustration of the structural character of Indonesia's dependence on international business and finance, as well as the 'international community'. It testified to the weakness of Indonesia's trade unions and other popular organisations, as well as also being a good indication of the consensus between Washington and the Indonesian elite, or at least of the submission of the latter to the former.

With Gus Dur's 'Pact Order' there might now be somewhat more emphasis on small-scale industry and agricultural development. But generally speaking, Gus Dur was betting on as good as possible relations with international business and finance, and on living up to the expectations of the IMF. The major current problem is the struggle within the political, economic, and military elite over which companies and banks should be looted or saved and/or sold out, and who shall be the winners, and who the losers in the process. Equally, the new instant democracy cannot offer a legitimate institutional framework for the handling of people's socio-economic hardship and protests. The ministry for social affairs was closed down, with the argument that civil society should take care of people's problems. Furthermore, the new minister of 'manpower' was an old Golkar man. Meanwhile genuine labour activists found established politics irrelevant, 'as it does not matter much in workers' daily lives'. For their part, employers made up for the loss of outright military intervention in labour disputes by drawing on their market bargaining power in times of crisis, establishing fake 'unions', and setting up their own security forces with police and military personnel as part-time 'consultants'.

## The regional grievances and thecrisis in East Timor

In addition to the economic crisis, the second major problem—the regional grievances and the struggle in East Timor—was also removed from the mainstream political agenda. As previously mentioned, local parties were not even allowed in the local elections, and the new laws on decentralisation remained as abstract as the military repression remained concrete. While this was in order to 'preserve national unity', the real problems of domestic colonialism and the occupation of East Timor persisted, and soon popped up outside the new democratic framework, where they immediately proved even more difficult to solve. The killings and protests in Aceh continued, as did the struggles between migrants and 'sons of the soil' (of various beliefs and ethnic origins) in Kalimantan or Maluku. There were even new economic conflicts between migrant groups in free-zone Batam next to Singapore.

The situation in East Timor, however, was special, and worse. Its status as a Catholic, former Portuguese colony without rich natural resources was unique in the archipelago, and so was the engagement of the 'international community'. At least by June 1999 (in a lengthy talk with East Timor leader, Xanana Gusmâo) it seemed to me that the National Council of East Timorese Resistance (CNRT) might prove right in 'trusting its (the international community's) alternative institutions and give priority to reconciliation' (Gusmâo). But it did not turn out that well. Nevertheless it is important not to forget that everybody, including the CNRT, agreed to brave the risks and seize the unique opportunity that arose when the then president, B.J.Habibie, in January 1999 sought to trade East Timor for international support while insisting on full Indonesian responsibility for security arrangements.

Actually, the unfolding of violence in East Timor was more a repercussion of the domestic crisis in Indonesia, which in many ways went from bad to worse following the elections in June. It was primarily the kind of elections that the West then supported, which helped to create the political vacuum and space for the military, paving the way for the human catastrophe in East Timor and the renewed attacks on democracy in Indonesia. For, as previously noted, basic problems—such as protests in the provinces—could still not find an outlet in the open political system. So such problems were consigned, rather, to the military and to the parliament of the street. And while the democracy movement was marginalised in the process of liberal electoralism, the military and the old corporative organisations were granted continued political representation. So the elected politicians were made dependent on the non-elected 34 per cent of the delegates who were to select a new president.

With regard to East Timor, the logics of the military and its civilian associates (including internationally well-respected figures such as then foreign minister Ali Alatas) were to first create semi-civilian counterparts to the CNRT in negotiations; then to further develop and empower militias to promote the pro-autonomy side in the referendum by creating both fear among the immigrants for what would happen if East Timor became independent, and fear among the East-Timorese for terror in the future in case they did not accept Indonesian dominance. Finally the intention was to display for protesting people in other Indonesian provinces the kind of problems and horror they would have to face in the event that they persisted. In the event of losing the referendum, the other aspect of the logics was a plan to create a mini-civil war in order, first, to eliminate, if possible, the Falantil (the armed liberation movement), and, second, to avoid losing face and to be able to say 'we invaded East Timor in 1975 to save the country from a civil war and when we leave there will again be a civil war'.

Meanwhile, the CNRT impressively kept its promise to keep a low profile, not allowing itself to be provoked by consistently stressing reconciliation. However, it had difficulties in simultaneously shaping a back-up in the event things went wrong. At the same time, the UN proceeded with the referendum on 30 August, although also, to my knowledge, without any serious back-up. Both parties, to my understanding, felt that they would have had to give in to the militias' intimidation and give up this unique opportunity, if they had not gone ahead with the referendum, despite the risks. So, while people bravely resisted intimidation and terror, and the armed forces respected the electoral operation (as during the Indonesian elections), the militias began to follow their own logic. Moreover, even after having arranged the proof of its point (that some kind of civil war would follow if East Timor would go for independence), the central armed forces command proved incapable of finally also displaying its strength by 'handling' (suppressing) the situation; a process which used to be the 'normal' pattern. Apparently a monster had been created which now ran wild.

In this situation it was difficult for the CNRT to do more than refrain from being provoked and thereby eliminated, which must have been difficult enough. Moreover, the UN also found itself rather helpless. Of course, immediate UN strengthening of its local representatives in order to maintain its presence would have been in full accordance with the May agreement (Article 7)—and disgracefully enough, this was not done. But while most people wished that the UN had intervened further, it is important to remember that this simply was not realistic.

So let us discuss instead the increasingly popular 'truth of the day' within the Western 'international community': that the UN ought to have been able, without hindrance, to sanction armed intervention when hell broke lose, but that it faced opposition from China in particular and several other developing countries. That indeed can be said to be true. But it was the US which approved Indonesia's occupation of East Timor in 1975; it was Australia which recognised its annexation; both countries sponsored Jakarta's special military forces; Sweden and Norway (among others) gave top priority to business dealings with Suharto's Indonesia; and the entire West adopted the particularly rigid Asian version of the principle of non-intervention in the area even in the face of genocide (by backing the Khmer Rouge regime).

East Timor certainly shows that international emergency assistance must be a matter of course when people are being terrorised and murdered, as surely as when they are starving and dying. Yet the basic question remains: will an intervention strengthen the forces of democracy that must be capable of assuming the leadership? Presuming, that is, that we do not propose making most countries in the world into Western protectorates with UN soldiers in every bush.

I myself persist in the view that an armed intervention without Jakarta's consent would have made it possible for the Indonesian military and militias to ideologically transform their terror and murder into a war of 'Indonesian national self-defence', eliminate the independence movement, and reintroduce autocratic rule in Indonesia itself. Not even the brave students would have been able, in such a scenario, to stand in their way. Luckily, however, the West was not able to start a war, and the International Monetary Fund itself wanted to put the squeeze on Jakarta (for the Baligate bank scandal). So the Indonesian democrats were able to stand up to the military and its allies and thus pave the way for international assistance to East Timor.

Thereafter, given that massive aid would soon reach all those needing it, that Xanana Gusmâo would be able to undertake his policy of reconciliation, and that Indonesia's occupation would not be followed by donors' domination, the remaining problems in East Timor seemed to amount to the following three. First, the militias had an escape-hatch in Indonesia's western part of the island. Second, even at the time of updating this text in early 2000, some 150,000 refugees were still stranded with them there; and, third, all atrocities (which were terrible enough even if some estimates must have been exaggerated) have to be investigated and their perpetrators judged.

Back in Indonesia—without which those problems could not (and cannot) be solved—the situation looked grim indeed, until 23–4 September 1999. The military was fanning the flames of extreme nationalism, and it had pushed through a law making possible a constitutional *coup d'état,* should it and the then president Habibie take the view that people were protesting too much and thereby threatening stability. In the long run, it would thus have been easier for the military to preserve its power, either by entering into a conservative alliance with Megawati (then the strongest presidential candidate), or by 'saving the nation' from protests against Habibie (should he have been able to buy himself votes enough to become president in the end). So the standard line reiterated in diplomatic and business quarters (and among scholars nourished by them) was as usual that now was not the time to push too hard, as everything might go to rack and ruin. Rather, 'the best' would be a stability pact between Megawati and Wiranto.

Fortunately, however, the students intervened instead. (Collectively they deserve the Peace Prize!) Yet again it was they who, along with some few reformist politicians, came to the succour of the dawning Indonesian democracy. And they did so by using the only method that really bites: resolute popular actions. The military and its allies retired. The respite was but a temporary one, of course. But this is practically inevitable when real political democracy is almost as dangerous for the establishment as if their property rights had been at stake.

It would be a good thing if the 'international community' were finally to learn this lesson, as this was not the first instance. As we know, even one of the world's most devastating economic crises and harsh external pressures were not enough to persuade the elite to dump Suharto. What was needed to effect this was collective popular action. That was decisive. And in the absence of a strong democracy movement, this took the form of riots and student demonstrations. Thereafter the democracy movement was ignored again and the students abandoned. So no transitional government was set up, only instant and shallow elections took place, a political vacuum was created, a catastrophe developed in East Timor, and the military and its civilian associates held on to their positions.

## A politically frustrated newmiddle class?

In processes like these, much hope is usually vested in the capacity of the educated new middle class. In face of the elections, however, the irony is that the Western craftsmen of middle-class democracy did not even manage to make life easier for those who aimed at this within the new liberal oriented PAN-party. It is true that PAN's own performance, abandoned as it was by most Muslim stalwarts as well, was a clear indication of the increasing importance of urban and semi-urban intellectuals, professionals and educated business people. On the other hand, however, some of the democratic potential of the new middle class may now get lost because of its problems making a difference within the neo-traditional political framework. The already-appearing 'alternative' cynicism, the East European-like privatisation of public social and economic policies, as well as the preference for extra-parliamentary lobbying and pressure group activities, do not automatically promote democracy. It also remains to be seen how middle-class groupings now react to the fact that Amien Rais was very active in mobilising the conservative Muslims rather than the reform forces behind Gus Dur during the horse-trade election of the new president, thus brokering a conservative pact that gave sections of PAN and the other Muslims much more influence in the government than during the elections.

By now, as Gus Dur and his liberal pragmatic allies are consolidating their positions in the central government, Rais is obviously trying to rally what remains of the Muslim 'axis forces' behind himself. Meanwhile PAN itself is deeply divided and only survived its first congress in mid-February 2000 by postponing the entire debate on whether it should turn explicitly Muslim or not, given the rather poor results in the parliamentary elections.

## Beyond *aliran*politics: de-Golkarisation or elite reconciliation?

The electoral achievements of the PDI-P, the PKB, the PPP (and to some extent PAN) are likely to be interpreted as the return of *aliran* politics based on the old cultural-cum-religious pillars of the syncretic *prijaji-abangan* combine (PDI-P), and the traditional and modernist Muslim *santris* (primarily PKB and PPP respectively). A brief comparison between the results from the only previous free and reasonably fair elections, 1955, shows some striking similarities. In 1955 the combination of the nationalist party's 22.3 per cent, the Christian and Catholic parties' some 5 per cent and the reformist Communist Party's 16.4 per cent comes to almost 45 per cent. The latter party was destroyed in the mid-1960s but in 1999, the PDI-P got 33.7 per cent, some splinter parties a few percent each, and most of 'the others' may be part of Golkar's 22 per cent (Golkar did not exist in 1955). Further, in 1955 the NU got 18.4 per cent while this time PKB got 12.6 per cent and 'the rest' probably voted for the minor NU-related parties and NU-sections of Golkar and PPP. Finally, in 1955 the urban-oriented modernist Muslim alliance of Masjumi, the minor Muslim PSII and the West-oriented Socialist Party got some 25 per cent, while this time, the combination of PPP's 10.7 per cent, PAN's 7.1 per cent, some minor Muslim parties (including Partai Bulan Bintang and Partai Keadilan), and the ICMI-cum-Habibie parts of Golkar came to roughly the same.

However, this seemingly stable pattern may be a hangover from the past in terms of the available political machines and mass organisations, while the socioeconomic fundamentals have changed. For instance, while the nationalist party behind Megawati's father, President Sukarno, had its major base among the rulers, administrators and educators of the state on each and every level (and their capacity to command votes), this stronghold, which also monopolised the military and big-business, was captured by Suharto and Golkar after 1965. So even if Megawati's PDI-P may try to recapture some of this, it is now more rooted in general anti-monopolistic sentiments, often led or backed-up by small and medium business people (including many ethnic Chinese) who did not benefit much from privileged political contacts under Suharto. This may also be partially true of Gus Dur's PKB. So even though their own resources are scarce, some of those new local political and business leaders are now likely to develop into more private-based patrons and bosses in close contact with religious leaders, military commanders, and important persons at the centre, while also mobilising voters to get 'democratic access' to state resources.

Over the years they may not be able to retain their popular support in face of the great expectations and the possible emergence of groups that try to substitute for the old communists by catering to the less privileged. But of course, the most immediately vital issue is if and how PDI-P, PKB and their allies will try to 'de-Golkarise' the administration, the military, the public companies and the educational system. A compromise with previous clients of the old regime under new central leadership, as in the Philippines, would hardly promote democratisation and prospects for long-term stability but rather an elected oligarchy and potential unrest.

## Gus Dur's 'Pact Order' and the political violence

Much pointed in this direction, however, even before the counting of the votes was finished. For instance, the *'pro-reformasi'* parties did not come together and make use of their popular electoral mandate to prevent manipulations and money politics, and promote democratic reformists in the appointment of the sixty-five plus 135 representatives from various sections of the society and the provinces respectively, who would join the 462 elected parliamentarians and the thirty-eight military representatives in selecting the next president.[19] Rather, elitist horse-trading got the upper hand.

Far beyond the elections, the outcome, as we know, was a transition from Suharto's 'New Order' to Gus Dur's 'Pact Order'. The Megawati camp held on to the election results and neglected the need to form a coalition. Even the pet stability-pact of the market and many diplomats between her and Wiranto did not materialise, although the latter abandoned Habibie. Hence, when Habibie was also refuted by the Assembly and gave in, it was rather the Muslim 'axis forces', brokered by Amien Rais and with Gus Dur in the forefront, that got a new lease of life. This was the least-worst alternative for the establishment, and all alternative contenders abstained.[20] For Rais (who had been kicked out of Habibi's and Adi Sasono's attempt under Suharto to provide a Malaysian-like transition via ICMI) and for Gus Dur (whose main priority it had been for six years to oppose this ICMI-strategy by all means, even by linking up with Golkar in the 1997 fake elections) this was a victory of sorts. But it took massive demonstrations and riots by Megawati's supporters to then also consider and take on board her and her party. So the only magic that was involved in turning the rioting into dancing in the streets, was that Gus Dur responded by political manipulation rather than military repression.

Thus, the new pact includes the slightly reform and secular-oriented sections of Golkar and the military, Amien Rais' and Gus Dur's tactical Muslim alliance, plus Megawati and a few representatives of her party. Aside from objecting to any minister with a corrupt past, and insisting on a formally civilian minister of defence, Gus Dur's main formula seems to have been the inclusion of almost all major sections of the elite (minus Habibie's Golkar-cum-ICMI camp), at the expense of a coherent and strong cabinet and a functioning opposition.

This kind of pact between softeners among the incumbents and moderates among the opposition is not just mainstream analysts' standard recipe for a smooth transition to democracy, but also the long-standing path nourished by Gus Dur and his associates. The first thing to note, however, is that although Gus Dur himself is more democratically oriented than Megawati, and a sharp liberal-oriented Muslim intellectual (rather than a cleric), whose statements like 'we make a perfect team—I can't see and she can't talk', have already charmed international media, he remains an elite manipulator whose despotic statements and manoeuvres are too confusing to be predicted by potential enemies.

Furthermore, and more importantly, the forces and compromises that he is relying on are likely to turn his pact into a more preservative than reformative one. This is not because Gus Dur or people in his inner circle, like Marsilam Simanjuntak, who came from their joint attempt in the early 1990s to form an Eastern European-like Democratic Forum, necessarily would like it that way, but because they lack a solid and reasonably radical popular mass movement. The basic logic, therefore, is that Megawati's populistic mobilisation of people, and the expectations of the mainly unorganised social movement of urban poor that has rallied behind her, would probably have given more space for anti-monopolistic efforts at de-Golkarisation than Gus Dur's pact. Essentially Gus Dur's pact harbours and draws on established organisations and clientelistic networks (including not just religious ones but also Golkar, reasonably loyal businessmen and military officers) that may now shape revised rules of the game and adapt to them.

More fundamentally, moreover, *any* scholarly celebrated pact between moderate incumbents and reformers is up against serious problems in Indonesia. To begin with, and as already noted, substantial political democratisation is especially difficult here. The establishment is less solidly based on private and thus non-contested ownership of the essential resources than in many of the 'Third World' countries that have formed the basis for empirical generalisations. One indication is the current struggle related to the Indonesian Bank Restructuring Agency (IBRA). After years of privatising public assets and profits, the crisis has now given rise to a general need among domestic as well as international investors to socialise their losses. Hence, the state is back again as a major owner-cum-actor in the economic field, and those (domestic as well as international and public as well as private) who wish to win rather than lose in this far from transparent process of 'reconstruction' need the best of contacts.

Another indication is the heavy involvement of the armed forces in the economy and administration. To roll them back is not just a matter of saying no or trying (as Gus Dur has) to form an elitist pact and assemble international support. The military entered into business on a massive scale already with the nationalisations of (primarily) Dutch companies in the late 1950s. To alter this is about as difficult as removing armed landlords through land reform. But the worst aspect of this is the violence committed by the military or supported by it. East Timor has taught the entire world how it works. Violence was made into established state policy in the massacres of 1965–6. The military and the militias acted the same way then as now. Conflicts and antagonisms are consciously exacerbated. People become so afraid—both of the military and of each other (including of those who have reason to take vengeance)—that the military has been able to make itself seem indispensable, by virtue of its 'protection against instability'. In East Timor, however, those instigating action by top military and civilian leaders lost control.

Indonesia calls to mind Germany just after the Second World War and the Holocaust, and still more so South Africa before it settled accounts with apartheid. The truth cannot be repressed if reconciliation and a reasonably functioning democracy are to be possible. But no Nelson Mandela is in sight, nor any ANC. So now, when the democracy movement must be able to recreate that part of Sukarno's and Mohammad Hatta's national project which built on equality and freedom—as opposed to autocracy plus xenophobia—what is needed is extra-international encouragement for such a renewed and refined project. Not a mixture of unilateral interventions and concessions to new and old rulers, in combination with a blind aversion to all kinds of nationalism.

Hence, the persistent special importance of the state and the military in the economy makes heavy-duty popular pressure particularly important in Indonesia. But this may now be contained by the new pact. It is indeed promising that the national commission for human rights, and especially a whole ensemble of human rights activists in civil society, have managed to put the spotlight on the military atrocities as well as making use of international pressure with regard to East Timor (rather than the other way around). This in turn has allowed Gus Dur to hold back the military, undermine the hawks, and to resist their insurgency campaigns related to political-cum-ethnic and religious violence. But it is important to realise that despite some attempts at building an organised mass base—of which the independent commission for missing persons and victims of violence (KONTRAS) support for the organising of the victims themselves is among the most impressive—most of the human rights work still rests with elitist middle-class groups in Jakarta and a few other cities.[21] So once again we come back to the basic weakness in the process of democratisation: that the civil and especially political societies are extremely weak in Indonesia due to more than thirty years of repressive 'floating mass' politics, which were accepted by the West and which prevented all kind of popular dissident organising.

Thus while the immediate outcome of Gus Dur's conservative 'Pact Order' is likely to be rather positive in generating relative stability for the time being and even 'domesticating' the military, the perspectives for the future are rather bleak. The stability is fragile. In general, but far from in all parts of the country, instant democratic institutions have so far provided legitimisation of a revised political leadership down to the regency level and enabled the major sections of the elite to regulate their conflicts relatively peacefully. That is not bad, given the preconditions. But there is no coherent democratic opposition, not to talk of a mass-based democratic movement. The elite is into politics for the purpose of attaining resources in a legitimate way. While Gus Dur's 'Pact Order' is inclusive of the established elite (including a few democratic personalities), it is exclusive of most of the actors and movements that really enforced democratisation. And there are few firm links with ordinary people.

## Neglected democratic preconditions

The kind of more substantial democratisation which is therefore needed is no far-fetched ideal type. It simply means that people in general, and not just competing sections of the elite, must have the chance and capacity to make use of the democratic institutions that go with liberal political democracy, so that they can develop and advance their own societal ideas and interests, and select and control their own representatives.

Most scholars would agree, then, that this calls for reasonably genuine political parties—between government and the people—and reasonably genuine mass organisations (behind and in addition to the parties) on the basis of people's societal ideas and/or interests. But Indonesia is short of the first (there is not even a coherent opposition) and lacking the second. Yet, as we know, this has not been given priority to, even by self-confident Western 'democracy supervisors' (and now it is neglected again among liberals who like to alter the electoral reform in the direction of American or Philippine politics). Yet, for example, even reasonably enlightened business managers do not seem to bother much about the fact that it must be better to negotiate with genuine unions than to have to repress people both inside and outside the factory gates.

Moreover, everyone would agree that democratisation calls for fundamental administrative reforms and real rule of law—constitutionalism—in addition to popular sovereignty. The only problem is that when constitutionalism does not precede popular sovereignty (as in the West), we either have to say that the time is not yet right for democracy, or discuss which socioeconomic forces and which societal dynamics would simultaneously enforce constitutionalism *and* democracy. Most literature on the subject (including that produced by the World Bank) talks at length of what should be done, but avoids the problem of what should possibly comprise the motivational forces.[22] So as long as there is no sign of a viable alternative, we have to return to the basic need of pressure from genuine organisations among the subordinated and abused sections of the population (workers, professionals and businessmen alike). And there are very few such organisations in Indonesia.

The problem is similar with regard to decentralisation, which is increasingly seen as another precondition for democratisation. New and better laws are crafted. But there is absolutely no forceful policy in support of forces and organisations that might prevent the rise of local patron and boss rule; especially not below the district level, where people live but where not even instant democratic changes have taken place—aside from where people themselves have protested against corrupt village leaders and Golkar hegemony.

Or we can turn to the absolutely vital educational sector which has to be totally reformed and de-Golkarised after centuries of indoctrination and subordination of both teachers and students. Who will enforce that, if progressive students, teachers, and cultural workers are not encouraged and actively organising?

Let us finish with the need to contain the conflicts between religious and ethnic communities. How shall this be possible, if neo-liberal and religious politicians are linking up with libertarian activists in closing down welfare state measures in favour of rival civil society associations rather than reforming the public sector, and are offering universalist alternatives to increasingly important primordial communities?

## A democratic vacuum—and a race to fill it

While the major problem between the fall of Suharto's 'New Order' and the rise of Gus Dur's 'Pact Order' was the political vacuum, the new primary obstacle is, thus, the democratic vacuum. Neither the established elite nor most genuine pro-democratic actors have firm roots in parties and organisations on the basis of people's societal ideas and interests.

This vacuum will now be filled—or at least compensated for—and the race is already on. As we know, the neo-traditional politicians have so far been comparatively successful in making up for their isolation by using populist and clientelist top-down incorporation of ordinary people and drawing on old perspectives, loyalties and machines. This is likely to be preserved and consolidated during Gus Dur's new 'Pact Order'. Indonesia may be turning from one-man bossism to petty bossism. So while the Indonesian breakthrough is remarkable it is only the end of the beginning. To a large extent the outcome rests with the capacity of the genuine democracy movement to regain the initiative, exert pressure and offer a political alternative. This will be increasingly difficult if many domestic experts and most foreign supporters keep on promoting liberal American personality and middle-class lobby and pressure group politics, including attempts to further alter the electoral laws in this direction.

The prospects are not the best. Despite all advances there is still no unified democratic front. While some leaders prefer to work within the established parties or try to make use of their access to new leaders and influential administrators, others have been marginalised or have got new opportunities to expand their private projects in civil society. As we have seen in previous sections, the movement is fragmented, focuses on single issues or general propaganda, and often fails to link up with, coordinate, and guide grassroots activities in civil society. So who is interested in political democratisation? NGOs, for instance, might become membership-based and give priority to the support for popular mass organising. But other NGOs prefer to stay away from involvement with the state and politics, so we do not know what will happen. Many rather autonomous popular initiatives at the grassroots level, including local unions and action groups, might now federate openly. But there are also top-down and foreign funded initiatives. Increasingly many people, and hopefully the students too, are getting engaged in investigating the history and truth about state-sponsored crimes against human rights, in order to fight militarism and religious and ethnic conflicts among people. But anti-statism and civil society romanticism are also part of the problem when there is a need for alternative politics to handle 'un-civil societies'. Out of some of this, genuine parties might develop. But currently it is even difficult to turn electoral watch movements into parliamentary watchdogs, and now there is mainly a process of fragmentation and depoliticisation, so again we do not know what will happen. The only thing we know for sure is that those are uphill tasks that have proved difficult enough under less harsh conditions, such as in the post-Marcos Philippines—and those tasks call for support and close studies.[23]

By the end of 1999, moreover, interest and concern had shifted to the problem of disintegration, primarily in relation to Aceh. The nature of the problem is that both unitarists who hail nationalism and federalists who call Indonesia a colonial construct seem to believe that the country will fall apart without harsh central control. Few recall how Indonesia emerged out of the anti-colonial struggle for freedom *and* democracy. Few pay attention to the fact that the democratic part of the project was purged from the late 1950s onwards. And few discuss whether the problems and demands on the local level can be handled in a more fruitful way by returning to the concept of democracy in the original national project, than to the despotic modernism in Jakarta or the competing ethnic and religious communities in the provinces.

This is not just a question of groups and provinces that would like to break away from Indonesia. On a more general level the central structures of authoritarianism are crumbling and the economy is in a shambles. As we know, politics will become more localised and the economy more privatised and internationalised (though hardly de-monopolised). So when leading democratic activists often say that local actions and processes, especially in local towns and villages, stand and fall with their own political advances at the centre, they might not be entirely correct. In fact, the political and economic processes of decentralisation might well imply instead that a stronger democracy movement may and must also grow from below.

The very processes are complicated and there are no ready-made paths. In the Central Java village of Gebjok, for instance, in Karanganyar district, right after the fall of Suharto, a few dissidents asked democracy activists in Solo for help to sue their corrupt *lurah* (village head). The advice, however, was that nothing would change unless they themselves linked up with others and sought the support of the villagers in general. So this they did. A *komite reformasi* was formed to fight the *lurah* who had appropriated money for a fresh water project, overcharged people for land certificates and privatised public land in favour of his cronies. Demonstrations, for instance, were held at the *lurah's* and *bupati's* (the head of the district) offices (the *lurah* is still legally responsible to the *bupati* rather than to the villagers). The *lurah's* office was occupied for two weeks, and an absolute majority of the villagers came forward to prevent the military and the police from intervening. When the *lurah* was brought to trial and temporarily discharged, the committee continued its work with regular meetings and public gatherings, initiated a cooperative to support agriculture, added the disclosing of local Golkar leaders' usage of the public social safety net for their own political purposes, and then discussed how to gear up by demanding total reformation of the local administration. This was not dependent on the ups and downs in the rate of foreign reported demonstrations in front of Hotel Indonesia in central Jakarta.

The committee members were hardly revolutionaries. The chairman was a dynamic local factory mechanic in his mid-twenties. Other members included a retired schoolteacher who used to hunt communists in the 1960s, but also a much younger, well-dressed and educated radical businessman, and a farmer-cum-agricultural labourer. Their party affiliations varied, some supported PDI-P, others the small NU-based PNU and one the conservative Muslim PBB. 'But that doesn't matter', they told me, jokingly picking at each other. 'That's just general and traditional affiliations. The important thing is our list of what should be done here.' This was in June 1999.

My fear was that they would be co-opted and divided by the established politicians and administration on the district level. But their own response at the time was that they did not know what would happen. They just wanted to hold on to their own programme and relate to similar committees in nearby villages, and if possible on 'higher' levels too. I asked if they knew of any such committee 'up there', but of course they did not, since hardly any existed.

Between hope and reality, my wonder at the time was, thus, if it was really beyond the capacity of the politically more 'advanced' pro-democrats at the more central levels to learn from Gebjok, to unite on more aggregate but yet concrete minimum platforms (rather than acting as isolated pressure groups or ideological spearheads only), and thus help to provide links and an organisational and ideological framework between committees on different levels (before they too were infected by neo-traditional politics).[24]

Six months later, little of this had happened. On 27 November instead, just as I revisited Gebjok, the committee failed miserably. The new bitter lesson, however, is equally important to learn. It had started well. Golkar lost massively in the June elections and the committee won its legal case against the *lurah,* so an election of a new head of the village would also take place. But then a political reconciliation took place among the elite on various levels. The new climate of 'Pact Order' took over and no common enemy was left to fight. Personal ambitions gained ground in the committee which split. Two candidates were nominated; one was brought in from outside the group by its until-then leader, the dynamic skilled worker; another emerged from within, the educated radical businessman. While PDI-P won the June general elections but remained politically and organisationally weak, and neither caused problem nor gave help to the committee, Golkar lost the people's sympathies but retained its organisation and informally remained in control of the local administration. Hence, the latter candidate (the radical businessman) was skilfully prevented on legal grounds from running (formally he was residing just outside the village). The politically less experienced committee was not able to work out an equally smart counter-move. Rather it stubbornly opted instead for boycott. Even worse, it actually tried to prevent the election on that Saturday morning of 27 November when I returned, and was stopped, of course, by the administration and the police, which, thus, appeared as defenders of democracy and people's right to vote. And this people did, rather massively—and in favour of a Golkar candidate.

In short, it was possible virtually to see (and not just analytically realise) how even the initially best possible local and popular *reformasi* group turned out to be totally insufficient without ideological and political structure and leadership.

Finally, on a more general level, the risk is that this kind of failure of the post-Cold War idea about instant democracy through the injection of human rights, civil society groups and liberal elections, opens up with the return of the other extreme thesis that stability and unity can not yet be upheld by democratic means, but that elite-led modern development is the only way to stable democracy. In Gebjok an idealist local *komite reformasi* loses out to Golkar and at the centre a hawkish new civilian minister of defence, Juwono Sudarsono, is even making use of the argument about lack of sufficient modernisation and middle class to threaten the entire nation with the return of the military if the generals do not get a 62 per cent increase in the state budget and if, as he put it, the politicians are not able to create a 'healthy and strong' political atmosphere.[25]

There must be an end to the vacillation between the two extremes. It is not enough that the US finally, on 14 January 2000, repudiated any attempts at coups in Jakarta. The idealist thesis is not sufficient and the determinist path ends up in dictatorship. The latter argument was used to legitimise Western support of Suharto's authoritarian modernisation, and not even its thirty years of development helped. Democracy did not emerge until the project broke down. So if we like to learn from history, we must realise that the present problem is not the lack of state control of people, but the lack of democratic institutions and of people's chances and capacity to develop and make use of them. In other words, the healthy and stable growth of the world's third-largest democracy primarily depends on the development of the popular democracy movement, beyond instant elections and new conservative pact rule. So the historical compromise between the two extremes would be to develop the insufficient civil rights plus elections path to also promote the kind of popular capacities for further democratic development that the practice of top-down modernism has constantly undermined.

## Conclusion

To summarise briefly: the new consensus on the need for democratisation in Indonesia is not good enough. What are on offer are primarily superficial ideological packages and empirical generalisations from quite different cases. There is a need to discuss instead Indonesia's own problematic context and the actors' politics of democratisation. One of several conclusions is that the democracy actors have failed to build links between civil-society-oriented movements and organised political work with ideological perspectives, and focus on collective interests. Another is that elite politicians and local patrons and bosses seem to be more capable of adapting to a neo-traditional electoral framework, in ways that are reminiscent of the Philippines. A third is that the June 1999 elections were rather free but not so just and very shallow. A fourth is that this in turn was a major factor behind the September 1999 catastrophe in East Timor. A fifth is that there are no shortcuts to reasonably substantial democratisation and stability in Indonesia, as the deeply embedded state-political violence, the symbiosis between political and economic power, and thirty years of 'floating mass' politics are major hindrances. So while Indonesia has now gone from Suharto's 'New Order' to Gus Dur's 'Pact Order', this, as I stated before, is only the end of the beginning. The healthy growth and stability of the world's third-largest democracy depend instead on the further development of the popular democracy movement. If this is accepted, the focus in scholarly studies and international aid should shift from the rights and institutions of liberal democracy to the factors and processes that may empower people to really use them.

## Notes

This chapter is reproduced with the kind permission of the *Third World Quarterly*.

1 I am most thankful to all friends cum colleagues, political leaders and activists who in a spirit of mutual trust and interest in critical ideas have spent a great deal of time in informative and exciting discussions with me. Also, in Indonesia, I am most thankful for Bimo's dynamic operational assistance. My research is currently financed by Oslo University and, over a long period, by SAREC, the department for research cooperation within Sida, the Swedish International Development Authority.

2 See Törnquist 1996a. A shorter and slightly updated summary was later published; for this see Törnquist 1997b.

3 From late 1996 my results were primarily based on news clippings and continuous visits and follow-up interviews with 'key informants' (as well as an ongoing project on the democracy actors and their constituents (at ISAI), jointly led with Arief Budiman). These were reported on in a series of mostly brief articles. See Törnquist 1996b, 1997a, 1997b, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 1998d, 1998e, 1998f, 1998g, 1999b, 1999c, 1999d, 1999e, 1999f, 1999g.

4 A major problem for this kind of summary is that, because of word limits, it has been impossible to include full references. Readers with specific queries are welcome to contact olle.törnquist@stv.uio.no.

5 See Törnquist 1996b.

6 This, for instance, was already obvious at the August 1998 International Jakarta conference, Towards structural reforms for democratisation in Indonesia', organised by the Ford Foundation and the Centre for Political and Regional Studies at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences, LIPI. I shall return later to observations in relation to the parliamentary elections.

7 For one interesting perspective, see Markoff 1996 and 1997.

8 See Huntington 1991. This, of course, fits well with the general results of the transition projects led by (a) Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, (b) Larry Diamond, Juan Linz and S.M.Lipset, (c) Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, and (d) Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle.

9 So titled because of the Islamic School run by Gus Dur where students managed to get the four leaders to meet on 10 November 1998.

10 See Sidel 1998:165.

11 For inspiring comparative analyses, see, for instance, Trocki 1998. For the problems of popular democrats under such conditions, see, for example, Törnquist 1998b. The definition of bossism is adapted from Sidel 1998.

12 Sidel 1997:167.

13 For India, here and in the previous paragraph, see, for example, Brass 1996 and 1997; Dreze and Sen 1996; and Basu and Kohli 1998.

14 For outlines of the new electoral system, see National Democratic Institute 1999.

15 For the argument in favour of the questions, see Törnquist 1999a: chapter 13.

16 See Törnquist 2000.

17 See references in note 2.

18 'Node' here refers to something similar to the computer-technical meaning of the word, that is, to indicate a kind of meeting point or intersection.

19 Minus, as it turned out, the representatives of East Timor.

20 Including, finally, Yusril Ihza Mahendra of the small, conservative Muslim Crescent Star Party PBB who got himself instead the position as Minister of Law and Legal Affairs in the new cabinet.

21 Komite untuk Orang Hilang dan Tindak Kekerasan.

22 See, for example, World Bank 1997b.

23 See, for example, Törnquist 1998c.

24 See Törnquist 1999d.

25 Juwono Sudarsono quoted in the *Jakarta Post,* 23 November 1999. Sudarsono was later replaced by another conservative, M.D.Mahfud.

# 11

# Conclusions

*Jeff Haynes*

This book has sought to examine the issue of democratic consolidation and its problems in new democracies in Latin America, Asia and Africa. In this, the final chapter, I discuss the general arguments and comparative implications of the material presented in earlier chapters, consider the implications for wider understanding of political change, and make predictions as to the future for democracy in these regions.

Twenty-five years after the commencement of the third wave of democracy, how best to characterise the democratic position in Africa, Asia and Latin America? The short answer is: it is highly variable, with major differences between individual countries. While the numbers of democratically-elected governments in these regions increased greatly over the last two decades, significant numbers of nondemocratic regimes—personalist dictatorships, single-party and communist states, and military regimes—remained. While forms of authoritarian rule differed from regime to regime, what they had in common was a denial of political rights and civil liberties to the citizens: human rights were often ignored, woman's demands belittled, environmental safeguards—if they existed—bypassed, and ethnic and religious minorities denied freedom of expression.

How were things different in their democratically-elected counterparts? The chapters of this book have indicated that, while the new democracies exhibited sometimes profound political variations, they had several common factors. First, all had some form of regular, relatively free and fair electoral competition even if, for example *vis-à-vis* Indonesia, there was some doubt as to whether this situation would endure. Second, in power, democratically-elected governments were—at least in theory—more democratically accountable than authoritarian regimes. Third, in the ensuing democracies, a wide range of issues could now be contested ground; that is, they could appear on the political agenda; and differing viewpoints could—at least, theoretically—be expressed, debated, contested. Fourth, as our surveys of recent progress towards democratic consolidation indicates, it was difficult—but not impossible—to achieve: one in three of the new democracies in Latin America, Asia and Africa managed to gain Freedom House's designation as a 'free' state in 1998–9. This appears to confirm what many observers have recently noted and confirmed by the case study chapters in this book: despite the high degree of optimism of the early 1990s relating to democratic consolidation, it was incorrect to assume that democratic consolidation would *automatically* follow transition. Moreover, it does not seem simply a matter of time before democratic consolidation is widely achieved. Instead, as Ersson and Engberg argued in their chapter, illiberal democracy has emerged as a growth industry. That is,

> [f]ar from being a temporary or transitional stage, it appears that many countries are settling into a form of government that mixes a substantial degree of democracy with a substantial degree of illiberalism. Just as nations across the world have become comfortable with many variations of capitalism, they could well adopt and sustain varied forms of democracy. Western liberal democracy might prove to be not the final destination on the democratic road, but just one of many possible exits.
>
> (Zakaria 1997:24)

Generally, the findings of the chapters of this book suggest that democratic outcomes, including manifestations of illiberal democracy, are strongly linked to the political salience of various *structural* and *contingent* factors. It is to this topic I turn next.

## Structured contingency and democracy

The notion of structured contingency is said to be a useful concept to help understand the array of recent democratic outcomes in the 'Third World' (Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Karl 1990). The main argument is that structural legacies—they can be pro-democracy or anti-democracy—are important factors when political actors search for rules of political competition in post-authoritarian systems. In other words, there is no *tabula rasa:* no incoming regime, whatever its stated ideological proclivities or goals, democratically-orientated or not, can erase historically-produced societal behaviour. What structures are being referred to? While they vary from country to country, every nation has historically-established patterns of power ('structures') involving regular, systematised interaction between power holders and the mass of ordinary people, an arrangement reflected in a country's established rules and institutions. These are not only *formal,* fixed structures of public life—laws, organisations, offices and so on—but also *informal* ones: that is, the 'dynamics of interests and identities, domination and resistance, compromise and accommo dation' in every polity (Bratton and van de Walle 1997: 276). Political actors are well aware that political competition and conflict are informed by both formal and informal structures that collectively mould the range of realistic alternatives open to them. This predisposes political actors to select certain courses of action and not others.

While problems of representation can theoretically be addressed by developing strong, formal political institutions, in at least three of the countries examined in the book's case studies, that is, in Zambia, Indonesia, and Mexico, inherited structures of power were of great political significance in moulding political outcomes. As each of these examples indicated, consolidating democracy was a difficult and slow process, primarily because traditional power-holders were against it: they feared the consequences of democracy on their own positions of superiority. However, as Shin remarks, democracy cannot logically 'be run by the few as in oligarchies or autocracies; nor should it be guided by intelligence or professional expertise apart from the people' (Shin 1999:137). In short, as Elklit made clear in his chapter, consideration of institutional variations in new democracies needs to be complemented by an understanding of their *underlying political dynamics:* that is, how, and with what results, individuals and groups gain access to political power, and what they do with it.

The problem, however, is that democratic *stability* depends to a considerable degree on integrating 'the military and business elites into a stable framework of efficient democratic institutions *which do not threaten their interests*' (emphasis added; Merkel 1998:56). However, the kinds of political system that are likely to eventuate when prioritising the interests of elites—various forms of limited democracies—will struggle to consolidate democracy. The problem is that to embed democracy in a polity to the extent that it becomes the normal and natural mode of political behaviour is likely to alienate traditional powerholders and their allies (for example, senior military figures, big capital owners, large landowners) because they are likely to see it as an unacceptable attack on their own interests. In sum, introducing democracy and ensuring regular tests of public opinion via periodic polls is normatively important—but if democracy is to be more than a simple replication of the old order in a new guise then it must seek, as Leftwich puts it, 'to correct past inequalities or new hardships' (Leftwich 1993:614). And this is where the post-transition problems begin.

While Burnell is correct to claim that 'failure to consolidate is not the same as de-consolidation' and that democratic stalling does not necessarily mean 'that democratic transition goes into reverse' (Burnell 1998:7), the important point, it seems clear, is that such a stage is not necessarily a hiccup on the way to greater democratic consolidation. Engberg and Ersson's chapter underlined how, as Zakaria notes (1997), 'democratic stalling' may signify a sustained political outcome, one characterised by limited democracy, without a retreat to *overt* authoritarianism. In other words, political elites may formally comply with the dictates of democratic politics yet still behave in unhelpful ways, by showing little or no regard for democratic principles and with little interest in developing public policy to benefit most citizens. For purposes of comparison, the elite may usefully be desegregated into political figures currently in office (or close to those in office) and the rest, including opponents who may believe, as the chapters by Elklit and Randal and Svåsand indicate, that the electoral arrangements are rigged against them and the media's coverage is politically biased. The point, however, is that both groups—that is, both 'ins' and 'outs'—may have a vested interest in seeking to diminish the degree to which democracy empowers ordinary people.

The concern that elites have with allowing the ordinary people a larger say in pol itical outcomes is neither a recent nor an exclusively third-wave trait (Arblaster

1999). For example, in describing the ways that vested interests in Britain and elsewhere vehemently denied the right of the masses to vote, an opposition which was not finally overcome in Britain until the 1920s, Arblaster's account is reminiscent in many ways of the contemporary situation in many countries detailed in the chapters of this book:

> Democracy has only become acceptable to the privileged classes because it has turned out to be less of a challenge to wealth and property than was feared, and also because democracy itself has been redefined in much narrower terms (as a method of choosing government) than it was given in the classical tradition reaching down from Pericles to John Stuart Mill and beyond.
>
> (Arblaster 1999:33)

Baker argued in his chapter that, without considerable attention to rather intangible indicators, interpretations of democratic failure or success are necessarily rather judgemental and relativistic. Observers, including Huntington (1991), have attached considerable responsibility to what elites do and the amount of respect or disrespect they show for the democratic 'rules of the game' in particular national settings. The consensus appears to be that the gravest potential political threat to new democracies comes from among the elites—particularly from those who have accumulated and concentrated power in the executive branch and have weakened accountability of the rulers to the ruled. As Wallis indicated in his chapter, fraudulent practices to retain and concentrate power have been common in Mexico; that is, they are a distinguishing feature not only in facade democracies (discussed in the introductory chapter of the current volume) but also in many electoral democracies. But making 'political equality an unyielding requirement means that no country truly measures up…[especially] if democracy means social democracy'. However, 'striking the right balance between demands for reform from subordinate classes, and pressures to mitigate threat perceptions on the part of the economic elites, is obviously crucial to the successful installation of democracy' (Burnell 1998: 20–1). It seems obvious that those with wealth will do all they can to resist further democratisation if it seems likely to cause or to demand measures that will significantly reduce their wealth by seeking to spread it around. Under such circumstances, the role of ideas—that is, the extent to which the idea of democracy as a desirable political outcome serves as the basis for choices and actions that determine political outcomes—is going to be of major significance if those striving for a more equal distribution of power manage to dominate over those who wish to retain the status quo; and the outcomes in individual countries suggest that, so far, such a shift of power has been difficult to accomplish.

A concern with structures does not mean that we should ignore the equally crucial role of human agency or contingency in helping determine political outcomes. When leading political actors sincerely value democracy, that is, when the *idea* of democracy as a desirable political outcome serves as an important factor informing political decision making, then, gradually, as Wyatt shows in his chapter on India, democracy can be built, even when unpropitious conditions—such as a weak economy or, as in Indonesia, a politically-active military—make that outcome seem unlikely. Evidence from the case-study chapters emphasises the importance of the interaction of the effects of structures and human agency in determining political outcomes. Decisions taken by highly significant political figures such as, Zambia's Chiluba or Indonesia's Suharto—and in Mexico the *future* decisions of the new president, Vicente Fox—were seen as vital in determining political outcomes. In addition, unplanned, serendipitous, events can increase the chances of democracy being built, while unplanned, baleful events can diminish them. As Törnquist emphasised in his chapter: the desire of peripheral peoples in Indonesia for freedom from central rule—for example, those of East Timor—may have major impact upon the wider issue of democratic progress in Indonesia more generally.

One of the presumptions of much of the democratic consolidation literature is that the degree to which democracy becomes consolidated is closely linked to the numbers of democrats there are in a polity. As Bratton and van de Walle note: '[a] consolidated democracy requires that democratic institutions are *not only built but also valued*' by political elites and ordinary citizens alike (emphasis added; Bratton and van de Walle 1997:279). The point is that democracy can be put in place, but to become *consolidated* it requires that political actors and the mass of ordinary people actors 'learn to love it. Until elites and citizens alike come to cherish rule by the people and exhibit a willingness to stand up for it…there will be no permanent defence against tyranny' (ibid.). To do this, there must be an institutionalisation of democracy, that is, where various organisations, norms and procedures appreciably gain value and stability.

In sum, as Elklit indicated in his chapter, both formal and informal institutions are significant because of the way they structure incentives and impose constraints, and inevitably they are instruments in the competitive struggle for power. Political actors will be cognisant of such factors, which not only limit the range of available—that is, realistic—alternatives open to them, but also predispose them to select certain courses of action over others. It is highly important for a polity to make the 'right' institutional choices, that is, they should be, one, politically appropriate, two, able to command society's respect, and three, technically sound. The problem, however, is that failed attempts at engineering constitutional arrangements and electoral rules that turn out to be inappropriate for the nation adopting them, can lead to serious problems. The parliamentary model is sometimes perceived as having more going for it than presidential models (characterised by separate and independent election of the executive and legislature and fixed terms of office), but there is no definitive evidence in this regard. However, in Latin America Mainwaring and Shugart (1997) suggest that a combination of presidentialism and extensive multi-partyism—say, more than three effective parties at any one time—is highly conducive to political instability.

## Democratic consolidation in Africa, Asia and Latin America

Examination of the chances of democratic consolidation in various regions can be made under four headings:

- political culture and the legitimacy of the post-authoritarian regime
- political participation and institutions
- economic aspects
- international factors.

It is appropriate to sum things up in this concluding chapter by summarising, under these headings, what we have discovered in this book *vis-à-vis* democratic consolidation in the 'Third World'.

### *Political culture and the legitimacy of the post-authoritarian regime*

Contrary to the arguments of Huntington (1991), evidence from the country case studies suggests that it is not necessary to have a certain set of cultural attributes present before democratic practices and institutions can emerge. But to build democracy it *is* necessary to forge a pro-democracy political culture among both elites and ordinary citizens, and this is often difficult to achieve for various reasons. Some analysts, although not Törnquist in his chapter on Indonesia, argue that it is especially difficult in non-Christian, especially Islamic, cultures. Diamond noted that, of the more than fifty 'not free' states in the mid-1990s, a large proportion had a 'majority Muslim population and often strong Islamic fundamentalist pressures' (Diamond 1999:261). Huntington argued that democracy was scarce not only in Muslim-majority countries, but also in those with Buddhist and Confucian cultures (Huntington 1991:73). For Fukuyama this is explained by these religions' allegedly 'hierarchical and inegalitarian' teachings that make democratic progress very difficult to achieve. For example, Buddhism, in 'confin[ing] itself to a domain of private worship centring around the family' is said to be politically passive in the face of authoritarianism, while 'Islamic fundamentalism', with its alleged 'nostalgic re-assertion of an older, purer set of values', looks to Fukuyama like European-style fascism (Fukuyama 1992:217, 236).

To what extent were these claims borne out by the evidence of our case studies? In his chapter, Wyatt explained that India, while predominantly Hindu, also has an important Muslim minority of some 100 million people, and has been a democracy for half a century. In addition, Muslim-majority Algeria, Turkey, Jordan and Kuwait are polities with variable, yet in some cases increasingly plausible, claims to be developing democratic systems. In addition, Hindu/Buddhist Nepal, Buddhist Thailand, Confucian/Christian Taiwan and Confucian/Buddhist/Christian South Korea have all taken the democratic road in recent years. Consequently, the claims of Huntington and Fukuyama should be treated with scepticism.

Rather than a specific religious culture, it seems clear that what is necessary for democracy is an appropriate civic culture, characterised by high levels of mutual trust, tolerance of diversity, and propensity for accommodation and compromise. This outcome, the result of democratic institutions and structures working relatively well over time, involves processes and institutions that help generate and disseminate democratically-appropriate values and beliefs among both elites and ordinary citizens.

## *Political participation and institutions*

Because state power is always so valuable, those who have it go to very great lengths to retain it. It seems likely that, in the great majority of new democracies, public office at the apex of the political system is perceived as among the best—if not *the* best—way for individuals to achieve private profit. This is because the state is the locus of a process where 'state rulers are defined by and obtain their power and resources on the basis of their office holding' (Forrest 1988:439). Consequently, control of the state is nearly always too appealing to be abandoned easily by incumbent power holders. Free and fair elections on their own cannot ensure that power holders will strive to build the conditions necessary for democratic consolidation if it means that power would, as a result, move from their hands to those of others. Under such circumstances they will do all they can *not* to facilitate democratic consolidation. Of crucial importance here are two sets of institutions: the armed forces and political and civil society.

### *The armed forces*

The political role of the armed forces has regularly appeared in the pages of this book —especially in the chapters by Randall and Svåsand and Törnquist—as an important factor in helping determine democratic outcomes. For example, given Latin America's propensity for military takeovers in the 1960s and 1970s, it would be hard to argue that Costa Rica's abolition of its armed forces in the late 1940s, followed by five decades of democracy, were not closely linked. Moreover, as Pakistan's successful *coup d'état* of October 1999 highlighted, when senior, or, occasionally, junior, figures harbour political ambitions and act upon such concerns, it is highly likely that democracy will suffer.

In the past, 'waves' of military coups swamped whole regions, for example West Africa in the 1960s and Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s. This suggests that military coups have sometimes seemed contagious, bringing on a 'reverse wave' (in Huntington's (1991) terminology) away from democracy. Various countries, for example, Ghana and Thailand, have seen periodic coups followed by the reinstatement of democracy seemingly *ad infinitum*. And, during the 1990s, new military coups occurred—for example, in Côte d'Ivoire and the Gambia—in countries that had apparently managed to keep the military aloof from politics for decades. In other countries, for example Turkey, military personnel remained enthusiastic, if somewhat less open, political actors. In many cases, the military's political involvement was linked to a desire to help defend members of the political and economic elite from the rigours of democracy.

### *Civil and political society*

Most observers would agree that democratic consolidation requires a shift from a situation where power is exercised by and for a numerically small elite to one where it is exercised for the good of the many. We have repeatedly seen in the chapter of this book that it is facilitated by *sustained* pressure from civil society and opposition parties on incumbent elites to allow a strengthening of democracy. But, this was often hard to achieve—not least because once democracy is won then civil society tends to fragment, while opposition parties can become more interested in their individual quests to achieve power than to help extend democracy *per se*.

Such a situation plays into the hands of groups of elites who might well not be notable for a sincere desire to extend and deepen democracy in ways necessary for democratic consolidation. It is important to note that power monopolies at the apex traditionally formed the political superstructure in most new democracies in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Organski (1965) long ago identified such power monopolies, which he called the 'syncratic alliance', as a an undemocratic concord uniting traditional agrarian interests too strong to be destroyed with a modernising urban-based elite. A bargain was struck between the two sets of interests: in exchange for obtaining the political support of agrarian interests, powerful urban-based actors agreed not to disturb significantly the often semi-feudal conditions of the countryside. The question is: to what extent, when a democratically-elected regime gained power, was there a shift in the power balance?

Traditionally in Latin America and parts of Asia, large landowners represent the rural side of the power coalition. In India, successive post-colonial governments, despite being legitimated through the ballot box for half a century (apart from the State of Emergency, 1975–7), failed to break with powerful rural allies. Although rural-based powerful families were often formally shorn of traditional powers after independence in 1947, many still often managed to maintain their long-standing powerful position via a very successful alternative: the elected route to power. Although Organski's description may be less relevant to Africa, it seems clear that support from those with wealth and power was, and is, more crucial to political decision-makers than support from other classes. In Africa, as Clapham notes, personalist dictatorship was often the most politically salient type of authority as it 'correspond[ed] to the normal forms of social organisation in [Africa's] precolonial societies' (Clapham 1985:49). In short, while precise bases of power differ, despite democratic transitions, pre-existing elites often managed to maintain their control of both the bases of economic wealth and the direction of political development.

Evidence suggests that such elite coalitions were an important means of maintaining upper-class power, as in Thailand and the Philippines, even when there was a democratic system in operation (Rocamara 1993; Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1992:174–5). The crucial analytical point is that while many dictatorial regimes were overthrown during the third wave and replaced by elected alternatives, this was rarely sufficient to oust from positions of power and influence long-entrenched, narrowly-based, elitist groups. But while traditionally oligarchical political systems may have disappeared, *traditional power monopolies* may remain under a democratic veneer of variable thickness.

A strong civil society is theoretically a crucial step toward realising politically freer polities. It is very hard to imagine a participant political system that is capable of surviving for long without a vibrant civil society. But while the emergence of a dynamic and vigorous civil society is a necessary development, it is not on its own sufficient to consolidate democracy. When the first battle is won and the authoritarian *ancien régime* is gone, the struggle for democratic consolidation creates a new kind of political environment with novel challenges to both civil and political society. The rallying point of the common enemy is no longer there. Now, the challenge shifts from cooperating in the common goal of removing unwelcome rulers to institutionalising democratic competition between the interests and aspirations of various groups in the society; so that democracy becomes, in the words of Linz and Stepan (1996), the 'only game in town'. Demands put on the skills and commitments of leading actors to meet this challenge are different from those required during the transition phase itself. Henceforward, as Karl emphasises, political actors must show the

> ability to differentiate political forces rather than draw them into a grand coalition, the capacity to define and channel competing political projects rather than seek to keep potentially divisive reforms off the agenda, and the willingness to tackle incremental reforms…rather than defer them to some later date.
>
> (Karl 1990:17)

Thus, while popular mobilisation and organisation undoubtedly improve democratic prospects, it is how popular power manifests itself *after* democratic transition that is a crucial factor in consolidating democracy.

Much of the relevant literature contends that civil societies that struggled against one-party and military dictatorships had the potential to weaken the cultural foundations of authoritarianism—that is, to serve as a genuine base for democracy. What was needed, it was suggested, was that a new democratic consensus must be created and strengthened—and political instability reduced—by robust electoral and institutional forms enabling democratic governments to work. This would mean that democratic regimes would be less at the mercy than before of the self-interested competition of elite politicians. But for this to come to pass, there had to be a learning process, a development explicit to Linz and Stepan's (1996) conception of democratic consolidation: the destructive confrontations of the past must not be repeated by the new generation of politicians seeking power. Instead, they must seek to deepen and extend democracy to previously excluded classes and groups.

But the momentum of the reform process was often not kept up in the post-transition phase. As Arblaster notes, 'transitions from dictatorship to democracy [in the third wave] were very often neither smooth, automatic or complete'. Further, the

> considerable obstacles to the wholesale adoption of the institutions of liberal democracy [and ability to] combine a quite minimal use of popular election with forms of strong, centralised government…amounted in some cases to presidential or prime ministerial dictatorship.
>
> (Arblaster 1999:33)

The failure of persistence led to 'stalled', 'flawed' or 'incomplete' democracies. In other words, there is 'transition from' authoritarianism but not 'transition to' democracy; there is 'stunted', rather than 'full' democratic consolidation, that is, when all groups of significant political actors explicitly accept that democracy is 'the only game in town'.

A combination of minimal state and minimal party institutions is apt to prove destabilising to all kinds of socioeconomic systems. A fusion of penetrated states and elite-dominated parties may help strengthen anti-democratic trends in most structural environments. It suggests that while a high degree of party control may well assuage economic elites, low internal coherence helps prevent state agencies from delivering the collective goods necessary to elicit the citizenry's long-term commitment to democratic principles.

In this context, the political importance of civil society is highly important. While transitions to democracy are often explained by a focus upon elites, it is important not to overlook the upsurges in popular mobilisation and organisation which are nearly always a crucial factor in their genesis and initial development (Foweraker and Landman 1997). This is because a strong civil society will both improve the chances for democracy and make a return to authoritarian rule more difficult than it would be in its absence. Theoretically this suggests the democratic importance of an array of civil society organisations; however, the democratic salience of such organisations may be undermined when significant groups of actors, including those with religious and/or ethnic goals, are less interested in democracy *per se* than in their own aspirations. In other words, because such particularistic groups may be motivated by extreme self-interest, chauvinism and animosity towards rival groups, then the contribution to achieving democratic goals is likely to be limited.

### *Economic aspects*

It is a truism that economic progress and a concern with welfare issues are nearly always central to chances of democratic consolidation. What is the relationship between economic and political changes in countries striving to build democracy? Everything else being equal, growing national wealth, relatively equitably distributed, and a concern with extending welfare mechanisms to all citizens should help reinforce democratic progress. There is also the issue of the distribution of material benefits and citizens' perceptions of the justice of the pattern of distribution. Do a privileged minority consume an inappropriate proportion of available resources? It seems plausible that popular adherence to democracy is likely to grow if government not only presides over sustained economic growth but also manages to convince the mass of people that it is not too unequally shared. Przeworski *et al.'s* (1996) comprehensive survey of evidence—covering 1950–90—suggests that on the one hand, democracies' chances of survival increase when they, first, develop economically in a sustained fashion, and second, gradually, yet consistently, reduce extant socio-economic inequalities. On the other hand, some types of resource base, notably those that convey large sums by way of rent to whoever controls national government via, for example, the exploitation of oil reserves, are inherently vulnerable to inequality, corruption and a lack of democracy. This helps explain why only very few non-Western oil-exporting countries have managed to build democratic systems.

### *International factors*

It has been suggested that the pace of democratic progress, especially in poor countries in Central America and Africa, is often 'influenced, sometimes to a considerable degree, by various international…factors' (Leftwich 1997:522). Nolting argues in his chapter in this book that the concept of 'third wave of democracy' was premised upon there being something happening at the global level to encourage democratic transitions around the world. This not only included global events and developments (the so-called 'diffusion effect'), but also specific encouragement from aid donors, for example, the European Union. However, linking democratic progress to such international factors was, in fact, problematic.

Democracy—and how to get it in nondemocratic countries—became an urgent focus of Western attention after the Cold War. Nolting explained that Western governments, as well as the World Bank and the IMF, began to attach 'political conditionalities' to aid and investment; and regimes which denied human and civil rights to their citizens were, in some cases, to be denied such external funding. The reasoning behind political conditionality was partly economic, as it was argued that economic failures were very often linked to an absence of democracy and political accountability. Without significant political changes, economic reforms, a precondition for continued foreign aid and investment, would not produce the desired results.

However, outcomes were disappointing:

> Too many international policy makers have taken electoral democracy as an end state in itself.… Some observers seem to assume that democratic consolidation is bound to follow transition in much of the world.… These

> assumptions are false and counterproductive.
>
> (Diamond 1999:273)

As Elklit explained in his chapter, once democratic transitions were seen to be completed—essentially, marked by the first free and fair elections—then the ability of foreign governments and other important actors to influence democratic progress became much less important. Evidence from this book indicates that external factors were rarely if ever crucial to democratic progress once the democratic transition was over.

Gills, Rocamara and Wilson (1993) claimed that the pace and content of democratic reforms was often controlled by Western governments, in cahoots with local conservative elites, anxious to prevent 'too much' democracy that would lead to political instability and thus perhaps impact deleteriously upon Western interests. In other words, both parties were said to share a strong interest in limiting the extent of political changes. This is a theory of democracy which highlights an important role for external actors in democratic outcomes and the result, 'low intensity democracy' (LID), was seen as no more than a—very—thin democratic layer overlaying otherwise unreformed political structures. Power stayed in more or less the same hands as before with the illusion only of greater democracy. LID was said to satisfy Western governments' allegedly insincere concerns for wider democracy. In sum, the LID argument was that external forces helped deliver strictly limited processes of political change because this suited their own aims, which were, one, continued economic control of dependent polities, and two, the survival in power of their local allies.

There was little or no evidence for the salience of the 'low intensity democracy' argument in any of our case studies. In fact, it seems that the LID argument seriously overestimates the extent of Western influence on democracy in most Latin American, Asian and African countries. For example, despite its best efforts, the government of the United States was quite unable decisively to influence the direction of political change in countries deemed of great strategic influence in the 1990s, including Afghanistan, Somalia, Nigeria and Sudan. Nolting's chapter suggested that Western governments and organisations, such as the EU, have two not necessarily congruous aims: they may well wish to see liberal democracy as a moral and political good; yet, under some circumstances, they may also prefer nondemocratic governments. For example, over the years successive American governments were ambivalent about the prospect of social democratic governments coming to power—even by the ballot box—as in Brazil and Chile in the 1960s and 1970s (Arblaster 1999:46–7). The main point, however, is that, generally speaking, Western governments seem reasonably satisfied if regimes in Latin America, Asia and Africa are stable and run benignly; if they are democratic too, it is a welcome bonus.

It is tempting to suppose that endorsement of Western economic growth strategies would go some way to compensate for the lack of 'conventional' democracy in countries such as Uganda. And this would seem to be the case. The national president, Yoweri Museveni, has made a successful diplomatic offensive to sell his no-party version of democracy to the West. His success in convincing the West that his all-inclusive 'movement system' democracy can work without political parties has surprised many observers. While neighbouring countries, such as Kenya, were forced by Western backers to adopt multi-party democratic systems, Museveni managed to side-step this outcome by the use of both subtle diplomacy and innovative appointments, such as Specioza Wandira Kazibwe who, as vice-president, was the highest-ranking female politician in Africa.

It is clear from the above that international pressure or encouragement to democ racy cannot be overlooked—but at the same time it should not be seen as inevitably one-way traffic. Forms can range from deliberate subversion to well-intentioned but unhelpful interventions. Structural adjustment programmes, as Burnell notes, demanded 'radical economic reforms that [often] prove socially damaging and politically destabilising, or which encourage a greater executive concentration of power in order to make the unpalatable reforms enforceable' (Burnell 1998:11). As Nolting explained in his chapter, withdrawal of the peer pressure, external support and encouragement—extended to political reforms by donor governments and international organisations like the Commonwealth following the Harare declaration of 1991—were also important in keeping the pressure on recalcitrant regimes to allow more and better human rights. However, overall such external factors were applied rather unevenly.

In sum, international aspects are not as important as domestic factors in shaping democratic progress. On the other hand, an adverse external environment, such as a 'global economic slump or international financial crisis can significantly increase the chances of democratic deconsolidation, or failures to consolidate' (Burnell 1998: 12). However, in general, it is widely reckoned that the external environment is of more importance in the liberalisation and transition, rather than the consolidation, stage of democracy. Finally, international pressures on countries in the 1990s to adopt the neo-liberal economic agenda may have helped persuade economically-privileged elites that democratic transition would not seriously harm their interests, and thus helped to limit their opposition. But 'by further entrenching such groups in the economy, these same international forces are possibly dimming the longer term prospects for greater social and political equality' (Burnell 1998:23).

## The future

We have seen that failures to consolidate democracy are probably best explained by the power of anti-democratic structural forces to prevent that outcome. But unconducive structural factors can be overcome by the determination of individual political leaders to work towards democratic outcomes. This helps explain why, when there are apparently similar forces at work in different countries, there may be contrasting democratic outcomes. It is highly likely that the extent to which there is a theoretically-significant pattern can only be known after detailed empirical research in a large number of new democracies; so far, this has not been done. What does seem clear, however, is that we should not assume that all societies are destined to arrive sooner or later at an identical political destination, or, indeed, that they should be expected to do so.

No doubt, political change will follow a variety of paths in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In some cases people will be led in circles, only later to find themselves essentially back where they began. However, it is equally sure that the pressures to open up political systems will almost certainly not abate—and if civil and political society develop in ways conducive to democratic consolidation then issues of accountability and performance will remain or become of political importance in many countries. While many countries continue to be characterised by regular encroachments upon the dignity of individuals, there is some evidence that political trajectories in many new democracies will, gradually, focus more clearly than before on the right of the individual to be free of arbitrary abuse at the hands of the state, and to enjoy a wide array of political rights and civil liberties. The evidence is still mixed, but an optimist might conclude that there is enough in the pages of this book to suggest that the time has come when most governments—of whatever political and democratic stripe—must begin to take seriously demands for the dignity and the equality of the individual expressed collectively by the still unabated demands for more and better democracy in many new democracies.

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