Governance and State Delivery in Southern Africa

Examples from Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe

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*The opinions expressed in this volume are those of the authors
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Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe – Anything in Common? Introductory Remarks

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In contrast to Zimbabwe, Namibia and Botswana are currently widely considered as relative success stories in terms of democratization and "good governance", not only in the Southern African region. Among Sub-Saharan countries they are together with the special case of Mauritius and the "big brother" South Africa competing as highest scorers within comparative international overviews such as the Freedom House Index for the African top rankings. But they also share with South Africa a top ranking of a much more sobering nature, namely as the countries with the highest Gini-coefficient (an econometric formula to measure the biggest income discrepancies and highest differences in the distribution of national wealth in a society).

While comparisons have their limits, it is also noteworthy that all these societies share a history of being multi-party democracies since independence, while at the same time displaying the "one-party-dominance syndrome", albeit in different ways and stages of legitimacy. In all these countries control over government and the public sphere has until the present day been executed by one party only, which could also claim to have led as an anti-colonial organization the countries to sovereignty and at least formal independence from foreign rule.

Botswana and Namibia share another not yet very common feature on the African continent (again together with South Africa), namely the relatively smooth transition from one state president to another, although the case studies reveal at a closer look some obvious hiccups, which are also to some extent related to intra-party disputes and power struggles.[1] As this example shows, the two "show pieces" deserve over time and by means of closer investigations second thoughts in order to adjust at least the most uncritical songs of praise towards more sober assessments.

The project "Liberation and Democracy in Southern Africa" (LiDeSA) has among others had as an aim since 2001 to offer exactly such evidence for more sober reflections, on whether and to what extent Southern African societies have in fact managed so far to emancipate themselves from the structural legacies of settler colonialism both in terms of the socio-economic realities as well as in terms of their political cultures.[2] It is in line with this approach, that the contributions on Namibia

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1 See the chapters by Ian Taylor and Kenneth Good on Botswana and by Henning Melber on Namibia in Roger Southall/Henning Melber (eds), *Legacies of Power. Leadership Change and Former Presidents in African Politics.* Cape Town: HSRC Press and Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute 2006. The volume also includes a chapter by David Moore on Zimbabwe.

2 Most prominently i.a. by means of the following volumes: Henning Melber (ed.), *Limits to Liberation in Southern Africa. The unfinished business of democratic consolidation.* Cape Town: HSRC Press 2003 and Henning Melber (ed.), *Re-examining Liberation in Namibia. Political Culture since*

and Botswana allow for and invite to pursue the further examination of to what extent these countries are able to set standards in terms of well functioning democracies with a convincing track record in terms of accountability and transparency.

Not that it is suggested that other societies elsewhere would meet such strict criteria in a satisfactory way. But this relative counter-argument should not provide an exit option for closing one's eyes to flaws and setbacks, as they have been documented in a number of previous publications from within the LiDeSA context and otherwise. The treatment of the scholar Ken Good, who had been active in the LiDeSA network, by Botswana's President Festus Mogae (considered to be among the enlightened of his species) is a noteworthy case in point.[1]

The two contributions on Namibia and Botswana add to the necessary reflections in different but complementary ways as "views from within". It is noteworthy in this context too, that notwithstanding (or even because of) the concept of relatively critical solidarity, which guided the LiDeSA project at the Institute, the Heads of State of both countries visited the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala in their official capacities within weeks of each other during the first half of 2006. Their prepared lectures delivered to an invited audience indicated that they do acknowledge the relevance of research and scholarly debate as an effort to contribute to improved governance not only with regard to their own societies.[2] While state representatives from Zimbabwe these days do not visit the Institute (though journalists do), its role in analyzing the current situation is occasionally reportedly acknowledged by the Head of State too.[3]

In this Discussion Paper, the insiders are of a different but equally authoritative nature. The retired deputy minister *Gerhard Tötemeyer* was himself for years after Independence directly involved in governance issues, first as head of the Delimitation Commission, then as Director of Elections, and finally as Deputy Minister for Re-

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Independence. Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute 2003. A second volume on Namibia (*Transitions in Namibia. Which changes for whom?*) is currently in preparation for publication by the Institute in mid-2007. Furthermore, several Discussion Papers and Current African Issues published by the Institute between 2001 and 2006 reflected critically upon various aspects of the situation in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

1　At 72 years of age, Ken Good, after long service at the University of Botswana, was declared a "prohibited immigrant" in early 2005 for his critical analyses and after an unsuccessful appeal removed within hours from the country. See on his case Scott Pegg, "Presidential Succession and Academic Freedom: Botswana Deports Leading Political Scientist Kenneth Good", *PS: Political Science and Politics*, vol. 38, no. 4, 2005, pp. 829–831; Ian Taylor, "The Limits of the 'African Miracle': Academic Freedom in Botswana and the Deportation of Kenneth Good", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2006, pp. 101–122.

2　President Festus Mogae of Botswana – accompanied not only by his wife but also the Swedish King and Queen – honoured the Institute with his presence and a public lecture during his official state visit to Sweden on 23 March 2006. President Hifikepunye Pohamba from Namibia – in the course of an official visit to Sweden – gave a lecture at the Institute on 10 May 2006.

3　According to witnesses on the ground, during a funeral Robert Mugabe made an impromptu reference in his speech to authors contributing to a volume published after his so-called re-election as Head of State; cf. Henning Melber (ed.), *Zimbabwe's Presidential Elections 2002. Evidence, Lessons and Implications.* Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute 2002.

gional and Local Government and Housing. In a public speech in September 2006 he shared once again his critical views on a needed reform of the governance system with a wider audience in Windhoek. This is anything but a fundamental criticism from outside the "mainstream" of the dominant party and is even more convincing for this reason. Instead, it confirms the view that there is room for improvements even from a perspective loyal to the party currently exercising political hegemony.

The account by *Christian John Makgala* on the politics behind the decision where the campus of Botswana's second university should be is an "inside view" in another way. As a scholar based on the Gaborone campus of the University of Botswana, he had not only critically followed the expulsion of his colleague Ken Good (which in contrast to many of his fellow academics he dared to criticize publicly for being an ill-advised interference in academic freedom). He also closely observed the pulling of strings behind the scenes, when it came to the decision where to open the country's second campus. It is a striking example of patrimonial rule, which further taints the rosy picture of Botswana's state of democracy.

While these cases touch upon matters of legitimacy still at stake, such legitimacy is a remote goal under the current circumstances in Zimbabwe, where the governing regime already lost any degree of legitimacy some years ago. In acknowledgement of this fact, *Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni* embarks on a somewhat surprising but inspiring argument, by suggesting that the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) designed and implemented within the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) should be enforced as a way out of the current impasse. This links recent work on both NEPAD and the APRM within the framework of the LiDeSA project more directly with Southern Africa than before.[1] Not surprisingly, Robert Mugabe and his government have in contrast to such a proposal indicated on several occasions strong doubts over the initiative and refused to comply with such undertakings.

Interestingly enough, both Botswana and Namibia have so far also shown great reluctance when it comes to NEPAD and its APRM. Notwithstanding this somehow unexpected alliance (since both countries would by all measurement receive rather positive marks) and the common desire not to spoil relations with a friendly neighbour (which puts it mildly at least in the Namibian case, where the government has earned a dubious reputation of being most loyal to comrade Bob in its official position), their governments deserve better judgments than being mere bedfellows of the discredited regime next door. But if state delivery is deteriorating or lacking a minimum degree of transparency and accountability, they might enter a similar slippery road as Zimbabwe did. After all, Robert Mugabe started off as a celebrated liberator, who could count on far reaching and wide support both at home and abroad. Not too long ago, and despite the first warning signals flickering, Zimbabwe was still celebrated as a (at least relative) success story in terms of decolonization. While one

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1 See Charles Manga Fombad and Zein Kebonang, *AU, NEPAD and the APRM. Democratisation*

should be careful with too quick and premature analogies, the trends in Namibia and Botswana (like in South Africa) deserve further critical analyses with the aim of contributing to the prevention of another such case as the Zimbabwean disaster.

The LiDeSA project will not be able to do this. After almost six years in existence it is coming to an end. This is one of its last contributions which tries to add in a relevant way to an ongoing and necessary debate over the question, to what extent decolonization still faces constraints in terms of the type of political system and the practices of the new political elites. The debate will continue.

Time for Renewal?
The Namibian State and Its Governance[1]

Gerhard Tötemeyer

After sixteen years of independence, it could be of fundamental interest to evaluate Namibia's institutions of national and sub-national governance. Do they comply with the principles of quality governance as well as with the demands of time and of new developments?

Against the background of Namibia's colonial past, which was based on ethnic and tribal division, on social, political and economic discrimination, the decision to institute a unitary state was a natural and consequential choice. If the Constituent Assembly had decided on a federal state, whether based on corporate or geographical federalism, the logical consequence would have been the cementation of the divisions of the past, disadvantages and discrepancies in society. It would have enhanced tribalism, and prolonged discrimination as institutionalised during the South African regime. It would also not have been a solution to the issue of how to overcome inequities, particularly pertaining to the distribution and sharing of resources. Therefore the unitary state with its common purpose and integrative character was the obvious choice.

In a publication of the United Nations Institute for Namibia (chapter 27) it was explicitly stated that that the choice of a unitary system of government in an independent Namibia would not imply the absence of decentralisation, thus the devolution and delegation of power to lower levels of governance. Delegation of powers was considered as desirable. The intention was clear: cooperative governance, thus sharing governance at all levels.

The ultimate objective was, "to decentralise with a view to balancing the requirements of democracy and popular participation with those of viability, efficiency and effective administration".[2] The implication was the devolution of power. According to Namibia's first Prime Minister Hage Geingob with the effect that power is delegated "from the centre to the periphery to make decisions more relevant to the development needs of the regions".[3]

The national level

The founders of the constitution decided on two entities, the National Assembly and the National Council. The institution of a National Council as a kind of second

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1 Originally presented in Windhoek, Namibia during September 2006, the original character of a lecture has been maintained. A list of further reading is attached.
2 United Nations Institute for Namibia, *Namibia – Perspectives for National Reconstruction and Development*. Lusaka 1988 (2nd edition), p. 966.
3 Hage Geingob, Drafting of Namibia's Constitution. Windhoek 2006, p. 38.

chamber was not something that was originally considered by the ruling party which feared that bi-cameralism would promote federalism and inflict negatively on the unitary state. SWAPO eventually agreed to the institution of a second chamber, the National Council.

After lengthy deliberations SWAPO also agreed that regional councils would be instituted as a second tier of government while local authorities would form the third tier of government. Contrary to what non-SWAPO parties in the Constituent Assembly believed, SWAPO was convinced that its majority, which it gained during the constituent assembly elections in 1989 would repeat itself at regional level.

To the National Council, composed of two regional councillors for each of the 13 regions, thus altogether 26, law introducing and reviewing powers were assigned. The National Council can thus be pro-active and reactive. It can introduce laws dealing with regional matters and submit the same to the National Assembly for consideration while reviewing decisions that have been taken by the National Assembly. The latter task is duly executed by the National Council. However, till today it has never made use of its power to introduce legislation on regional matters to be deliberated on by the National Assembly. This I consider as a substantial shortcoming of the National Council.

In my opinion there is also another deficiency in the law-making process of our country. Over the years one has noticed long and exasperating debates in the National Assembly, particularly when bills and motions are debated. Due to the fact that all ministers and deputy ministers are members of parliament, they spend valuable and extended time in the National Assembly. Some of this time they could use more profitably and effectively in their offices. Not unknown is that from time to time the National Assembly has to adjourn due to a lack of a quorum. Very often the reason is, and by no means mala fide, that ministers have to attend to urgent matters in their ministries or other commitments of national interest, which require their immediate attention.

What could be a solution to this dilemma? It would contribute positively to the law making process, content and time-wise, if submissions such as bills, could first thoroughly be discussed by the standing committees of the National Assembly of which all the parties represented in parliament are members. After in-depth discussions they would then submit their decisions and recommendations to the National Assembly. The consequence would be less time-consuming debates in the National Assembly.

Such a method can, however, at present not be effectively applied due to limited numbers of members of parliament who can serve on the standing committees. Ministers and deputy ministers are excluded from membership of standing committees. That immediately affects more than half of all members of the National Assembly.

There are at present seven standing committees. Some matters have been grouped together due to the lack of sufficient number of members of parliament to

serve on more committees than are at present established. Two examples: there is a standing committee on Economics, Natural Resources and Public Administration. It would substantially serve the policy and law-making process if the three subjects could be divided into three separate committees. Each one deserves to be a standing committee in its own right. The same argument could be applied to the standing committee combining Human Resources, Social and Community Development and the standing committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security.

The implication of a stronger and more efficient standing committee system would be that the policy-making process can be initiated and thoroughly debated at standing committee level. It will thereafter be finalised in the National Assembly, which will be the ultimate arbiter on legislation either in the form of amendments to existing laws or as new legislation. There are a number of countries, including South Africa, which could serve as an example to this effect.

If the greater part of the policy and law-making process is performed by the standing committees, the National Assembly in addition to sanctioning the preparatory work done by the standing committees, could also include in its task performance the revision process at present entrusted to the National Council.

Another problem the law making process is exposed to is what one could refer to as an efficiency delaying process. It is related to time. Many important bills are delayed due to the time-consuming review process in the National Council, often taking an unduly long time. Such delay can impact on the efficient running of government affairs.

In addition to the tasks the standing committees are already performing others could be added such as being the direct link of legislature to the public, thus becoming readily accessible to the public. Petitions by the public can be directly brought to the attention of the standing committees. Namibia is in need of a proper working standing committee system forming a link where organisations and individuals coming from the civil society can meet the government, thus the legislators. It would create a more direct relationship between parliament and the public at large.

Through a revised and robust standing committee system, members of the National Assembly will become more empowered and more effective. It would be optimal functionally and substantively if standing committees initiate and prepare legislation. Standing committees should become the engine room of legislature. Different parts should be put together at standing committee level, tested on their effectiveness and functional performance before the recommended product is ready and forwarded to the National Assembly for final attention. The latter would then be responsible for the ultimate quality and efficiency control of the product.

Standing committees can be entrusted with even further tasks, important among them initiating, investigating and evaluating issues brought to their attention, as well as conducting hearings. It is then upto the standing committees to transform deci-

sions taken by them into legislation. The final arbiter will definitely be the National Assembly and the implementer the Executive.

The suggestion thus is to have more standing committees with an enlarged membership either by also allowing deputy ministers to serve as members on standing committees or to increase the membership of the National Assembly. How could that come about?

There may be two options. One is to terminate the existence of the National Council and add 26 members, but differently elected than the members of the National Assembly, to the National Assembly. They would be directly elected, two per region, according to the winner-takes-all electoral system. There could be different ways of election. One could be that the two candidates with the highest votes obtained in each region become elected members of the National Assembly.

Such members of the National Assembly would then represent their respective regions in the National Assembly. It would cause a direct impact of the regions and their interests on the national law making process. The Regional Councils would continue in their present form and also the number of councillors at present serving on the Regional Councils.

If such an option were considered, it would imply that Regional Councils no longer elect two councillors to serve on the National Council. At present these councillors are, while the National Council is in session, often absent for an unduly long period from their constituencies, and do not have sufficient time to cement their relationship with the constituents in their respective constituencies and to attend to their needs.

The second alternative that could be entertained, although it would be more expensive, is to continue with the National Council but in a different form and composition. The National Council could keep its name or it could be changed into an upper house, a senate or revision house or just the people's house. Its only function would be to discuss and formally approve legislation adopted in the National Assembly. Its present potential law making power would then be excluded. The members of such a body would be appointed by the President on recommendation by the National Assembly. Its constituting members could represent interest and minority groups in the society such as the professional sector (e.g. legal and business sector), the impaired and physically disabled, trade unions, community organisations such as the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN), organisations representing gender interests, and even assigned representatives of the Council of Traditional Leaders.

If the second alternative were adhered to, that is not to dissolve the National Council but to change its composition and task performance while electing 26 regional representatives to the National Assembly, one should combine it with a revision of the electoral system as applicable to the election of members of the National Assembly.

The time is opportune before the next round of elections, to consider whether Namibia should introduce a mixed electoral system at national level implying, as indicated, that part of the National Assembly is elected according to the winner-takes-all electoral system and that the present 72 members are elected according to the prevailing proportional electoral system. If such a change should be considered, which has definitely many advantages, the same principle of fair gender representation as practised at local authority level could also be applied at national level and be embodied in the Constitution. A mixed electoral system, as practised in a number of African countries, including South Africa, guarantees the representation of regional and local interests in a suggested reconstituted parliament whether unicameral or bicameral.

The size of a parliament is generally based on population numbers. The President's present prerogative to nominate an additional six non-voting members to the National Assembly for special reasons and considerations can remain particularly if the National Council is abolished. The total number of members of parliament and its composition should reflect the representativeness of the total population in the highest law making body.

If the present National Council should continue to exist but with a different composition and restricted task performance, it should not exceed thirty members. In that case the nomination of members to this body would make the President's mandated nominations to the National Assembly superfluous.

Any of the mentioned changes would imply amendments to the Constitution and the Regional Council Act. Before being legalised and implemented they could be tested by way of a referendum. Everybody is concerned about the stability of a political system. Stability should, however, not mean stagnation or even sterility. Namibia is daily faced by new challenges while developing progressively. Demands change constantly, also the way how new situations should be addressed satisfactorily and efficiently. Matters, policies and even structures may have to be adjusted to comply with a new situation within the context of new dynamics and changing circumstances. Adjustments, even to the Constitution, may from time to time be necessary to comply with new demands and requirements as long as they can be considered as substantial improvements in the interest of a working democracy and to the benefit of the nation and quality of governance.

The rationale underlying the hitherto stated arguments is utilitarianism and functionality. The aim of utilitarianism, as applied to state administration and governance, is the adequacy of any law and institutional arrangement and whether it is optimal and satisfactory in content and application. The measuring instruments are efficiency, effectiveness, and legitimacy, emphasising the functionality and normativity of institutions and their performance. Normative in the sense that state institutions conform to community expectations of behaviour and outputs. There is a strong expectation contained in norms.

The Regional Level

The institution of regional councils was meant to bring government closer to the people. People at sub-national level are offered an opportunity to share in the governance of the regions and take on co-responsibility in regional development. Regionalisation as instituted in 1992, reflects a constructive development within a comprehensive process of democratisation to which the Bantustan policy of the past was a destructive opposite. Regionalisation has been strengthened through the decentralisation policy and process. It remains of relevance to assess how regional councils could be capacitated in the decentralisation process be it through delegation, devolution, agencification or outsourcing of assigned tasks and how sub-decentralisation could be implemented.

The decentralisation policy which is empowering the national state at sub-national level, has strengthened but also burdened regional councils with new tasks as assigned by different ministries, including the mother ministry, the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development. In addition, regional councils' cooperation, advice and assistance are sought by many institutions such as NGOs, civic organisations, foreign representatives and institutions, development agencies and local authorities. Regional councillors serve on a plethora of committees including the constituency and regional development committees.

The many tasks and responsibilities as performed by regional councils have particularly affected the regional governor. He or she is expected to be the political head of the region, to be the principal agent of central government in the region, to be the chairman of the regional council and the management committee which in itself is an anomaly, and to be a councillor in the constituency where elected.

The governorship has become a full-time political and executive position. The governor's work performance exceeds the normal eight hour office day. This has particular consequences. He/she can no longer be available to the voters in his/her constituency and can thus not give sufficient attention to the interests of the voters who have elected him/her. The voters of such constituencies are dissatisfied with the present status quo. It is not unwillingness on the part of the governors to be available to the electorate in the constituencies where they were elected. But his/her unavailability affects and harms the democratic principle of political representation and availability to the voters. They are deeply concerned about this state of affairs that needs to be urgently addressed, before the next regional councils elections, by the national policy makers.

The position of the governor and the way he/she is elected must be reconsidered**.** He/she should be given a separate status as governor, relieved of the position of councillor and only perform the role of the chairperson of the Regional Council. This would imply also relieving him/her of the position of chairperson of the management committee. The only position the governor would then occupy would be that of being the political head of the region, thus also head of the executive. It

is recommended that the governor should be directly and separately elected by the eligible voters of the region on the same date as the regional councillors are elected in their constituencies.

The suggested changes imply that the position of governor must be legally redefined. Fortunately such a change would not imply an amendment to the Constitution, but only to Section 18 of the Regional Council Act of 1992. Section 9 of the same Act refers to the election of a governor. In the case of the direct election of a governor by the electorate in a region, both mentioned sections in the Act must be revisited.

The changes proposed pertaining to the position, status and role of the governor, would not only enhance the status and legitimacy of the office of governor, but would also imply maximum obligatory performance as chairperson of the regional council in question. The governor remains the principal agent of the central government in a region. Being the political head of the region the governor must see to it that the regional councillors perform their tasks according to government policy and adhering to national laws. A directly elected governor should serve in this position for five years, as all councillors do, and could be re-elected if nominated.

Such a change in the position of the governor would contribute to more effective regional governance. The governor would have more time to initiate, plan, monitor and control development in the region. He/she would no longer be exposed to a split of personality and responsibility, as the representative of a constituency and the governor of the region at the same time.

The governor thus becomes a separate and directly elected political entity, alongside to the regional councillors. In the case of electing the governor the whole of the region becomes the electoral entity. All constituencies combined in a region vote for a governor. One practice could be that the candidate for the governorship originates from the region, although candidates originating from other regions should for the sake of national unity not be excluded for consideration. Political parties nominate their candidates for this position. Independent candidates could also stand as is at present the case on constituency level. The candidate obtaining the highest number of votes is declared duly elected. This would imply, and in this respect would differ with the practice as applied during presidential elections where a candidate must obtain at least 50 per cent plus one to be duly elected, that a governor may even be elected by less than 50 per cent as long as he/she gains the highest number of votes of all the nominated candidates.

The local level

Local authorities are the lowest level of sub-national governance. The Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development (MRLGHRD) is deeply concerned about the status and inefficient running of many local authori-

ties. It has therefore instituted a committee on local government reform to deal with the deficiencies experienced in many local authorities.

A new vision and action leading to a new local authority system and structure in Namibia has undoubtedly become a necessity. Such a system and structure must guarantee competency, efficiency, quality and professionalism in local governance and administration. Namibia is in dire need of innovation that addresses the fundamental shortcomings in the running of local authorities from the village to the municipality level.

Local governance and administration should be driven by knowledge-based technology and marked by professionalism. We are all living in a knowledge-demanding and expertise-driven world, but there is a lack of professionalism in the governance and administration of Namibia's local authorities. New solutions have to be found and should be based on the newest development in management practice and information technology. Functional institutional excellence and integrity, openness and competence as well as transparency in governance and administration must be achieved. A dynamic action plan at local level has become a necessity.

There is an urgent need to empower and capacitate local authorities. Among other things emphasis must be put on adequate skills development. The authority structure must be modernised, streamlined and professionalized so that it can comply with added responsibilities. In many local authorities the communities have lost trust in the capability and quality of local authorities and their staff to comply with the demands of competent governance and administration.

Many of the existing municipalities, towns and villages in Namibia fall short of the criteria and expectations required for quality governance and administration. One notices among local councillors and equally among officials a conceptual lack of knowledge on the preconditions for the efficient running of a local authority, in addition to not having adequate knowledge of applicable legislation.

Many of the local authorities demonstrate a lack in the perception of how such a body should be professionally managed and how a local authority is well planned, organised and efficiently run. A proper vision and mission as well as ethical commitment particularly pertaining to the proper management of resources, are missing in many local authorities. What one observes overall is lack of professionalism, competence, responsibility and managerial skills.

How best can all these problems be addressed? Probably one solution would be to look at the present local authority system and structures to see whether they comply with what is expected of them in terms of their responsibilities and quality performance. Are the type of local authority structures and systems that Namibia inherited from the colonial past still the best to comply with what Namibia needs? Urgent attention must also be given to the present management system at local authority level and also to revisiting the present powers and functions, which have been allocated to local authorities.

The question arises whether the executive mayoral system, the collective executive system and the plenary executive system could be introduced in Namibia as is being practised in South Africa. One of the features of the executive mayoral system is that a highly professionally and qualified mayor is elected as the head of a municipality. In the Namibian context such a system could be applicable to Part I municipalities, thus only to Windhoek, Swakopmund and Walvis Bay. A collective executive system could be practised in all other municipalities and towns, and the plenary executive system at village level.

In the executive mayoral system the mayor is elected from among the councillors for five years, that is the whole period before the next round of elections takes place. This is important for continuity and the execution of long term development plans. One of the preconditions for the success of such a system is, in addition to others, that political parties when nominating their candidates for local authority elections must ensure that they are qualified for serving as councillors. The MRLGHRD has developed a list of 23 qualifications a candidate should comply with before nominated as a councillor. It is up to the nominating parties to comply with such criteria.

The Local Government Reform Committee will probably deal with the three local government systems mentioned. Should the executive mayoral and executive committee systems be applied, they would also have an impact on the present electoral system.

Is the time ripe and opportune to introduce a mixed electoral system at local level which would imply that a certain percentage of councillors would be elected according to the proportional electoral system practised at present and the rest on a ward basis when the winner-takes-all electoral system would apply? Local authority councillors elected on a ward basis according to the winner-takes-all electoral system would then be directly responsible for the ward where elected. Namibia should not totally abolish the proportional electoral system practised in Namibia today. Only this system can, among other things, guarantee fair gender representation.

Namibia is in need of a local authority system and structure that complies with performance excellence. It must develop a local authority system that is demand-oriented and contextualised according to Namibian needs. This requires capacitated local government institutions at an appropriate level, integrated development planning, progressive development and satisfactory service delivery, all performed in a professional way.

What about developing metropolitan areas in Namibia? A metropolitan area is a large urban settlement with high population densities, complex and diversified economies, and a high degree of functional integration across a larger geographical area than the normal jurisdiction of a municipality. What we at present experience in some areas of Namibia is that economic and social activities transcend existing municipal boundaries. Metropolitan residents may live in one locality, work in another, and utilize recreational and educational facilities across the metropolitan area.

Typically, metropolitan areas constitute a single labour market, a single retail and housing market, and a single environmental and ecological unit. To the outside world and possible investors, the metropolis constitutes a single investment entity. A metropolitan government is able to market the metropolitan city as a whole. Metropolitan governments are authorities whose areas of jurisdiction cover the whole metropolitan area.

When applying these and other criteria for a metropolitan area in the Namibian context, very few areas would qualify. Among them could be the Ongwediva/Oshakati/Ondangwa area and the Walvis Bay/Swakopmund and Henties Bay area, and possibly also the Rehoboth/Windhoek/Okahandja area. It would, however, be worthwhile to consider such an option as it would substantially contribute to the development of the respective areas. A metropolitan system in these spatial areas would combine the efforts of the present three existing municipalities to develop such a metropolitan area into a prosperous corporative entity. It would also contribute to a rationalization process.

Once the revision of the Namibian local authority structure and system is considered, one must, alongside the quality of local governance and administration, also by necessity address other issues such as an adequate local economic base, independent resource capability, a revised financial policy for local authorities, a suitable town development policy, and greater supportive policy to local authorities, whether monetary or expertise-wise, by the central government.

Many local issues, such as poverty, unemployment, security, suitable and affordable housing, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and criminality, are as much local problems and challenges as they are matters of national concern and areas of obligatory intervention by central government. It is a matter of sharing these responsibilities which implies making sufficient national resources available to address these issues at local level. Furthermore, this implies that attention should be given to how the country's resources can best be shared between central and local government and how the sources of revenue can be broadened at local level. The same is applicable at regional level.

Final Remarks

Namibia as an independent state is still in a process of political, economic and social transformation and stabilisation. This demands a constant in-depth analysis of the working of the state. In the political field it should particularly pay attention to the governance and administration at all three tiers of government. It is a kind of inventory: what has been achieved since independence? Such an analysis should include successes, shortcomings and failures.

The Constitution refers to peace and tranquillity that needs to be maintained. It equally guarantees human rights and the rule of law. These and other constitutional

guarantees must be constantly assessed, especially as to whether they are fully operative. Fortunately, institutional arrangements are no longer based on criteria such as colour or race as practised during colonial times. It is governance by free choice. Equally, elections are free and transparent.

Namibia is characterised by a working multi-party state with, however, a weak opposition, not only in terms of numbers but also in terms of its contribution to a vibrant political debate. Namibia is a dominant party state. This is not the fault of the ruling party. Its overwhelming support during elections is considered as strength, but also contains a potential weakness. A dominant party can easily become too regulative, too normative, too directive and too self-assured and absolute. Criticism is not taken lightly. There is also always the danger that too much power, not well controlled, can corrupt and can become dangerously selfish.

The inherent weakness of a dominant party is that its elected leadership tends to encapsulate itself, becoming introvert and less concerned about its electorate. It is in danger of losing direct contact with the masses although believing that it has the masses unconditionally behind it. Such a perception may work for some time, but not forever. For this reason alone it is imperative that sufficient checks and balances of power are in place and are successfully working as control mechanisms. This paper claims that this not the case and that improvement is direly needed. Such an assumption requires, timely and consequent, urgent attention.

Sixteen years after independence it has become a necessity for the ruling party to reassess its position and task performance. The most important criterion is whether present government structures and processes are meeting the expectations of the people. Against this background it is of relevance to analyse whether present institutional arrangements and processes are still complying with the expectations of the people and whether people are sufficiently involved in the governance of the country. The issue to be addressed is how can the organisation and the governance processes of the state be improved, how can the voices of the people be better and more efficiently represented in state organs at all levels of governance, in other words how can people be given a stronger and more representative say in the running of the state at national, regional and local level.

The task of the government is to practise co-governance, thus with the people and not only for the people, a process from which the whole country can benefit. It is also important for the government to constantly increase its own credibility and to assure that it remains the voice of all the people and not only of a particular elite or clique. In the end, quality of governance will determine the success of any government. A government and its governance cannot be successful without capacitating people and without offering them an opportunity to take on co-responsibility through co-governance. In addition, checks and balances include a controlling function, often not very much appreciated by politicians.

The intention of this contribution was therefore to address the issue of national and sub-national governance and its renewal. It is important for every government to be exposed to critical considerations such as how quality governance can be improved at all levels of government.

The issues mentioned demand honest and practical answers. An open public debate on the issues as proposed and discussed in this paper could be fruitful and rewarding. Sufficient opportunity should be given to all Namibian citizens to be co-workers and co-builders in improved systems and structures at central, regional and local governance level. The end result should be a better society governed by systems and structures that are more functional, more suitable, more efficient, more professional, more transparent and more responsive to the challenges of today and the future. The ultimate objective must always be credible, morally and politically defensible governance. It must also be representative.

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'A Home Town Decision?'
The Location of Botswana's Second University

Christian John Makgala

> *One of the pillars of our [Botswana's] democracy is consultation – genuine and sincere consultation…. But we live in Africa where there is a problem with politics.*
> (Botsalo Ntuane, 2006)

There is a view in Botswana that the country's tradition of consultation in major decision making has in recent years undergone serious erosion and has become mere window dressing by government. An example, which the paper uses, is the recent controversial government decision to locate the country's envisaged second university in a place different from the one a government appointed consultative Task Force had recommended. The paper argues that the government decision was not based on tribalism and regionalism as some observers conclude, but was a case of realpolotik for the purpose of survival of the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP). It appears that by locating the university in the Serowe/Palapye area instead of the recommended Selebi-Phikwe the government is trying to counter the growing opposition support in this traditional stronghold of the BDP. However, the paper concludes that such a move is likely to backfire since history has shown that the university is the breeding ground for opposition activists and support in Botswana.

Introduction

This paper examines the perception that Botswana's culture of consultation in major decision making has in recent years become illusory. The paper uses as an example the recent controversial development whereby the government rode roughshod over the recommendations of a Task Force it had appointed to gather people's views and recommend on the location of the country's second university. This led to serious uproar in the country with some questioning the credibility of the country's much touted democracy. From time immemorial to the late colonial period the rulers (chiefs and the colonial officials) of Botswana relied heavily on consulting the ruled in the decision making process. This democratic practice has greatly contributed to the peaceful co-existence (*kagisano*), political stability and economic growth, which exist in the country today and has made Botswana a rather unique case in Africa, something Samatar calls an African Miracle (Samatar, 1999). However, political scientists argue that the pre-independence political dispensation in Botswana was not consultative since the xhiefs and their lieutenants merely set the agenda and manipulated public opinion into accepting predetermined decisions. This view is,

however, disputed by historians who counter-argue, with evidence, that colonial rule was to a considerable extent consultative. The political scientist, John Holm, in particular believes that even the post-independence government has never been consultative. Nevertheless, the BDP literature and propaganda are replete with pledges of consultative governance.

In recent years, perhaps owing to acidic factional fighting within the BDP (which has been in power since 1965) and its declining popular vote, there is a perception that consultation appears to be a sham as the popular view is ignored. In this paper it is argued that disregarding popular wisdom and expert advice by the BDP government seems to be a matter of political expediency for political survival.

This paper explores the view held by some that the government's decision to locate the second university in the Serowe/Palapye area instead of the ailing mining town of Selebi-Phikwe (as per the recommendations of the Task Force and public opinion) should be seen as tribalism or regionalism as deifes logic because Selebi-Phikwe is also in the Bangwato (Central District) region. Even the company that operates the Selebi-Phikwe mine is called Bamangwato Consolidated Limited (BCL).[1] Therefore political expediency as opposed to blatant tribalism/regionalism seems to have been the determining factor.

This essay examines the various arguments for and against the location of the second university in the Serowe/Palapye area, none of which provides a convincing explanation, and attempts to provide a more likely reason for the government's choice of Serowe/Palapye. The choice of Serowe/Palapye seems meant to thwart growing opposition support in the Central District and prevent the opposition from using Palapye (Bangwato tribal capital from 1889–1902) as a launching pad into the Central District. This region has been the heart and soul of the BDP's support since the party was formed by Seretse Khama in 1962. Serowe is just 45 kilometres from Palapye and extremely important to the BDP historically, spiritually and psychologically.

The BDP government's seemingly desperate measures and perceived arrogance (Moabi, 11 March 2004) could be attributed to the fatigue of four decades of uninterrupted rule. According to Staffan Darnolf and John D. Holm, 'after a prolonged period of rule most ruling parties lose an election, regardless of their policy successes and probity' (Darnolf and Holm, 1999:3). Therefore the decision to locate the university in the Serowe/Palapye area may have been motivated by the need to protect the Palapye constituency from possible opposition takeover in the next election. For instance, the incumbent MP for Palapye, Boyce Sebetela, has been accused by some people of being arrogant, corrupt and lacking popular appeal in Palapye. So serious was this that it is said that a plan is being hatched to replace him with a woman candidate who is believed to have popular appeal (*Monitor*, 10 January 2005). To

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1 In this paper the modern *Bangwato* version is used instead of the old *Bamangwato*.

lend further credence to this view Sebetela was not reappointed into Cabinet following the 2004 elections. Furthermore, immediately after the election, James Olesitse, Palapye candidate for Botswana Congress Party (BCP) who had given Sebetela a run for his money during the election, appealed to rival opposition parties to cooperate in order to dislodge the BDP from power. Previously the BCP was not keen on cooperating with another main opposition party, the Botswana National Front (BNF). Sebetela himself has confessed to being worried by the talk of BCP-BNF cooperation (*Monitor*, 10 January 2005), something his party previously dismissed as a non-viable experiment.

Conceptual Framework: From Consultation to Persuasion in Botswana

Consultation (*therisanyo*) was the hallmark of governance in Botswana until the late 1950s and the early 1960s when new tribal councils consisting of elected representatives emerged. The British colonial administration relied on the traditional *kgotla* forum for consultation with the Batswana. The *kgotla* was an assembly whereby theoretically all adult males could come and air their views freely and even influence decisions. The Chief was expected to make the final decision based on the mood of the majority speakers. Usually the Chief would have informally discussed the issue or agenda with his advisers privately before it was tabled at the *kgotla*. 'This consultation enabled the Chief to indicate his own views which the advisers could then disseminate among the people', writes the historian, Harold Robertson (1978:19). This possibility has been pinpointed by some political scientists as leading to predetermined decisions at the *kgotla* by the tribal leadership. However, Leroy Gunderson's conclusion to that effect has been viewed by Robertson as rather harsh (1978:20). 'The participation of the *hoi-polloi*', says Gunderson, 'was mere window dressing. The real value of the *kgotla* was that it led the ordinary tribesman to believe that he had taken part in the decision process' (Gunderson, 1970:75). This view has recently been echoed by another political scientist, Professor John Holm. He believes that 'consultation has been a symbolic act designed to make people believe they had a say in a decision when in fact the leaders were doing what they had always planned. The royal relatives were critical in limiting discussion at the *kgotla*, as they spoke first and set the agenda' (e-mail communication with John Holm, 8 February 2005 and Holm and Molutsi, 1992:326). Yet another political scientist, Mahmood Mamdani, charges that 'in the colonial period this public assembly was turned into a forum where decisions were announced but not debated' (Mamdani, 1996:46).

According to a recent historical study, contrary to Mamdani's assertion, what made indirect colonial rule different in this country was the part played by the tribal public opinion, which was able to work independently or with the support of the chiefs or British colonial government (Makgala, 2001). This tripartite interplay ensured transparency in tribal governance, consultation and also a measure of ac-

countability. Moreover, in Botswana, tribal administrations were responsible for the provision of various social services from as early as 1900 while their counterparts elsewhere in British Africa largely assumed this responsibility in the 1950s after the Second World War. Therefore, indirect rule in Botswana tended to be development-oriented and 'progressive'. The tribes played an important role in the management of tribal affairs and consultation was the key to progress (Makgala, 2001:85–115, 156–77, 186–217, 254–85). The absence or scarcity of this dialogue elsewhere in Africa led to confrontation and uprising against colonial regimes (Makgala, 2004a:301; Kimambo, 1971 and Marks, 1970). When adequate consultation was ignored in Botswana, development faltered.

Mass consultation through *kgotla* ended in the late 1950s and early 1960s when tribal councils with a limited number of elected members were established in the tribal areas. The meetings of these councils were held indoors and closed to members of public. The decisions from these meetings were later announced to the populace in the *kgotla*.

The liberal democracy model adopted by Botswana after 1965 further entrenched representative governance and merely used the *kgotla* for purposes of persuading the people into accepting concluded government decisions or policies. To this effect John Holm argues that 'democracy as a form of government these days is a system wherein the people elect representatives. There is no guarantee that the representatives will follow or reflect public opinion.... What elected representatives have to do under the system is build enough support for the next election. They may well do so by satisfying a number of minorities, which come to make up a majority. So, in this case [the second university] the Government decided to reward its home base'. This view supports the essay's contention that the decision to locate the proposed university in the Serowe/Palapye area was influenced by the threat of opposition in the next election. Holm's position on representative democracy smacks of the mainstream elite theory. According to Eva Etzioni-Halevy, 'some of these [elite] theorists… have further posited the existence of concerted power elites (made up of a few interlocking groups of power holders) that rule democracies, particularly the American one. The public, or the masses, have no choice but to acquiesce in this arrangement; they are virtually devoid of power and have little impact on government policies that affect their lives' (Etzioni-Halevy, 1997xxx).

Despite this development there were various ways in which pre-colonial dispensation and indirect colonial rule shaped later developmental state politics in Botswana, something which was not the case in Zimbabwe for instance. According to Zibani Maundeni, unlike Zimbabwe, 'independent Botswana was able to generate and sustain a type of developmental state because of the presence of an indigenous initiator state culture that was preserved by the Protectorate state and was inherited by the post-colonial state elites' (Maundeni, 2001:105). The strength of the country's democracy, the government's relative accountability, economic and political stability

seem to be the legacy of consultation with the people. However, John Holm argues that 'after independence the manipulation has taken many forms'. Here he provides evidence. 'I remember with the first Tribal Grazing Land Policy (TGLP, in the 1970s) programme, they held radio listening groups where the group was to report its opinion. The questions were marginal to the whole enterprise, but much was made out of the consultation', he says. According to Holm, 'the only time when consultation has worked in terms of popular control is when a village has gone into an open revolt about a development project decision, e.g. the Maun water dispute' in the 1980s.

The BDP government's perceived lack of consultation might have been 'unnoticed' during Seretse's reign owing to the overwhelming popularity he enjoyed countrywide as well as his wise vision and approach to nation building. Seretse was an extremely popular but uncrowned Chief of the Bangwato of the Central District. According to Wellie Henderson, 'That Botswana today is a sovereign entity with a respected voice in regional affairs, maintaining domestically a polity that is stable, constitutional and democratic, owes much to the determination of a man who could easily have chosen to live quietly in Serowe amongst his own people, whilst looking after the cattle that he so adored' (Henderson, 1990:27). To John Holm, 'the government starting with Seretse has been extraordinary in going its own way regardless of public opinion. It has been dominated by economists' (communication of John Holm, 8 February 2005).

With independence looming large, the BDP paid homage to the tradition of consultation by launching its newsletter called *Therisanyo/Consultation* in September 1963. *Therisanyo* was the brainchild of Seretse's deputy, Quett Masire, who was a journalist. The first issue of *Therisanyo* stated that the newsletter was 'a horn that will blow to call the people of Bechuanaland from their tribal hiding places and other racial groups, from their racial bigotry to national consultations in frank discussion' (Parsons, et al., 1995:221). We are told that the '*Therisanyo* newspaper was expensive to produce, and there was the need for extensive use of vehicles in the campaign to reach every corner of the country' (Parsons, et al., 1995:221). Curiously, *Therisanyo* has been defunct for many years now despite the BDP being well endowed in resources while the opposition complain ceaselessly of lack of funds. BDP critics charge that the non-production of *Therisanyo* is testimony to the BDP's lack of commitment to the tradition of consultation in taking major national decisions.

Botswana's form of consultation, however constrained, does not seem to have obtained in many countries in post-independence sub-Saharan African. Some leaders unilaterally and personally determined locations for national educational facilities. Some of these facilities were located in some Heads of State's home districts, which in some cases were not ideal for the countries concerned. Sometimes even the education offered was incompatible with the needs for national development of those countries. For example, President Kamuzu Banda of Malawi built a school resembling Eaton of England in his home district of Kaungula (Nyamnjoh and Jua,

2002:10). The selection of location for Moi University in Kenya by the then local potentate, Daniel arap Moi, sounds rather comical in comparison to Botswana's consultative approach:

> It was every bodyguard's nightmare. All day long the president had been driving through the countryside around Eldoret, racing from one remote estate to another before heading off on foot into the bush. Often the thick screen of trees and scrub obscured him from view as Moi, deep in conversation with the Indian architect Harbans Singh, pushed his way through thorny thickets and clinging vegetation. Moi, however, had other things on his mind than personal security – he was considering the options on offer for the site of Kenya's newest university. Finally the president had made *his* choice. In the midst of a wattle tree plantation near the small market town of Kesses, in the heart of Uasin Gishu in the Rift Valley, he decided on the site and designs for Kenya's grandest seat of learning, Moi University (Morton, 1998:144).

However, there is a growing perception that the Banda and Moi ways of doing things are taking root in Botswana. The Botswana government has been accused of insensitivity to popular views and acting unilaterally on issues of serious national concern. Critics charge that this development became worse with the recruitment of Seretse Khama's son and chief of the Bangwato, Ian Khama Seretse Khama, from the commandership of the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) into the BDP and vice presidency of the country in 1998. This accusation is also made by some important personalities in the party. In 1998 President Masire retired in a move meant to curb corrosive factionalism that was ruling supreme in the party. Masire was succeeded by his deputy Festus Mogae, a Mongwato from Serowe/Palapye. Mogae recruited Khama from the BDF and Khama seems to have agreed on his own terms, noted former Cabinet Minster Ponatshego Kedikilwe (*Botswana Gazette*, 18 June 2003). Khama is Mogae's tribal chief.

Vice President Khama has been accused of dictatorial tendencies so much so that one BDP Member of parliament, Olifhant Mfa, declared in public that once Mogae retires democracy in Botswana will be a thing of the past. This 'prophecy' has since been cited many times in the country's political discourse. Some hold a view that Mogae treats Khama with kid gloves and allows him to act as he pleases. 'Technically', wrote a disappointed Kesitegile Gobotswang, 'the country is under the rule of Khama and Mogae has been reduced to a lame duck president… I will refer to Khama as the ruler and Mogae as President…. The ruler is also known for making decisions without following laid down government procedures' (Gobotswang, 8 December 2004). In his systematic study of the relationship between Mogae and Khama, the political scientist Professor Mpho Molomo suggests that Botswana's democracy is under siege (Molomo, 2000a:109–121).

Critics also accuse Mogae of granting Khama an unprecedented one year sabbatical leave just a year after becoming Vice President. Many have also questioned his piloting of BDF helicopters to BDP rallies. Khama is himself blamed for abruptly ending Tirelo Sechaba national service which is blamed for having brought about a crisis in the tertiary education system. But to be fair to Ian Khama crisis in education as a result of lack of consultation had a precedent. For instance, in 1988, ten years before he arrived on the political scene, the BNF was seen to be gaining popular support for promising voters free secondary education. The top BDP leaders had to contain this perceived BNF threat, and 'they did not even take time to consult the Ministry of Education about the feasibility of the change. They just announced the date of implementation' (Lekorwe, 1989:223). This had adverse consequences because the government had embarked on building many junior secondary schools all over the country without a corresponding number of senior secondary schools. The result was a large number of junior secondary school dropouts. Even today the Ministry of Education is said to be deliberately failing large numbers of junior secondary school students because senior secondary schools are far too few to accommodate them.

Nevertheless, Gilson Saleshando, the opposition BCP deputy president and contestant for the Selebi-Phikwe West parliamentary seat, accuses Khama of having decreed that the second university be located in the Serowe/Palapye area (*Mirror*, 8–14 December 2004). During the acrimonious run up to the 2003 BDP Congress in Ghanzi, factionalism reached fever pitch in the party (Makgala, 11 February 2004b). BDP's then National Chairman, the Member of parliament and long time Mogae rival, Ponatshego Kedikilwe, who was competing against Khama for the National Chairmanship position, stated that Khama's activities were turning the country into a 'demo-feudal state' (*Gazette*, 18 June 2003).

Another perception is that the current leadership is also insensitive to tribal balance in terms of the composition of the Cabinet. The Cabinet is viewed as dominated by the Bangwato or people from the Central District, and hence the decision to locate the university in the Serowe-Palapye area despite the desperate and urgent need to salvage Selebi-Phikwe. However, one observer Molefhi Kalaota felt that 'With the southern region of the country in the hands of the opposition, it was obvious that northerners, primarily Bangwato, would dominate the cabinet' (Kalaota, 26 November 2004). Nevertheless, Seretse's biographer, Wellie Henderson, writes that 'Seretse gave no special political influence to Central District politically, his cabinets, when he did come to power, were balanced. (It must be remembered that Central District contains approximately 37 per cent of the total population and must therefore be expected to have considerable political significance)' (Henderson, 1990:37). Furthermore, Mogae has been blamed for the so-called militarization of Cabinet (Gobotswang, 8 December 2004). The reason being that the current cabinet consists of five former top ranking soldiers, three of whom are natives of Serowe.

On deliberate non-consultation even with usual international contacts, the historian and political commentator Sandy Grant observes that regarding the project of the magnitude of the university the government should have gone straight to the Commonwealth Secretariat which must have enormous experience of such issues and needs (e-mail communication with Sandy Grant, 3 February 2005). That is why it exists, he says. 'But in this case', he continues, 'the government chose to shy away from its usual contacts, friends, partners and go it alone…. With a thirty year old track record of working closely with such partner [and] international agencies, it suddenly decides to go it alone on an issue screaming aloud for extra technical input.'

The Fate of Selebi-Phikwe and Second University Task Force

In early 2004, President Festus Mogae appointed a Task Force whose mandate was to tour the country gathering views on where the country's second university should be located, and to recommend a suitable location. The envisaged university was planned to offer predominantly science and technology oriented courses. The Task Force was chaired by the scientist Professor Sesai Mphuchane of the University of Botswana. Following the phasing out of Tirelo Sechaba, there arose an immediate and urgent need for a second university owing to an extremely high demand for places which the University of Botswana simply did not have enough facilities for. As a result, the government was compelled to send students abroad to study at phenomenal cost.

Apparently, for a while, the BCL which mined copper-nickel in Selebi-Phikwe, the country's third largest urban centre, was threatened by closure owing to huge costs of production and depleting copper-nickel deposits. The mine is expected to fold up in 2012. The town came into existence as a result of the mine. Over the years, the government had tried to deal with this threat by wooing foreign investors to set up businesses in Selebi-Phikwe. Unfortunately, most of these investors, mostly running textile factories, proved to be fly-by-night operators who obtained the readily available financial assistance from government and skipped over the border overnight leaving employees in the lurch (Good and Hughes, 2002:39–59). The opposition had a field day in castigating the BDP government for this unfortunate development (Rantao, 2000:52).

With Selebi-Phikwe having one foot in the grave, for many years the government tried many strategies for ensuring that the town would live beyond the closure of the copper-nickel mine. As a result some people felt that Selebi-Phikwe was the obvious choice for the location of the second university. Some even wondered why a Task Force was appointed instead of building the university in Selebi-Phikwe right away. In Tlokweng, the journalist Letshwiti Tutwane, told the Task Force that the government should not have instituted it because the location of a university is a technical matter. He argued 'that when the government signed an agreement with the American government not to hand over American criminals to the international

court the government did not ask Batswana whether it should sign the agreement or not' (*Mmegi*, 26 January 2004). Another Tlokweng resident, Tshegofatso Moahi, suggested Selibe-Phikwe as the ideal place for the university as the mine was about to close down and building the university there would inject life into the dying town. She said that houses that were used by mine workers could be turned into lecturers' houses which would help in cutting down on building expenses. However, 'Moahi differed with Tutwane by saying that what the government has done by setting up the task committee is the right thing as it shows that it is committed to democracy' (*Mmegi*, 26 January 2004).

However, residents from various towns and villages formed committees which articulated their bids and presented them to the Task Force. In some cases, individuals wrote letters to the private newspapers arguing their cases. Although many favoured their places of residence it appeared that Selebi-Phikwe was a compromise or second choice for the majority. Selebi-Phikwe residents who had banked on this widespread sentiment were rudely awakened by the government's decision, a theme to which we now turn.

'And the Winner Is… Serowe/Palapye': Cabinet Decision on the Task Force's Recommendations

After the Task Force submitted its recommendations (in early 2004), it took many months before the government made an announcement on the recommendations. However, on 28 January 2004 the *Mmegi* newspaper wrote that according to Professor Mphuchane the most popular site for the second university would be known by early February (*Mmegi*, 28 January 2004). Perhaps the delay was linked to the elections to be held in late October 2004. Chances were that had an unfavourable announcement been made before the election it could have adversely affected the BDP's fortunes in Selebi-Phikwe. This delay is said to have caused confusion to the residents of Selebi-Phikwe. 'Residents in the mining town feel that the delay is a plot to sideline Phikwe as the rightful place for the university', wrote a local newspaper, *The Mirror* (21–27 July 2004).

The hopeful and anxious Selebi-Phikwe residents began to feel that 'the government will not have done the town justice if the proposed university is located elsewhere. They believe that politics and tribalism may be playing a hidden hand in the delay to announce where the varsity will be located', reported *The Mirror*. Without releasing the Task Force's report, a few days after the election, the government announced that Cabinet had decided that the second university would be located in the Serowe-Palapye area. (Although the BDP won the election, its share of the popular vote fell from 57 per cent in 1999 to 52 per cent in 2004. It was clear that in numerous constituencies the combined opposition (mainly BNF and BCP) votes outnumbered those of the BDP.)

Table 1: Per cent of popular vote won by party in Botswana's general elections

Party	1965	1969	1974	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999	2004
BDP	80	68	77	75	68	65	55	54	51.7
BNF	-	14	12	13	20	27	37	25	26.0
BPP	14	12	6	8	7	4	4	-	
BIP/IFP	5	6	4	4	3	2	4	-	
BCP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	16.6
BAM	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	
Other	1	0	1	0	2	2	0	0	5.9
Rejected	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	

Source: Good and Taylor, 2006.

Many were shocked by the news, since the Serowe/Palapye area was least expected to triumph. This led to a long and controversial debate in the public arena with some supporting the government's decision while others opposed it.

The recommendations of the Task Force (based on its terms of reference) were leaked and appeared on the cover page of the *Mmegi* newspaper of 3 November 2004. It reported that the Task Force never mentioned Serowe as a contender for the university location while Palapye also did not meet the requirements:

> Palapye fared badly on the key social, political and economic factors used by the Task Force to decide where the institution should be located. The first consideration was that if the university was to be biased in favour of science and technology, it should be located in a centre with a strong industrial and commercial base. The second consideration was to locate the university where it would help address the uneven distribution of development projects in the country. The consideration emanated from the fact that the only university in the country is based in Gaborone and this gives the capital city and the surrounding areas an advantage. Hence the second university was proposed to be located away from Gaborone in line with the government policy of decentralisation.
>
> Availability of education institutions and hospitals was seen to be important to both staff and students at the location of the new university by the Task Force. Easy accessibility by road, air and rail to allow people to reach the facility was another factor used to determine where the university should be located. Current and future needs of the location including cost implications were taken into account. As per the set criteria, Francistown, Selebi-Phikwe, Maun, Palapye and Ghanzi were found by the Task Force to be strong contenders for the location of the university.

According to the leaked information, the country's second city, Francistown, had beaten its competitors, although the Task Force had misgivings about abandoned mine shafts there. Selebi-Phikwe was also seen as meeting the requirements. Its case

was further strengthened by the Task Force's sympathy concerning the bleak future of the town. However, sulphuric smoke from the mine chimney, a notorious cause of the polluted air in Selebi-Phikwe, was noted as a drawback to its case. The tourist town of Maun was third and qualified under the uneven distribution of development criteria. 'Most development in Botswana is perceived to be concentrated in the eastern and southern parts of the country particularly along the railway line. The Task Force pointed out that lack of physical infrastructure would make Maun rank below Francistown and Selebi-Phikwe. In addition, it would be difficult to attract investors to Maun to provide other facilities to support the university.' While the fourth placed Palapye had good access to communication facilities and was centrally located, other required facilities were inadequate. Hence, 'the case for Palapye as a location for the second university remains weak'. This was directly cited from the report and underlined with red ink for emphasis. Ghanzi, while in need of development, could not host the university owing to acute lack of the supporting infrastructure required (*Mmegi*, 3 November 2004). Taking the strengths and weaknesses of all the contending places into account Selebi-Phikwe was chosen by a majority view in the Task Force (*Mmegi*, 3 December 2004). Citizens who disapproved of the government choice of Serowe-Palapye area wasted no time in lambasting the Cabinet decision as grossly unfair. Most linked the decision to the preponderance of the Bangwato in the Cabinet.

'A Hometown Decision?': Dissenting Voices

With most civic organisations said be largely on the government's side or quiet on controversial issues (Maundeni, 2004:72–75), private citizens and the independent press were the ones at the fore-front of dissension. 'It is clear that government has ignored expert advice on the location of Botswana's second university with arrogance and impunity', lamented the daily *Mmegi* newspaper (10 December 2004). The newspaper continued:

> But the question that remains to be answered by the leadership of the country is: did the Task Force appointed to determine the location of the second university fail in its job so miserably for government to ignore its recommendations so contemptuously? And if the government had powers and the will not only to ignore the findings of its own Task Force and willy-nilly decide on the location of the university, why then was it necessary to waste public funds in an exercise in futility….Government's decision to disregard the specialists' findings on the location of the university is tantamount to casting aspersions on the professional integrity of very eminent and highly respected persons…. So much money and time have been spent on a Task Force whose recommendations and findings government has totally disregarded. Should government continue with the practice where the process of consultation is a mere formality, the nation might lose confidence in

the leadership of the country and other aspects of democracy that are founded on the spirit of consultation.

A *Mmegi* columnist and campaigner for Selebi-Phikwe, Dan Moabi, said that the government decision was 'a harsh slap in the face for the residents of Selebi-Phikwe' (Moabi, 2 December 2004). The Minister of Education, who announced the Cabinet decision, stated that Palapye was chosen for its central location and good access to communication facilities, adequate electricity and water supplies. Pollution from the BCL mine marred the Selebi-Phikwe case, it was said. Moreover, according to the Minister, the government had plans for building a technical college in Selebi-Phikwe to keep it alive. These reasons were dismissed as lame excuses by Moabi who also agitated for increased pressure on the government to convince it to change its decision:

> Quite frankly, I don't find any of these reasons convincing. Why has the central location of Serowe/Palapye suddenly become such an important factor in determining the location of a large project? Why didn't it come into play in determining for instance, the location of the existing university, or of the capital of Botswana? Will Serowe/Palapye become the home of all major projects in the future, to ensure that they are centrally located? Given this new logic of the BDP government, what is the future of those parts of this country that are not centrally located?

> Selebi-Phikwe, like Serowe/Palapye, has plenty of electricity and water. It also has good road and rail access, both of which can be improved, if necessary. In addition, the copper-nickel mining town has considerably more of other infrastructure that the new university will require, than either Serowe or Palapye….

> [In terms of pollution] it is as if when the cabinet took the decision to locate the university in Serowe/Palapye, it had forgotten that the copper-nickel mine would be closed down in 2012. In any case, the people of Selebi-Phikwe have endured that pollution since the mine commenced operations. Why can't the new university endure it for the remaining short life of the mine?

> I urge all the people of Botswana to support the efforts of the residents of Selebi-Phikwe to persuade the government to change its unfortunate decision on the location of the new university. It is an indefensible decision.

In another article Moabi charged that 'the perception is rapidly growing that with a president, a vice president and a number of cabinet ministers who come from the Serowe/Palapye area, the government's position on this matter is starting to look more and more like a hometown decision' (9 December 2004). He went on, 'We should make it absolutely clear to our government that national decisions that seem to be aimed at protecting selfish personal, community or tribal interests, or that are taken arbitrarily, are unacceptable. It's decisions of this kind that ultimately undermine national unity, often with grave consequences' (Moabi, 9 December 2004).

'Payback Time and Paradigm Shift in Development': Bangwato's Response

The news of the location of the second university in the Serowe/Palapye area was received with alacrity and great joy by the residents of the area. The tribal leadership and intelligentsia justified the Cabinet decision as long overdue and the most 'welcome paradigm shift in development' (Leepile, 26 November 2004). Some residents in the area dismissed the tribalism school of thought arguing that for a long time developments had been monopolized by the towns at the expense of villages. John Holm corroborates this view by saying that 'if you look at policy making in Botswana, it is amazing how little the core Bamangwato areas have benefited, especially relative to [towns such as] Lobatse, Francistown and Gaborone' (communication with John Holm, 8 February 2005).

Consequently 'Jobs are only found in towns because of this. Even nowadays, rain falls only in towns', teased one Bafeletse Selepe of Serowe (*Mmegi*, 1 Dec. 2004). As for the plight of Selebi-Phikwe some residents felt no pity (*Mmegi*, 1 Dec. 2004). An excited taxi-man said that 'when the BCL mine closes, the residents should just take a ride to Palapye to look for jobs. Their children should come to our university as well. Selebi-Phikwe is not far from here. We need them to come and ride in our taxis' (*Mmegi*, 1 December 2004). A historian, Metlhaetsile Leepile, saw the government decision in terms of paradigm shift in development and pursued his argument from a historical and economic angle:

> Serowe and Palapye are more than deserving candidates for the proposed university. Both are historical settlements of the Bangwato, which between them, have over 200 years. Both have viable populations; and, I should add, infrastructure. Serowe remains one of Africa's largest traditional settlements. It is the home of our first president and the capital of the Central District – a huge, expansive territory bigger than many nation states and very well endowed in mineral and other natural resources. Gamangwato has the largest per capita head of cattle in this country and should, if things were done fairly and equitably in this country, have been favoured with an abattoir….
>
> Let me remind some of our commentators that Serowe and Palapye have been unfailing in their support for the ruling party since 1966. In politics, you cultivate loyalty; you do not take anything for granted. It's payback time, period.
>
> Not long ago, Selebi-Phikwe was the cattle-post of the Bangwato from Serowe, Palapye, Sefhophe and Mmadinare…. With the discovery of copper/nickel it was rezoned into an urban centre…. People relocated from Serowe, Palapye, Bobonong and the surrounding settlements to Selebi-Phikwe….Forced emigration stifles sustainable national development. It has the potential to turn entire communities into economic refugees. It can kill the psyche of those people that are deliberately left behind; obliterating their self-worth as a people. It can be doubly painful when resources are extracted from a rich area only to be ploughed back in less economically endowed places. That's a recipe for trouble. By spreading infrastructure around, by proactively redistributing the national wealth, you

deal with perceptions of favouritism towards certain regions or centres. It is such excesses, or rather, short-sightedness, that often results in social polarisation, with the attendant political turmoil that has visited much of Africa in our life-time – Côte d'Ivoir, the Congo, Nigeria, the Sudan, etc. It is not as if the tell-tale signs were not there before these countries degenerated into the abysmal chaos some of them have fallen into. Leaders should have the capacity to read the mood of a population and correct mistakes while there is still time (Leepile, 26 November 2004).

Leepile's sentiments were shared by Bangwato Deputy Tribal Authority, Kgosi Mothusi Seretse. The latter 'said that they had been keeping quite (sic) about all the past developments that had passed their area but with the university, they would not sit back and watch…. Seretse warned that should government reverse its decision to build the institution in their area, the unity that prevails in the country would elude Botswana' (*Monitor*, 10 January 2005). Naturally, Palapye headman Raditanka Ntebele could not agree more with the views expressed in favour of the Serowe/Palapye area (*Monitor*, 10 January 2005). The Member of parliament for Palapye, Boyce Sebetela, who favoured Serowe over Palapye complained that the issue had been unnecessarily blown up out of proportion. 'Like Kgosi Seretse, he warned that if government reverses its decision on the university, it would be an unprecedented development that could lead to ethnic division in the country' (*Monitor*, 10 January 2005).

Another Mongwato royal, Reverend Gasebalwe Seretse, who was elated by the Serowe/Palapye location argued that the second university should also be named after the progressive Bangwato Regent, Tshekedi Khama (1926–1949) (Seretse, 15 December 2004). Gasebalwe's position is an interesting one because he is also a church minister. It appears he got carried away and was merely expressing a personal opinion but did not indicate so in his letter to *The Midweek Sun*. Being a civic leader, the implication of his statement was that it was the position of his denomination. This earned him the wrath of one of his followers, Michelle Morongwe-Gulubane, who confessed to being shocked by the government's decision. From the embattled Selebi-Phikwe she wondered whether democracy existed in Botswana and attributed the Cabinet decision to corruption (Morongwe-Gulubane, M. 12 January 2005).

Meanwhile Serowe and Palapye residents vowed to protect their extraordinary luck. In Palapye, a committee was formed in November 2004 with the mandate of ensuring that the government's decision stood.

Parliament's Constitutional Position on Cabinet Decision

During a parliamentary session on 9 December 2004, the BCP member of parliament for Gaborone Central, Dumelang Saleshando, whose hometown is Selebi-Phikwe, moved a motion which sought a parliamentary resolution the objective of which was to suspend the decision for location of the second university in the

Serowe/Palapye area. He wanted government to give parliament an opportunity to debate the report of the Task Force. Saleshando was informed by the Attorney General and some Cabinet Ministers that parliament did not have powers to question decisions of Cabinet or executive, and his motion was dismissed. 'This was seen as a hastily thought-out strategy to block… Saleshando's motion', wrote the enquiring *Mmegi* (11 January 2005).

The explanation offered for rejecting Saleshando's motion was dismissed by David Magang, former Cabinet Minister and lawyer from the south. He argued that Section 86 of the Constitution makes the legislative power of parliament infinite unless it contravenes the Constitution. According to Magang, the ministers rejected Saleshando's motion on procedural grounds instead of substance. 'Parliament is entitled to change, not only to question, decisions of government. If parliament can question the validity of certain pieces of legislation and even amend them, there is no reason why it can't change what is obviously a policy recommendation', said Magang (*Mmegi* 11 January 2005). He also suggested that the motion be re-tabled and be examined on its content and substance. Magang went further, 'If government has sufficient support of MPs in parliament that the university should be located at Palapye, then the motion can be rejected. If parliament rejects it after a debate, then it validates the decision of government against the recommendations of the commission. It was wrong to reject the motion purely on misleading procedural grounds.'

Magang, who suspected that while strong-arm tactics might have been used to force Cabinet Ministers to accept the decision on the Serowe/Palapye area and were now tied to it given the government's position on Saleshando's motion, stated that other people were free to interrogate the decision. To him, this was important because the Cabinet decision flouted the Task Force's recommendations and popular opinion. He also argued that Selebi-Phikwe needed the university for its survival which would give it university town status such as Cambridge and Oxford in England as well as Stellenbosch and Potchefstroom in the neighbouring South Africa. As for the pollution from the mine chimney, he said once the mine closed that would cease being a concern.

Furthermore, Magang stated that in 1994 while he was Minister responsible for mines, he commissioned a study to look into the shaky situation of Selebi-Phikwe. The study recommended that despite the BCL mine being uneconomic, it played a significant role in supporting some key aspects of the economy. For instance, 'The ordinary retail shops in the town were dependent on the purchasing power of the 5,000–6,000 workers. The Water Utilities Corporation also maintained employment and economic activity. The Botswana Power Corporation supplied more power to the mine than any other customer. The major part of coal from Morupule goes to Selebi-Phikwe. So to close the mine would cause a crisis in the country', argued Magang. He intimated that since Botswana is a democracy and not a dictatorship, government's decisions ought to be debated. *The Monitor* newspaper's columnist and

historian, Sandy Grant, observed that 'Come the crunch, it is the nationally elected body which controls the cash and it was this power which enabled the 17th century English parliament to bust King Charles' (Grant, 17 January 2005).

Spurred on by this kind of support, Saleshando was reported to be ready to re-table his motion in the next session of parliament. Curiously, he stated that his motion would be rephrased in order to avoid hijacking the implementation of Cabinet decision but merely to lay bare parliament's indignation (*Mmegi* 11 January 2005). Saleshando's seemingly subdued tone surprised the 'veteran campaigner', Moabi, who saw it as a sign of the Batswanas' 'docility as a nation' which according to him was 'extremely dangerous for the future of our democracy' (Moabi, 13 January 2005). Moabi wrote that those against the Cabinet's decision should be determined to force the government to build the university at Selebi-Phikwe. However, to lend further credence to this paper's argument of political expediency, when Saleshando re-tabled his motion in February 2005 all but two (for Selebi-Phikwe) BDP MPs stood against it. Even those who had previously supported Saleshando somersaulted. This development may be an indication that the BDP is beginning to realise that its days in power could be numbered and trying strategies which will ensure that it keeps its traditional Central District stronghold in the event the party finds itself in opposition. Interestingly, soon after Saleshando's motion was defeated the government announced that the country's second university would be built only in Palapye.

'Brainstorming and Charting the Way Forward': Response by Selebi-Phikwe Residents

Selebi-Phikwe residents and community leaders were reported to be accusing some government officials of exacerbating their town's misery. In particular, some strongly believed that Vice President Khama had decreed at a Cabinet meeting he chaired that the second university be located in the Serowe/Palapye area (*Mirror*, 8–14 December 2004). According to the BDP parliamentarian for Selebi-Phikwe West, Kavis Kario, town residents, the business community, communities from Selebi-Phikwe's environs and political leaders from different political parties convened a meeting to brain-storm and chart the way forward (*Mirror*, 8–14 December 2004). At the meeting a committee of five men was appointed to go and meet President Mogae to put the case for the reversal of the Cabinet decision on the location of the second university. Kario said that the committee was not going to be confrontational since that would be self-defeating. When he was asked whether he did not fear that his party would brand his actions as defiance, he said that would be unfortunate (*Monitor*, 29 November 2004).

Gilson Saleshando, Dumelang Saleshando's father and BCP Vice President and former parliamentarian for Selebi-Phikwe, was very pessimistic about the prospects for the committee's success. He blamed Khama, saying that he personally took the university to his area and pointed out that the committee's mission was a doomed one

(*Mirror*, 8–14 December 2004). According to one adherent of the 'hometown decision' school of thought from Selebi-Phikwe, Khama was behind the decision knowing quite well that by building the university in the Serowe/Palapye area his party (BDP) was playing into the hands of the opposition (anonymous). He says Khama is trying to create for himself a legacy of having bequeathed a university to his people just like Tshekedi Khama's legacy of having built the celebrated Bangwato College in 1948. Following the expulsion of Batswana students from South Africa by the newly elected apartheid regime, Bangwato College ceased to be a mere Bangwato tribal school but became a national institution. It was also renamed Moeng College.

'The Writing Is on the Wall': Opposition Encroachment Thesis

My argument is that perhaps the location of the second university in the Serowe/Palapye area is an attempt by the BDP top brass to prevent the possible takeover of Palapye by the opposition. In this case, Palapye can be seen as the route to Serowe. Palapye is very near Serowe, which can be said to 'the jewel in the crown' of the BDP in the same way India was famously referred to as 'the jewel in the crown' of the British empire (see Robinson and Gallagher, 1961). It can also be viewed as a shrine for the BDP because it is the burial place of Seretse Khama, his wife Lady Khama and Lenyeletse Seretse, Masire's deputy (1980–1983), and a host of other important personalities associated with the BDP one way or the other. Although the BDP is evidently losing support in its traditional stronghold of Central District constituencies, in Serowe support for the party remains resolute.

Serowe's centrality to the psychological well-being of the party cannot be overemphasized. Therefore, there is a need to counter the opposition's encroachment at Palapye lest it uses it as a launching pad into the region as well as the northern part of the country. This is a strategy possibly understood and appreciated by even those Cabinet Ministers from regions other than the Central District and hence their agreement to the Cabinet's decision.

Furthermore, the BCP candidate, James Olesitse, who had made serious inroads into Palapye called for unity between the opposition parties in order to avoid vote splitting which only benefits the BDP. It is received wisdom in Botswana's political discourse that splits and lack of cooperation prevent the opposition from dislodging the BDP from power. Sebetela himself is on record as warning that opposition unity could lead to constituencies like the hitherto safe Palapye being lost. 'If you add the numbers from the last elections, it will show you that '*re dule ka bobi jwa segokgo*' ['we escaped by a whisker']. The numbers indicate that the opposition is taking power. The writing is on the wall. These guys are talking about a pact. Even *bo*-Palapye ['Central District constituencies'] are in trouble', he said (*Monitor*, 10 Janiary 2005). Sebetela had scored 3,863 votes, Olesitse 2,303, and BNF candidate 724 (Independent Electoral Commission, http://www.gov.bw/elections04/index.

html). In other words Palapye has become a 'battleground constituency' and there is a danger that other constituencies in the Central District, where combined BNF and BCP votes look scary, could become too close to call at elections (see Table 2 below). As a result, the party is said to be planning to replace the allegedly unpopular and arrogant Sebetela with Specially Elected MP Professor Sheila Tlou in the next election (*Monitor*, 10 January 2005).

Incidentally Palapye also has a significant history for the BNF and its splinter party BCP. In April 1998 at the height of BNF's factional fighting, the two opposed camps engaged in a bloody confrontation in Palapye, which later led to the formation of the BCP by one of the factions. The success of talks on opposition cooperation could be a tall order for the BDP.

Therefore, trying to reinvigorate its popularity by locating a university in the Central District could have long-term negative effect on the party's grip of power in the region. The reason is that experience shows that the already existing University of Botswana has for years been the stronghold of the opposition. For instance, after the 2004 elections Gaborone City councillors elected a University of Bostwana student as Mayor after he wrested his local council seat with a landslide margin from a BDP activist. Greater urbanization of the Serowe/Palapye area could augment electoral support for the opposition at the expense of the BDP in the area. The trend in Botswana is that the BDP is strong in the rural areas whereas the opposition enjoys more support in the urban centres.

Table 2: Central District election results (2004)

Constituencty	Party	No. of votes
Nata Gweta	BAM	875
	BDP	2,988
	BCP	768
Nkange	BAM	1,355
	BCP	3,176
	BDP	4,246
Tonota North	BCP	1,394
	BDP	4,444
	BPP	695
Tonota South	BDP	4,417
	BNF	1,253
Bobirwa	BCP	3,756
	BDP	4,258
Mmadinare	BCP	1,137
	BDP	4,158
Selebi Phikwe East	BCP	2,478
	BDP	2,629
	BNF	1,231
	IND	59
Selebi-Phikwe West	BCP	2,802
	BDP	3,100
	BNF	1,489
Tswapong North	BCP	1,298
	BDP	5,579
	BNF	956

Constituencty	Party	No. of votes
Palapye	BCP	2,303
	BDP	3,863
	BNF	724
Tswapong South	BCP	1,980
	BNF	869
	BDP	5,005
Mahalapye East	BNF	1,836
	BDP	3,979
Mahalapye West	BCP	975
	BDP	5,429
	BNF	1,664
Shoshong	BDP	3,391
	BNF	1,850
	BCP	380
Serowe North East	BCP	600
	BDP	5,871
	BDF	465
Serowe North East (Ian Khama's constituency	BDP	Un-opposed
Serowe South	BCP	430
	BNF	1,066
	BDP	6,228
Boteti North	BCP	528
	BDP	3,870
	BNF	2,587
Boteti South	BCP	885
	BDP	2,944
	BNF	1,204

Note: Constituencies in bold are the areas where combined opposition votes outnumber those of the BDP. Italicized constituencies are areas where the combined opposition has made serious inroads (having lost with a margin of less than 1,000) into the BDP strongholds. This means that 7 constituencies are marginal while just 12 are safe. Therefore the opposition has captured 37% of the constituencies while the BDP got 63% in this District. In previous elections the BDP used to retain almost all of its Central District seats with an overwhelming majority.

Conclusion

An effort has been made to examine how the culture of consultation served Batswana in the past and how it has declined or been supplanted by representative democracy. This has been done through a study of the opposed views regarding the Cabinet's controversial decision to locate the country's second university in the Serowe/Palapye area. This decision went against the recommendations of expert advice and popular opinion. Hence it sparked heated debate in the social, political and media circles. Naturally the Bangwato welcomed the decision to build the premier institution in their region. However, most dissenting voices felt that the beleaguered mining town of Selebi-Phikwe should be the host of the perceived life-saving project. As the paper has argued, it appears that Serowe/Palapye was chosen in order to keep the growing support for the political opposition at bay particularly in the BDP traditional stronghold of the Central District. However, such a strategy is also fraught with risks as the BDP could be unwittingly creating an opposition enclave in its own backyard.

Unfortunately the stance taken by the government reinforces an already growing perception that its efforts at consulting the citizenry on critical issues of national concern lack commitment. As shown in the paper, some citizens have even ques-

tioned the reputation of the country's democracy. The danger is that the citizenry could lose confidence in the government's consultative machinery on the grounds that it simply serves the rulers' hidden agenda. Moreover, such an attitude could lead those nominated to chair or serve in such task forces and commissions of inquiry to decline such assignments on the grounds that they serve no purpose, as they are mere window dressing and not a genuine consultation processes.

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Bob Is Peerless:
Zimbabwe and the Quest for an African Peer Review Mechanism[1]

Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni

The quest for a peer review for Zimbabwe makes sense in the context of the current African initiatives to find African solutions to African problems and the paradigm shift from a rigid state-centric Organisation of African Unity's (OAU) policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of its members to the current flexible African Union's (AU) 'non-indifference' towards massive crimes against humanity and other emergencies including genocides in Africa.[2] Article 4(h) of the African Union Constitutive Act of 2000, clearly states that the AU has the right to intervene in the affairs of a member state – pursuant to a decision of the Assembly of Heads of State in respect of 'grave circumstances' namely, war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity, as well as a serious threat to legitimate order-to restore peace and stability in a member state.[3] My starting point is to argue that the Zimbabwean crisis constitutes 'grave circumstances' requiring the intervention of the AU through its African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). I interpret the Zimbabwean situation since the beginning of the third millennium as constituting a conflict situation that cannot be left alone in this era of African renewal initiatives. After a brief analysis of the Zimbabwean situation as constituting 'grave circumstances', I move on to analyse why an APRM is necessary as part of post-conflict recovery strategy. Zimbabwe desperately needs assistance to move from crisis to normalcy. I grapple with the problematics associated with the normalisation process that is being hindered by the ruling Zimbabwe African Union-Patriotic Front's (ZANU-PF) monologue and the Movement for Democratic Change's (MDC) failure to come up with an alternative package of rehabilitation of Zimbabwe beyond the neo-liberal rights-talk that has been decentred by ZANU-PF's militant and radical nativist agenda.

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1 Presented at the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa Annual Symposium on *Challenges for Democratic Governance and Human Development in Africa*, Ilovo, Johannebsurg, 8–10 November, 2006.

2 K.M. Mathews, 'Renaissance of Pan-Africanism: The African Union and the New Pan-Africanists', paper presented at the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) Policy Seminar: *Building an African Union (AU) for the 21st Century: Relations with Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and Civil Society,* Cape Town, 20–22 August 2005. See also the CCR Policy Seminar Report, *Building an African Union for the 21st Century: Relations with Regional Economic Communities, NEPAD and Civil Society.* Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, 2005, p. 17. See also Organisation of African Unity, *Charter of the Organisation of African Unity,* Addis Ababa, 1963.

3 See Protocol on Amendments to the Constitutive Act of the African Union, article 4(h) available at www.africa-union.org.

Mapping the Contours of 'Grave Circumstances'

There is no event that has attracted academic and political commentary as the plunge of Zimbabwe from a promising stable transitional state into crisis at the beginning of the new millennium has done. The crisis has left not only Zimbabweans but also the region and the international community guessing on what went wrong. So far four events are associated with the plunge of Zimbabwe into crisis and they constitute what one can term the immediate causes of the crisis. Most analysts have dated the origins of the crisis to the years 1997/1998 which were dominated by four shock events: the unbudgeted war veterans payout in August 1997; followed quickly by the official announcement of the controversial fast-track land reform programme as a solution to the intractable land imbalances created by long years of settler colonialism. The *Herald* newspaper quoted President Mugabe describing the unequal pattern of land ownership as 'colonial settler robbery' and telling the nation that:

> We are now talking of the conquest of conquest, the prevailing sovereignty of the people over settler minority rule and all it stood for including the possession of our land…Power to the people must now be followed by land to the people.[1]

While this made the white farming community panic over their land as President Mugabe and ZANU-PF pushed ahead with their attack and violation of property rights, another disastrous step was in the making in the form of Zimbabwean intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) conflict in mid-1998. Again, the public and the parliament did not debate the issue of sending troops to the DRC. All these developments were taking place within a broader environment that was experiencing the negative impact of the Asian financial crisis in 1998.[2] Taken together, these unilateral actions feeding on what Horace Campbell termed 'executive lawlessness' created 'grave circumstances' in Zimbabwe and opened the way for the plunge of Zimbabwe into unprecedented crisis.[3]

Indeed the years 1997/1998 saw President Robert Mugabe buying off a potentially violent challenge to his rule from a combination of former ZANLA and ZIPRA combatants who were complaining of being neglected after devoting their lives to the independence of Zimbabwe.[4] In panic, Mugabe gave each veteran of the more than fifty thousand members of the Zimbabwe Liberation War Veterans Associa-

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1 *The Herald,* 6 December 1997.
2 R. Parsons, 'The Political Economy of Zimbabwe, 1996–2002', working paper presented in Buenos Aires, 23 July 2002, p. 12.
3 H. Campbell, *Reclaiming Zimbabwe: The Exhaustion of the Patriarchal Model of Liberation*, David Philip Publishers, Cape Town, 2003.
4   On the politics of war veterans see N.J. Kriger's *Guerrilla Veterans in Post-War Zimbabwe: Symbolic and Violent Politics, 1980–1987*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003. See also N.J. Kriger, 'War Victims Compensation: Collusion between Ex-Combatants and the Zimbabwean Government,' *Journal of African Conflict and Development*, Volume 1, 2000, pp. 33–43 and N. J. Kriger, 'Zimbabwe's War Veterans and Ruling Party: Continuities in Political Dynamics,' in *Politique Africaine*, Volume 81, 2001, p. 80–100.

tion (ZLWVA) lump sums of Z$50,000 and life pensions. This unilateral decision had serious fiscal consequences for the future of the country. Bubbling with the financial rewards, the war veterans and ZANU-PF reconstituted themselves into a formidable political force relying on frontal assaults on imagined, manufactured and perceived enemies of the state. Taken together, they constitute what I have termed a 'nationalist-military alliance' whose consequences for constitutionalism and rule of law have left Zimbabwe as a 'pariah state' at the international level and 'authoritarian leviathan' at the domestic level.[1] Writing about the entry of the war veterans into mainstream Zimbabwean politics, Norma Kriger noted that 'Zimbabwe's guerrilla veterans have burst into the international media as the storm troopers in Mugabe's new war of economic liberation.'[2] This new economic war was termed the *Third Chimurenga* and the whole crisis unfolding in the country is located within the dynamics of this war.[3] The key contour of the *Third Chimurenga* is land restitution. Concurrently with giving war veterans lump sums of money, Mugabe officially announced that his government was beginning to implement the Land Designation Act and one thousand five hundred white owned farms were identified for free redistribution to the black population. This action further plunged the fiscal sector into crisis as the whole agricultural sector that formed the backbone of the Zimbabwean economy was thrown into turmoil characterised by violent farm invasions and looting.[4] The consequences of the fast-track land reform programme were too ghastly for the country to the extent that some people reduced the Zimbabwe crisis into a land crisis. However, the issue of land reform did not only throw the agricultural sector into turmoil but also provoked serious debates among Zimbabwean intellectuals with some like Ibbo Mandaza and Sam Moyo arguing from the political economy paradigm supporting Mugabe's land policy as part of the continuation of the national democratic revolution that had miscarried at the Lancaster House Conference. Sam Moyo stated that:

> Much of the negative fallout from the occupations movement, including its short term gain, has to be weighed more seriously against the longer term gains to the broader democratisation process, of creating space for awareness and participation in the basic social struggles hitherto dominated by formal state structures and urban civil society.[5]

1 S.J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'Nationalist-Military Alliance and the Fate of Democracy in Zimbabwe', *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, Volume 6, No. 1, 2006, pp. 49–80.

2 N.J. Kriger, op.cit.

3 R. Mugabe, *Inside the Third Chimurenga*. Ministry of Information and Publicity, Harare, 2001. This book consisting of Mugabe's speeches gives details of the key contours of the *Third Chimurenga* as defined and understood by President Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF.

4 W. Willems, 'Peasant Demonstrators, Violent Invaders: Representations of Land in the Zimbabwean Press', unpublished paper, 2004.

5 S. Moyo, 'The Land Occupation Movement in Zimbabwe: Contradictions of Neo-Liberalism', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Volume 30, No. 2, 2001, p. 330. See also S. Moyo and P. Yeros, 'Land Occupations and Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Towards the National Democratic

Sam Moyo and Paris Yeros frantically tried to situate the fast-track land reform within the parameters of a national democratic revolution poised against mystification of imperialism by what they termed 'oppositional intellectuals' operating within the civil society movements and the Movement for Democratic Change's 'post-nationalisms'.[1] This debate has led Brian Raftopolous to write a detailed article on 'The Zimbabwe Crisis and the Challenges for the Left' where he awakened the 'Left' to the dangers of supporting such narrow nationalism as that being shown in Zimbabwe arguing that:

> …much of this embattled nationalism is channelled against citizens of our states, and the nationalism that presents itself as the nation's shield is often the suffocating embrace of murderous regimes. We need to find new collective discourses that build on a broad participation…[2]

Raftopoulos alerted those who think that what is happening in Zimbabwe is progressive and emancipatory to notice how exhausted and authoritarian nationalists are appropriating progressive discourses of liberation for selfish reasons. The key challenge is how can these nationalists like President Robert Mugabe be progressives and authoritarian and violent against their own people at the same time? The Secretary General of the South African Communist Party (SACP), Blade Nzimande reinforced Raftopoulos' argument by pointing out that what is happening in Zimbabwe is not progressive at all, instead Mugabe is practising the politics of '…demagogic appropriation of a progressive nationalist discourse' and is posturing as an 'active champion of democracy' while in reality he is a damn dictator.[3] Raftopoulos' analysis of the '…challenge for the Left' posed by the Zimbabwean crisis is very important in a number of senses. He rightly noted that the Left have been closed in a political economy cocoon that made them focus more on economic and structural issues of class and race and in the process peripheralise the issues of democracy and human rights that are at the centre of the Zimbabwe crisis. The Zimbabwe crisis cannot be understood from a narrowly focused political economy perspective because the crisis unfolded and affected every aspect of society in a short six years assuming various characters. So far, intellectuals have been content with competing to describe the crisis in different epithets. Some like Timothy Scarnecchia of George Town University in the United States of America have embarked on detailed comparisons of the crisis

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Revolution in Zimbabwe,' in S. Moyo and P. Yeros (eds), *The Resurgence of Rural Movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America*, Zed Books, London, 2005.

1 Ibid, p. 166.

2 B. Raftopolous, 'The Zimbabwean Crisis and the Challenges for the Left,' in *Journal of Southern African Studies,* Volume 32, No.2, June 2006, p. 219.

3 B. Nzimande, 'Towards an Alternative South African Development Path: Notes for Input to a Policy Workshop on Zimbabwe-An SACP Perspective,' (paper presented at the Launch of The Zimbabwe Institute, 27 February 2004.

with what Robert O. Paxton termed the 'fascist cycle'.[1] According to Paxton, the 'fascist cycle' unfolds in this way with: '…warning signals in situations of political deadlock in the face of a crisis, threatened conservatives looking for tougher allies, ready to give up due process and the rule of law, seeking mass support by nationalists and racial demagoguery.'[2] These intellectual descriptions have ranged from governance crisis, humanitarian crisis, blocked democratic transition crisis, development crisis, leadership crisis, economic crisis; exhaustion of nationalism, exhaustion of patriarchal model of liberation, unfinished business, and land crisis to mutating millennial crisis.[3]

What is more worrying is not the ontology of the crisis but its devastating manifestations and its consequences for the life of Zimbabweans. Zimbabwe constitutes a clear case of 'grave circumstances.' The United Nations has already classified it as the country with the fastest shrinking economy in the world. Zimbabwe is now among the leading rank on the list of the world's 94 poorest countries.[4] The American Ambassador to Zimbabwe Christopher Bell captured well the 'grave circumstances' in Zimbabwe when he argued that 'I know of no other example in the world of an economy that, in times of peace, has contracted so precipitously in the course of six years' as that of Zimbabwe.[5] Indeed real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) nosedived and fell to 30 per cent in the period from 1997 to 2003 and this trend has continued unabated through 2005 and 2006. Every major economic sector indicator has declined significantly since Zimbabwe veered into crisis at the beginning of the new millennium.

Diana Games, a former editor of *Business in Africa* added her voice to the 'grave circumstances' in Zimbabwe in a South African Institute of International Affairs Report entitled *The Zimbabwe Economy: How It Has Survived and How Will It Recover*?

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1 T. Scarnecchia, 'The 'Fascist Cycle' in Zimbabwe, 2000–2005', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 32, No.2, June 2006, pp. 221–237.

2 R.O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, Knopf, New York, 2004, p. 205.

3 A. Hammar, B. Raftopolous and S. Jensen (eds), *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*, Weaver Press, Harare, 2003; P. Bond and M. Manyanya, *Zimbabwe's Plunge: Exhausted Nationalism, Neo-Liberalism and the Search for Social Justice*, University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 2003; T. Ranger (ed.), *Nationalism, Democracy and Human Rights in Zimbabwe: Volume Two,* University of Zimbabwe Publications, Harare, 2003; and H. Campbell, *Reclaiming Zimbabwe: The Exhaustion of Patriarchal Model of Liberation*, Third World Press, Asmara, 2004; S.J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'The Dynamics of the Zimbabwe Crisis in the 21st Century,' *African Journal on Conflict Resolution,* Volume 3, No.1, 2003 and S. Mair and M. Sithole, *Blocked Democracies in Africa: Case Study of Zimbabwe,* Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Harare, 2002.

4 D. Games, 'Zimbabwe: A Pre-Election Overview and Recovery Scenarios', a report prepared for the South African Institute of International Affairs, March 2005, p.3.

5 C. Bell, 'Pain Talk about the Zimbabwean Economy,' paper presented at Africa University, Mutare Zimbabwe, 2 November 2005, p. 1.

> Zimbabwe is facing probably its most testing time ever with the combined problems of a breakdown of law and order, an economy in crisis, international isolation and a government holding its people hostage to its ambition to stay in power.[1]

What is even more frightening is that the current government appears to be without a plan to extricate the country from this economic meltdown. Instead the ZANU-PF-led government's interventions so far have dismally failed to address the problem and in reality, the interventions have been largely politically motivated and aggravating to the economic meltdown. Finex Ndhlovu, a Zimbabwean doctoral candidate at Monash University in Australia described the crisis in Zimbabwe as 'self-induced tsunamis' with specific reference to the controversial land reform programme and Operation Clean Up (Operation Murambatsvina) that combined to leave the agricultural sector in ruins and about seventy thousand Zimbabweans without shelter.[2]

Taking Stock of Grave Circumstances

Zimbabwe is suffering the consequences of conflictual politics and violence. The war that engulfed Zimbabwe at the beginning of the new millennium is well documented in the publications of such organisations as the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (ZHRNF), Zimbabwe Crisis Coalition and many other civil society organisations.[3] It took the form of a civil war. At the centre of this war was and is militarization of the state and the survival of the state through frontal attacks on imagined and perceived enemies. The cabinet that was created at the beginning of the new millennium was termed 'the war cabinet.' That Zimbabwe is suffering from a number of interlocking and overlapping conflicts is well articulated by the *Global Crisis Solutions* specialists in its internal position paper of May 2004 entitled 'Zimbabwe: Land, Identity, and Power' where they noted that:

> As in every social environment, there are numerous conflicts in Zimbabwe. Social conflicts include those between the whites and the blacks, the rich and the poor, and the Shona and the Ndebele. Political conflicts include those between the MDC and ZANU-PF and Zimbabwe and the international community. The resources for which these conflicts are being waged vary from land, control over the economy, financial resources, political power, and sovereignty. Expectedly, the causes of conflict and the parties have overlapped. Some of these conflicts have remained non-violent while others have erupted. Unfortunately, this is all occurring within a failing humanitarian context.[4]

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1 D. Games, *The Zimbabwe Economy: How Has It Survived and How Will it Recover?*, SAIIR Reports, Report Number 30, 2002, p. 1.
2 F. Ndhlovu, 'Zimbabwe's Self-Induced Tsunamis: Fast-Track Land Reform and Operation Clean Up,' unpublished research paper, 2005.
3 Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, *Who Was Responsible? Alleged Perpetrators and Their Crimes during the 2000 Parliamentary Election Period*, Zimbabwe Human Rights, Harare 2001.
4 Global Crisis Solutions, 'Zimbabwe: Land, Identity, and Power', Global Solutions Internal Position Paper, May 2004, p. 1.

The state of Zimbabwe was at war with its own citizens. The war propaganda was formed around the land question and the imagined danger of the re-colonisation of Zimbabwe. What is lacking in the current studies of the Zimbabwe crisis is a serious consideration of this war whose consequences were devastating. Those who argue that the end of the liberation war in 1979 was the end of the last war in Zimbabwe are badly mistaken. Besides the so-called 'dissident war' of the 1980s that affected mainly Matebeleland and the Midlands regions, Zimbabweans have continued to suffer serious human rights abuses reminiscent of a country in a war situation. ZANU-PF and President Robert Mugabe have consistently defined politics in conflictual terms and have always re-invoked liberation war violence at every election time. Norma Kriger argued convincingly that:

> Organised violence and intimidation of the opposition, albeit of varying intensity, has been a recurrent strategy of the ruling party before, during, and often after elections to punish constituencies that dared oppose it. Youth has been an important instrument of ruling party violence. The perpetrators of election violence have enjoyed impunity, often buttressed by presidential pardons and amnesties.[1]

Zimbabwe is one country that challenges those working on peace, security, conflict and conflict resolution to re-think their definition of war. The violence that took place in Zimbabwe and the attendant polarisation of society and the tensions that engulfed the country were similar to those in war situations. Even the number of people who died as a result of violent death equalled that of a society at war. The national temper and the emotional propaganda by ZANU-PF created a war situation. The training of 'green bombers' (Youth Militias) and the mobilisation of war veterans reinforced the reality that the country was at war. This was even demonstrated by the number of people that left the country and the number of internally displaced persons. Presenting a paper entitled 'Prospects for National Dialogue in Zimbabwe' at the Institute for Security's Policy Research and Capacity Building in Southern Africa Workshop of 1–2 December 2005, Brian Raftopoulos noted that Zimbabwe was emblematic of a state in deep crisis though it has succeeded in using an anti-imperialist and pan-Africanist discourse to keep the region on its side. According to Raftopolous, this state success has resulted in the dualist character of the Harare regime taking the form of 'outward radicals and inward oppressors.'[2]

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1 N.J. Kriger, 'ZANU (PF) Strategies in General Elections, 1980–2000: Discourse and Coercion', *African Affairs*, 104/414, 2005.
2 B. Raftopolous, 'Prospects for National Dialogue in Zimbabwe,' paper presented at the Policy Research and Capacity Building in Southern Africa Workshop, Cape Town, 1–2 December 2005. Raftopolous' presentation was summarised in 'Policy Research and Capacity Building in Southern Africa Workshop Report' The Southern Africa Human Security Programme of the Institute for Security Studies (2005), pp. 25–26.

Two research fellows at the Centre for Global Development, Todd Moss and Stewart Patrick correctly treated Zimbabwe as a country that was engaged in war and opened the debate for post-war or post-conflict recovery for Zimbabwe, arguing that '…the country nonetheless exhibits many extreme characteristics of a society in violent conflict.'[1] Moss and Patrick went on to graphically enumerate the 'grave circumstances' of the Zimbabwean situation taking stock of how it affected every facet of human life and how it left every institution requiring comprehensive review.

The 'grave circumstances' of Zimbabwe are more clearly manifest in the scale of economic collapse within a short period of six years. The national economy has shrunk by more than a third since the turn of the millennium, a far worse decline than seen during full-scale civil wars in other African countries. Writing on the catastrophic economic collapse in Zimbabwe, James Hentz argued that '…Mugabe, like Tubman, Doe and Taylor in Liberia and Mobutu in Zaire, has created a corrupt patrimonial system that has systematically hollowed out the Zimbabwean state.'[2] The *New York Times* on the other hand commented on 'corruption and despair choking Zimbabwe' and reported that 'of people who got good arable land, 99.2 per cent are cabinet ministers, wives, political cronies, relatives, and girlfriends of the Mugabe administration.'[3] Indeed, it was a combination of corruption, populism, and lack of clear planning that contributed to the collapse of one of the robust economies in Southern Africa. Commenting on the crisis in Zimbabwe, Jonathan Moyo, a former Minister of Information and Publicity and a political scientist, said that ZANU-PF 'is finding itself in a triple trap.' He elaborated the 'triple trap' as having three components to it:

> The virtual collapse of the economy with the present 913.6% inflation galloping towards 1000% beyond any remedy by ZANU-PF government which is now in a policy paralysis; the growing international isolation of Zimbabwe which is now a pariah state that can no longer be redressed without a comprehensive programme of political and economic reform in constitutional and structural terms; and, the Tsholotsho Declaration[4] whose burning fires threaten to leave ZANU-PF

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1 T. Moss and S. Patrick, 'After Mugabe: Applying Post-Conflict Recovery Lessons to Zimbabwe', *Africa Policy Journal,* Volume 1, Spring 2006, p. 23.

2 J.J. Hentz, 'State Collapse and Regional Contagion in Sub-Saharan Africa: Lessons for Zimbabwe', unpublished paper, Department of International Studies and Political Science, Virginia Military Institute, 2005, p. 15.

3 'Corruption and Despair Are Choking Zimbabwe,' *New York Times*, 19 October 2003.

4 The Tsholotsho Declaration must be understood within the politics of sucession in Zimbabwe that culminated in some members of ZANU-PF congregating at Dinyane School in Tsholotsho on 18 November 2004 to discuss on-going reform within ZANU-PF in the context of filling the post of vice-president left by Simon Muzenda. Professor Jonathan Moyo who was one of those who participated in the Tsholotsho meeting and who was subsequently fired from his ministerial post because of this meeting defines the Tsholotsho Declaration in a more comprehensive and convincing way and it is worth quoting his defnition of the Declaration: 'The Tsholotsho Declaration is made up of the following four key principles that define its political thrust: that the top four leadership positions in the ruling ZANU-PF- president and first secretary, two vice-presidents and second

in political ashes unable to turn around the economy and restore Zimbabwe's reputation.[1]

Inflation has since exceeded 1000 per cent and indeed the Harare government seems to have no clue on how to save the country from further collapse. Making his case on why he thinks President Robert Mugabe 'should go' Jonathan Moyo chronicled how he has become a liability to the nation: 'Mugabe now lacks the vision, stature, and energy to effectively run the country, let alone his party'.[2] On the possibility of ZANU-PF turning around the economy, Moyo simple said '…it is now clear to all that they are totally clueless…they don't know what do'.[3] Moyo, in fact, is a 'wounded' politician who might be up to getting back at ZANU-PF and Mugabe because of his dismissal from cabinet and ZANU-PF. His analysis of Zimbabwean politics remains penetrating and cannot just be ignored. A lecturer on politics at the University of Zimbabwe in the early 1990s, his analysis and prediction of situations in Zimbabwe has since then been incisive and near to the truth.

The other apparent 'grave circumstance' in Zimbabwe is that of political violence and the social trauma it has generated among both victims and perpetrators. Writing about how violence was 'endemic' in Zimbabwe, the MDC Member of parliament, David Coltart, a lawyer by profession had this to say:

> Zimbabwe is afflicted with a disease akin to alcoholism, namely endemic violence. For over 150 years, leaders of this beautiful country, bounded by the Zambezi and Limpopo, have used violence to achieve their political objectives. Violence was used by Lobengula to suppress the Shona. Violence was used to colonise and the threat of violence was used to maintain white minority rule. Violence was used to overthrow the white minority. And since independence, violence has been used to crush legitimate political opposition. The use of violence has been compounded

secretaries and national chairman-which make up the party's presidency, should reflect Zimbabwe's regional diversity and ethnic balance between and among the country's four main ethnic groupings, namely Karanga, Manyika, Zezuru and Ndebele in order to promote and maintain representative national cohesion, development, peace and stability while fostering a broad-based sense of national belonging and identity; that the top position of president and first secretary of the party should not be monopolised by one sub-tribe (or clan) but should reasonably rotate among the four major ethnic groupings; that the filling of these top four positions should not be by imposition by the party hierarchy but through democratic elections done by secret balloting; and, that the filling of the top four leadership positions and the democratic elections should be defined and be guided by and done in accordance with the constitution of the party to promote the rule of law within the party as a foundation for maintaining the rule of law in the country.' Mugabe and others within ZANU-PF, particularly the faction led by General Solomon Mujuru that are comfortable with the post of president being occupied by a Zezuru seized the opportunity and they declared the Tshol-otsho Meeting as a coup plot led by Professor Jonathan Moyo. See J. Moyo, 'Tsholotsho Saga: The Untold Story,' in newzimbabwe.com http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/sky95.14039.html

1   J. Moyo, 'Tsholotsho Saga: The Untold Story' in newzimbabwe.com http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/sky95.14039.html

2   J. Moyo, 'Why Mugabe Should Go Now,' in newzimbabwe.com http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/sky90.12869.html

3   'Moyo: I'm Zimbabwe's Odinga' in newzimbabwe.com http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/sky94.13973.html

by another phenomenon-namely a culture of impunity. Those responsible for use of violence have never been brought to book. Not only is there a long history of violence used successfully to achieve political objectives but also those who have committed horrendous crimes have prospered through their actions. As a result, the use of violence is now deeply imbedded in our national psyche. Political violence is accepted as the norm.[1]

The fact that the long history of Zimbabwe is mediated by violence is well articulated in the collaborative book *Violence and Memory* as well as in Richard Werbner's book *Tears of the Dead*.[2] Indeed the security forces, intelligence services, and an array of government-backed militias have terrorised civilians with the blessing of the state, committing gross atrocities. At the turn of the millennium Robert Mugabe and ZANU-PF took the country back into the violence of 1970s as indicated by the creation of re-education camps, torture camps on the farms, state bombardment of the nation with the dangers of re-colonisation and the valorisation of the *Third Chimurenga* into an actual war for the minds and hearts of Zimbabweans. President Robert Mugabe himself worshipped at the altar of violence to the extent of priding himself and his party on having 'degrees in violence'.[3] Because of Mugabe's violent posturing, his followers within ZANU-PF do not see anything wrong with using violence to achieve political ends. One of the popular ZANU-PF songs is 'ZANU ndeyeropa.' *Ropa* is a Shona word for blood. Zimbabweans are, therefore, constantly reminded that ZANU-PF liberated the country through spilling blood. This political mentality is not consonant with peace.[4] As a result of this violent politics the and the recrudescence of this conflict practice of politics, Zimbabwe is a deeply stressed nation characterised by uncertainty, high levels of suspicion, low levels of trust and a steep deterioration of social capital.

What is even more threatening to the life of Zimbabweans is the scale of breakdown of basic services compounded by the erosion of the economic foundations of the nation. When rated at the level of provision of basic services to the citizens,

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1 D. Coltart, 'Why I cannot join Tsvangirai's faction' in newzimbabwe.com http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/senate198.14230.html
2 J. Alexander, J. McGregor and T. Ranger, *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the 'Dark Forests' of Matebeleland,* James Currey, Oxford, 2000; R. Werbner, *Tears of the Dead: The Social Biography of an African Family*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1991 and J. Alexander and J. McGregor, 'Hunger, Violence and the Moral Economy of War in Zimbabwe,' in V. Broch-Due (ed.), *Violence and Belonging: The Quest for Identity in Post-Colonial Africa*, Routledge, London and New York, 2005, pp. 75–90.
3 See various books on Mugabe as a violent man, M. Meredith, *Robert Mugabe: Power, Plunder and Tyranny in Zimbabwe,* Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg, 2002; M. Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns: Robert Mugabe and the Tragedy of Zimbabwe*, Public Affairs, New York, 2002, S. Chan, *Robert Mugabe: Life of Power and Violence*, Michigan University Press, New York, 2003 and D. Blair, *Degrees in Violence: Robert Mugabe and the Struggle for Power in Zimbabwe*, Continuum International Publishing Group, 2002.
4 During the oath taking of new MDC Members of parliament in 2000, Mrs Shivai Mahofa led the ZANU-PF Members of parliament in the song 'Zimbabwe Ndeyeropa baba' in apparent threat to the MDC politicians who were joining the august house for the first time.

Zimbabwe is a 'failed state' however problematic the definition of a 'failed state' is. Health services, roads, education services, and cities are on the edge of complete collapse. Electricity, water, and fuel that sustain life in the urban centres are in very short supply. Hentz noted that 'strong states control their territory and provide public goods. Zimbabwe can only do the former.'[1] The agricultural sector that formed the backbone of the economy is a shell of its former self. Indicative of the scale and tragedy of the decline, Zimbabwe has fallen from being the breadbasket of Africa and food exporter into a 'basket case' and a beggar.

At another level, the meltdown of the economy in Zimbabwe has manifested itself through wholesale de-formalisation of the economy. The process of informalisation of the economy has taken the form of citizen disengagement from the state and disengagement from the formal economy into the informal sector (the black market). Mugabe's cronies, ZANU-PF leaders and the military elite effectively have captured the remaining formal economy. This crisis is coupled with the mass flight of people and capital from Zimbabwe's smouldering edifice. To borrow Thomas Hardy's term, Zimbabweans have become a 'madding crowd' and nobody wants to associate with them. To the Zimbabweans themselves, ZANU-PF, war veterans and youth militias are the worst 'madding crowd' and keeping away from them is to save one's life. Hence, the mass flight of people to Britain, Botswana, South Africa, America, and other parts of the world, keeping 'far from the madding crowd.' Almost 30 percent of the population, that is, about 3.4 million Zimbabweans have left the country since 2000 in the midst of financial bleeding that has witnessed the Zimbabwean dollar crumbling to worthlessness. This discussion of the 'grave circumstances' in Zimbabwe leads to the debate on what is to be done and what is to be done with ZANU-PF 'madding crowd'? The answer is that the crisis need urgent normalisation measures, hence the important to debate the normalisation processes here.

The Normalisation Debate and Its Problems

Zimbabwe's 'grave circumstances' cannot be allowed to continue like this without intervention. It calls for urgent intervention, particularly by the AU and its pan-African agencies that are championing African re-awakening and the idea of African solutions to African problems. Despite the rhetoric to the contrary, the Zimbabwean leadership is desperate for a way out of the crisis as indicated by President Robert Mugabe's plea for building bridges between his country and Britain. This and the belated selection of the former President of Tanzania, Benjamin Mkapa as mediator in the Zimbabwean crisis at the African Union meeting in Gambia are indications that Zimbabwe is ripe for external assistance. The main Movement for Democratic

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1 J.J. Hentz, 'State Collapse and Regional Contagion in Sub-Saharan Africa: Lessons for Zimbabwe', unpublished paper, Department of International Studies and Political Science, Virginia Military Institute, 2005, p. 15.

Change (MDC) faction led by Morgan Tsvangirai has been toying with a roadmap for normalisation of the Zimbabwean situation involving constructive engagement with ZANU-PF. The crisis has adversely affected every citizen, inclusive of those in the business fraternity and the ordinary consumers always at the receiving end of crisis, to the extent that every Zimbabwean now expects a solution or a process of no return in the country's meltdown. What is giving hope is that the level of violence that escalated at the beginning of 2000 has fallen. These are some of the indicators that form the background to the quest for an African Peer Review for Zimbabwe. Without becoming overly optimistic, there are indeed indications, though problematic, of an attempt by the rulers of Zimbabwe to normalise the situation.

Sam Moyo, a leading Zimbabwean academic, defined normalisation as a search for a broad convergence of thinking over policy, law and implementation practice, the search for strategies and tactics to resolve key differences (particularly the reduction of violent confrontation associated with political conflict and partisan strategies for reform and the accommodation of opponents and opposing views). Normalisation reflects the search for stable regime restoration and increased state capacity for consensual political and policy reforms.[1] At the centre of the normalisation debate is the role of dialogue as opposed to ZANU-PF monologue that is breeding fatalistic politics and despair among citizens. There is need for dialogue in the domestic arena, dialogue in the regional arena and dialogue in the international level arena. The crisis has terribly affected relations between the state, private and civil society actors. The Zimbabwe crisis has threatened regional peace and development. At the international level, Zimbabwe has assumed a pariah status. What all this means is that the normalisation process just like the crisis that manifested itself at different levels, must take place at different levels and engage on different fronts.

However, three major issues make Zimbabwe's quest for normalisation very problematic. Firstly, there is the refusal of ZANU-PF to dialogue with the MDC as a major political stakeholder in the process of normalisation of politics in Zimbabwe. The ZANU-PF monologue is partly responsible for the crisis the country is currently suffering and as such is not capable of righting the wrongs it created and perpetrated. On the other hand, the MDC is not clear on the way forward for the country beyond the neo-liberal rights-talk and the cry for regime change. As such both dominant political formations are not capable of effecting and carrying out the key reforms necessary for the solution of the democratization and human development deficits that are at the centre of the Zimbabwean crisis. Secondly, ZANU-PF has not buried its militaristic, authoritarian, violent, and top-down way of doing things and this attitude is not consonant with the demands of a participatory and negotiated solution to the Zimbabwean problem. Finally, the Zimbabwean problem cannot be solved

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1 S. Moyo, *The Zimbabwe Crisis and Normalisation*, Centre for Policy Studies, Johannesburg, 2005, p. 17.

without embarking on a nation-wide comprehensive review of the whole smouldering edifice involving all key stake-holders focusing firstly on the causes of the crisis and secondly charting the way forward based on national consensus.

Sam Moyo's problem is that he believes that ZANU-PF and Robert Mugabe are capable of carrying the burden of normalisation of the crisis-situation in Zimbabwe. He is not too critical of ZANU-PF's 'go it alone' desperate efforts to normalise the situation. ZANU-PF is at the centre of the smouldering edifice to the extent that in cannot pretend to be rescuing people from crisis. Burning houses cannot be extinguished by those who are inside the inferno. The Zimbabwean economy was set ablaze by ZANU-PF's populist inspired economic planning myopia. Those inside a burning house need outside helpers to escape the inferno. Moyo optimistically thinks that 'Zimbabwe has witnessed a phased, albeit slow, course of addressing key aspects of its internal crisis since 2003, suggesting the gradual normalisation of politics, economic policy processes, state-civil society and international relations.'[1] The major mistake of optimists is to take the issue of de-escalation of open violence as de-escalation of conflictual engagements between the state and various international actors in terms of bi-lateral and multi-lateral trade, financial aid, and informational (media, intelligence, and advocacy) relations. Yes, open violence has de-escalated but Zimbabwe is suffering from what is termed 'negative peace' and the continuation of what has been termed the 'political economy of decline.'[2] Negative peace refers to the absence of violence as opposed to 'positive peace' that entails the restoration of relationships, establishment of justice and creation of just social systems that serve the needs of the whole population.[3] The ZANU-PF elites continue to 'invade' farms and to take farms at gunpoint. Zimbabwe is still deep in conflict if conflict is understood as 'the energy that builds up when individuals or groups of people pursue incompatible goals in their drive to meet their needs and interests.'[4] The continuation of 'farm invasions' by the Harare elite indicates that only the interests of the elites are being fulfilled at the expense of the broader nation and the broader national economy that continue to bleed to death. The reality is still terrible for Zimbabwe: inflation is out of control to the extent of the Reserve Bank Governor adopting fire-fighting tactics and crisis management steps of just removing 'three zeros' from the currency as inflation continued to get out of control.

In the debate on normalisation of the Zimbabwean situation, analysts must be vigilant lest they fall into ZANU-PF crisis management measures as indicators of normalisation. For instance, Sam Moyo takes such measures as Presidential Land Re-

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1 Ibid, p.15.
2 S. Dansereau and M. Zamponi, *Zimbabwe –Political Economy of Decline*. Compiled by Henning Melber, Discussion Paper 27, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala, 2005.
3 C. Nyathi and A. Odendaal (comp.), 'Building Capacity for Negotiating Skills and Conflict Transformation in Zimbabwe: A Government of Zimbabwe/ United Nations Development Programme Project', Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, 2005.
4 Ibid.

view Committees seriously as indicators of 'resolving internal land disputes (among the various beneficiaries and potential land seekers).'[1] Moyo confidently writes that 'normalisation actions commenced in October 2002 through the Buka review and in mid-2003 became coordinated through the Utete Review.'[2] To Moyo, even the scorched-earth policy code-named *Operation Murambatsvina* (Operation Clean Up) and its successor *Operation Garikai* (Operation Restore Order) as well as Gideon Gono's harsh monetary policy are part of a normalisation process.[3] These are in reality parts of crisis management. Moyo ignores the fact that ZANU-PF has demonstrated over the years a rare ability to worsen crises rather than to normalise crises. *Operation Murambatsvina* actually exacerbated the Zimbabwe crisis. Some Zimbabwean scholars like Martin Rupiya of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) have no kind words for military-style operations as a form of governance and normalisation of crises. Rupiya writing from a vantage point as a former military officer said:

> The military-style Operation Murambatsvina (Clean Up), which was launched on 19 May 2005 to curb urban-based 'informal trade and settlement,' confirms a characteristic that continues to severely undermine Zimbabwe's democratic governance. However, this message appears to be lost on government because, even after Murambatsvina drew widespread international condemnation, the state established another operation-Operation Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle-on 9th July 2005. Current evidence has shown colonels of regiments trying to again take the lead in motivating local government councils to embark upon construction of housing units to meet an apparently impossible deadline-2 000 units in 40 days.[4]

Governance through military operations cannot be considered as part of normalisation of the Zimbabwe crisis. Instead, it is part of what Chris Maroleng terms the 'increased securitarisation of the Zimbabwe state', which is a major contour of the Zimbabwean crisis.[5] Operation Murambatsvina 'is paradigmatic of the erratic nature of policy making and implementation in the country (reminiscent of the flawed implementation of the land reform programme)-it is also disturbing in the profound disregard for fundamental human rights of ordinary Zimbabweans, as well as in its heavy handed and violent nature.'[6] Martin Rupiya concluded his analysis of 'govern-

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1 S. Moyo, *The Zimbabwe Crisis and Normalisation*, p. 16. See also C. Utete, Presidential Land Review Committee (PLRC) Report, Volumes 1 and 2: Main Report to His Excellency the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, August 2003.

2 Ibid, p. 17.

3 On Operation Murambatsvina and its negative impact, see Mrs Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, *Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe to Assesss the Scope and Impact of Operation Murambatsvia by the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlement Issues in Zimbabwe*, 18 July 2005.

4 M. Rupiya, 'Zimbabwe: Government through Military Operations', *African Security Review*, Volume 14, no. 3, 2005.

5 C. Maroleng, 'Zimbabwe: Increased Securitisation of the State?' *Institute for Security Studies Situation Report*, 7 September 2005.

6 Ibid, p. 1.

ance through military operations' by a plea to the Zimbabwean government to stop using this type of rule. He stated that:

> Governance through military operations such as Operation Gukurahundi, Chin-yavanda, Murambatsvina and now Garikai/Hlala Kuhle has consistently resulted in human abuses and brief but spectacular gains, followed by enduring anger, denials and eventually abject apologies. The time may have come for Zimbabwe to confine its governance methodologies to exclude the militarised alternative as part of its wider political stabilisation.[1]

The entire above-analysed situation in Zimbabwe indicates that the country needs help. It is clear that the dominant political forces have failed to solve their problems and to save the country from further collapse.

Scenarios after Scenarios and No Recovery

Many analysts have presented different scenarios for Zimbabwe since 2002. One of the common scenarios posed is that President Robert Mugabe amends the con-stitution and remains the leader of Zimbabwe up until 2010. This scenario is seen as fatal as it will mean total collapse of political and economic institutions. Under this scenario, political repression will be the order of the day provoking such po-litical formations as MDC to resort to violence or will be dissipated into oblivion. The continued economic collapse will push Zimbabwe more and more towards the brink of a civil war. This is a point well captured by Jonathan Moyo when he argued that '…the situation in the country now is such that the prospects for spontane-ous violence, around consumer-based issues because of prevailing harsh economic conditions, are extremely high. Equally high is the escalation of that violence into generalised conflict.'[2] The recently held demonstrations organised by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) that were met with harsh and violent responses from the state, leaving many leaders of the trade union injured, vindicates Jonathan Moyo's predictions. Moyo was not far from the truth when he argued that:

> Consumer demonstrations are now inevitable because basic commodities, espe-cially foodstuffs, have now become either unavailable or unaffordable. The issue now is no longer about taking to the streets to demonstrate for civil rights but to demonstrate for food, access to health care, public transport and such related basics.[3]

The second common scenario is that President Robert Mugabe steps down in 2008 and opens the way for a transitional government as a key to the normalisation of

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1 M. Rupiya, 'Zimbabwe: Government through Military Operations,' p. 3.
2 J. Moyo, 'Talking Points for a Seminar on the Future of Opposition Politics in Zimbabwe,' talk presented at a Seminar organised by Mass Public Opinion Institute, Harare, 30 March 2006,   p. 6.
3 Ibid.

the Zimbabwean situation. This transitional phase will be dominated by constitu-tion-making and preparation for internationally monitored elections that will put in place a legitimate government able to positively engage the nation, region and international community in its bid to return Zimbabwe to normalcy. This is the route favoured by civil society and the MDC as well as other opposition forces. The opposition's quest is for harmonisation of parliamentary and presidential elections to take place as soon as possible or at the latest by March 2008. This is seen as part of normalisation of politics through putting in place a legitimate government able to solve the economic crisis.[1]

The third scenario is that of Mugabe handing over power to an appointed successor from ZANU-PF. This is a scenario favoured by South Africa, which trusts ZANU-PF as a former liberation movement when it comes to the capability to stabilise Zim-babwe. Mbeki is not sure of the reliability of the MDC and trade union leadership. In this scenario, the MDC will be swallowed into a government of national unity (GNU) just like what happened to PF-ZAPU in 1987. According to the proponents of this scenario, Mugabe just needs the 'soft landing,' that is necessary for guarantee-ing his safety after leaving office. Like all dictators, Mugabe is afraid of the possibility of being taken to court and being tried for what he did while in office, including being taken to the International Court of Justice in the Hague in the Netherlands.[2] Since 2005, the debate on this scenario has revolved on what became known as the 'exit plan' for Mugabe but is vague on the modalities of this exit. At one level is the idea of the exit coming via a negotiated settlement involving ZANU-PF and the MDC. At another level is that the international community, preferably the African Union or SADC, should preside over and oversee this exit strategy.[3]

Analysts in the build up to the March 2005 elections proffered these scenarios and they are being repeated as Zimbabwe is approaching 2008, which is expected to be an election year if ZANU-PF and Robert Mugabe do not amend the constitu-tion.[4] Commenting on the dominant scenarios for the recovery of Zimbabwe, Diana Games emphasised the crucial point that:

> The recovery scenario needs to focus less on personalities and more on a return to normality across the board, the opening of political space-which may or may not generate regime change-and on putting in place political safeguards that will provide checks and balances for any future government.[5]

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1 Ibid.
2 R. Carver, 'Zimbabwe: A Situation Analysis and Trend Assessment', Report Commissioned by United Nations High Commission for Refugees, Protection Information Section, July 2003.
3 D. Games, 'Zimbabwe: A Pre-Election Overview and Recovery Scenarios', a report prepared for the South African Institute of International Affairs, March 2005, p. 35.
4 Since achievement of indepence in 1980, the Zimbabwean Constitution has been amended 17 times. These amendments are tantamount to ZANU-PF re-writing the constitution.
5 D. Games, 'Zimbabwe: Recovery Scenarios,' p. 33.

Indeed, the normalisation debate in Zimbabwe must be liberated from the ZANU-PF and MDC binaries. It must not be locked in and determined by what ZANU-PF and MDC are currently doing but it must rather use the present to focus seriously on the future. The future is not dependent on ZANU-PF and MDC. The apparent poverty of the normalisation debate currently is its circulation around the removal of President Robert Mugabe and the idea of change of power from ZANU-PF to MDC. As noted by Games, 'Although Mugabe's exit is a necessary condition for reform of the political and economic structures of the country, it is not sufficient. Neither is the changing of power from ZANU-PF to the opposition MDC….'[1] Their existence indicates the intractable nature of the Zimbabwean normalisation problem.

The debate on normalisation of Zimbabwe has culminated in four main approaches which are well summarised by Diana Games as the 'South African approach,' the 'Georgian approach,' the 'Indonesian approach,' and the 'Liberian approach.'[2] The South African approach is well known and it revolves around facilitation of multi-party negotiations, mainly involving ZANU-PF and the MDC. This one has been tried through the efforts of Presidents Thabo Mbeki and Olusegun Obasanjo, and they met with unwillingness on the side of both ZANU-PF and the MDC to engage in constructive dialogue. Mugabe insisted that MDC was a neo-colonial front and a puppet of the unrepentant Western neo-imperialists, mainly Britain. Mugabe's condition for negotiations with the MDC was that it must first 'repent' for being a 'running dog of imperialism.' To him the MDC was nothing but a 'creation and creature of resurgent British imperialism.'[3] The MDC faction led by Morgan Tsvangirai seem to favour and try to promote the 'Georgian approach' crafted around the experiences from Georgia in the former Soviet Union, where demonstrations led by the opposition parties were successful in forcing President Eduard Shevardnadze to resign. Since the failure of MDC to remove ZANU-PF and Robert Mugabe from power in 2000 and 2002 through electoral victory, it has tried this option including the abortive 'final push' of 2003 and the recent 'winter of resistance' that never took place.[4] This strategy seems to be doomed to fail in the context of Zimbabwe where Mugabe is prepared to unleash the military forces on unarmed civilians.

What has not yet been seen is the 'Indonesian approach,' which saw President Suharto of Indonesia voluntarily stepping down after three decades in power and making way for his chosen successor, B.J. Habibie.[5] Mugabe has insinuated that he might leave power voluntarily in March 2008. Zimbabweans are indeed waiting

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1 Ibid, p. 33.
2 Ibid, p. 36.
3 'ZANU-PF Election Manifesto-March 2005: The People's Manifesto: Message from the First Secretary and President of ZANU-PF CDE. R.G. Mugabe,' p. 1. On Mugabe's anti-imperialist politics see R. Mugabe, *Inside the Third Chimurenga*, The Ministry of Information and Publicity, Harare, 2001.
4 *The Zimbabwean*, 25 June 2006.
5 D. Games, "Zimbabwe: Recovery Scenarios,' p. 36.

anxiously for this day. The final approach, which has not been attempted, is the 'Liberian approach' which was crafted by Nigeria involving offering President Taylor of Liberia safety in exile.[1] For Zimbabwe, it means that Mugabe accepts being given safety somewhere in Africa after leaving power. It is unlikely that Mugabe can accept such humiliation when he considers himself the 'father of Zimbabwe.' This option for Mugabe became even more far-fetched when Taylor was finally handed over to Liberia to face a war crimes trial.

The reality in Zimbabwe is that the country itself needs a 'soft landing' after the conflict that consumed its strength and one such 'soft landing' can be provided by the intervention of the AU through its APRM. This pan-African inspired scenario has not yet been considered in the current search for normalisation of the Zimbabwe crisis.

The Case for an APRM

The BBC News through its BBC Focus on Africa Programme interviewed a number of people about whether the peer review mechanism can work in Africa. One of those people who were interviewed gave the shortest response when it came to the Zimbabwean situation and the role that the peer review can play. He said 'unlikely in the case of Zimbabwe-Bob is peerless.'[2] The other person interviewed was more positive about the mechanism but she also mentioned Zimbabwe in her narrative. This is what she said:

> I think the Peer Review is excellent in theory but in practice, it will only work when those governments that have a track record of human rights abuses, mismanaging the economy and poor leadership like the regime of Zimbabwe...are forced to sign up. Far too many African governments are answerable to no one, act as though corruption is the norm, and fail to implement even basic systems for the development of their people while the African Union has little influence to make change happen. It is of no use if governments that do sign up are those that are doing the right thing and providing stability and opportunities in their countries.[3]

Two crucial issues emerge from the two testimonies. The first is that President Robert Mugabe is 'peerless' and the second relates to which countries must sign up for peer review. On the first issue, Mugabe is 'peerless' at a number of levels. He belongs to the old guard that ought to have left power long ago. Secondly, he is 'peerless' because of his seniority among Southern African leaders and this makes juniors like President Thabo Mbeki fail to deal effectively with Mugabe. Mugabe is a peer to

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1 Ibid.
2 BBC News, 'Can Peer Review Work in Africa?' in http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3493813.stm
3 Ibid.

Nelson Mandela but not to Thabo Mbeki. Thirdly, he is 'peerless' because he does not listen to anybody and is engaged in a fatalistic monologue that is weighing heavily on the Zimbabwean economy and politics. Even at home, his ministers are all younger than him and his peers, Joshua Nkomo and Simon Muzenda who deputised him for years have left him alone. Fourthly, the idea of Mugabe being 'peerless' captures the powerlessness and lack of concern for African problems. Who then is going to peer review Mugabe if the African Union is toothless? Finally, Mugabe is 'peerless' because his demagoguery, well formulated around the African nationalist and pan-Africanist rhetoric and tradition, makes him a hero among some Third World quarters and many African leaders are still thinking in nationalist terms. Mugabe's pan-African rhetoric has silenced many African leaders. As noted by Ian Phimister and Brian Raftopoulos, Mugabe has succeeded in posturing as a victim of Western imperialist conspiracy and a courageous leader who has stood firm against neo-liberal imperialism.[1] In these senses, Mugabe is indeed 'peerless.'

On the issue of which countries must or should sign up for peer review, Zimbabwe is one country that desperately needs comprehensive peer review because of the havoc wrecked by its non-democratic governance and its failure to absolve itself from the crisis that was largely internally generated. If Mugabe is indeed a true pan-Africanist, who believes in the ability of Africans to solve their own problems, then he should join the APRM to make sure not to be hijacked by the imperialists and neo-colonialists. However, Mugabe's anti-imperialist crusade and his attempt to rally Africa and the Third World behind his nationalist inspired land reform programme make him a pillar of the pan-Africanist agenda of complete decolonisation. Mugabe decided not to accede to the APRM because of the country's poor human rights record and his agenda to remain in power through authoritarian means that are not amenable to the spirit of peer review.

Mugabe has defined the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) together with the APRM as fronts for Western imperialism. However, the Minister for Economic Planning and Finance, Dr Herbert Murerwa did not dismiss the APRM. He said:

> Our position is that this is a voluntary and individual choice by some African countries and we have chosen not to be reviewed. We are not prepared. It will be a government decision. When the government decides the time is ripe, we will volunteer for review.[2]

Zimbabwe has a very complicated view of and working relationship with the African Union and its agencies. Zimbabwe is a member of the African Union but it tries to

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1 I. Phimister and B. Raftopolous, 'Mugabe, Mbeki and the Politics of Anti-Imperialism, *Review of African Political Economy,* Volume 101, No. 31, 2004, pp. 385–400.
2 Africa File Editorial, 'Zimbabwe must be reined in first' in http://www.africafiles.org/printable version.asp?id=12897

shun NEPAD and the APRM. However, Mugabe's isolation has made him partici-pate in NEPAD projects in the name of pan-Africanism to counter the stigma of being isolated. The main problem with Zimbabwe, when it comes to the issue of APRM, is 'President Mugabe's government would like to have it both ways.'[1] In this position, Mugabe is enjoying the support of other African leaders who have kept a very low profile when it comes to the issue of the Zimbabwe crisis and the authoritar-ian politics that are ripping the country to pieces. The African leaders within both the African Union and SADC put the quest for camaraderie and fraternal bonds higher above the issue of good governance in Zimbabwe.

As the situation stands in Zimbabwe, a peer review will give the country a more dignified return to normalcy. Firstly, Zimbabwe will volunteer on its own terms for peer review and follow Murerwa's logic that it is now prepared for a review. Sec-ondly, it will give Mugabe the needed status of a leader who respects pan-African crafted mechanisms. Thirdly, a peer review mechanism for Zimbabwe would be a more credible, non-partisan and comprehensive starting point for Zimbabwean re-building. Zimbabwe is currently suffering from ZANU-PF and Robert Mugabe monologue, what is needed is dialogue. APRM is capable of offering a platform for all Zimbabweans to take part in the audit of the collapse and in shaping the road to recovery. The problem with Zimbabwe and Mugabe is that they have misread the APRM as a 'shaming exercise' meant to expose them as dictators who ruined the country. What Mugabe does not want to hear is about his responsibility for the crisis in Zimbabwe. By definition, the APRM 'is a mutually agreed instrument for self-monitoring by the participating members of the African Union.'[2]

What Zimbabwe desperately needs is contained in the five stages to the APRM. The first stage involves the country under review providing data on the economic and political situation. The crisis engulfing Zimbabwe is a cause for concern and data is needed on the economic and political situation in the country as a starting point on the path to recovery. A country programme of action is desperately lacking in Zimbabwe. The second stage entails the APRM country team visiting to evalu-ate whether all stakeholders were involved in the preparation of the 'Draft Country Programme of Action' before finalising the draft into the 'Country Programme of Action.'

This consultative process will destroy ZANU-PF and Robert Mugabe's mono-logue on the way forward for Zimbabwe. Every institution in Zimbabwe is in need of review and the third stage of the APRM entails the country review team using the 'Country Programme of Action' to develop an assessment of the country's economic and political situation culminating in the development of a 'Draft Country Review Report.' The report is then discussed extensively with the country under review and

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1 Ibid.
2 D.A. Bekoe. 'Creating a Reliable African Peer Review Mechanism', *Chimera: The Creation of Im-agination*, Volume 1, Issue 4, Winter 2003.

the government is given a chance to respond to the country report. Its comments are taken seriously to the extent of being attached to the review report. By this stage, a comprehensive review of the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe would have been done locating and defining the key problems that need redressing. The fourth and fifth stage involve reporting to the APRM Secretariat, making recommendations and publicising the country's APR Report through regional and sub-regional organisations such as the AU, PAP, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, the Peace and Security Council, the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the AU and the regional economic organisations to which the country belongs.[1]

What need to be delineated here are the benefits of the APRM for Zimbabwe. As defined by Fabricio Pagani:

> Peer review can be described as the systematic examination and assessment of the performance of a state by other states, with the ultimate goal of helping the reviewed state improve its policy-making, adopt best practices, and comply with established standards and principles. The examination is conducted on a non-adversarial basis, and it relies heavily on mutual trust among the states involved in the review, as well as on their shared confidence in the process.[2]

Despite Mugabe's attempts to link the NEPAD and ARPM with imperialism, Zimbabwe stands to gain by acceding to APRM. Zimbabwe's policy-making processes need a thorough review and a peer review provides that window for Zimbabwe. This is an argument that is also presented by *Global Crisis Solutions* for the Zimbabwe land reform. They suggest 'engaging the regional integration mechanism in developing a regional code of standards for land reform that would be pegged to the peer review mechanism.'[3] As stated in the *African Union and NEPAD Guidelines for Countries to Prepare for and to Participate in the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)*, the peer process is designed to be open and participatory:

> Through a participatory process, the APRM will engage key stakeholders to facilitate exchange of information and national dialogue on good governance and socio-economic development programmes, thereby increase the transparency of decision-making processes, and build trust in pursuit of national development goals.[4]

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1 J. Cilliers, *NEPAD's Peer Review Mechanism*, Institute for Security Studies Occasional Paper Number 64, November 2002.

2 F. Pagani, 'Peer Review as a Tool for Co-operation and Change: An Analysis of an OECD Working Method' paper presented at the New Partnership for African Development's (NEPAD) African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) Conference, Cape Town, 2004, p. 1.

3 Global Crisis Solutions, 'Zimbabwe: Land, Identity and Power,' p. 12.

4 African Union and NEPAD Guidelines for Countries to Prepare for and to Participate in the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM): NEPAD/APRM/Panel3/guidelines/11-2003/Doc8 , NEPAD Secretariat, Midrand 2003.

The APRM base document in paragraph 3 makes it very clear that the primary purpose of the APRM is to foster the adoption of appropriate laws, policies, standards and practices that lead to stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated sub-regional and continental economic integration.[1] Zimbabwe desperately needs all these interventions because its crisis is largely that of governance and socio-economic development. Zimbabwe's normalisation process cannot make sense without the adoption of a realistic programme of action crafted through consultation of all stakeholders. There is no doubt that Zimbabwe is under one of the most malfunctioning governments in the SADC region and needs assistance.

There are four compelling reasons why a peer review is needed in Zimbabwe. Firstly, through acceding to APRM, the country will gradually shake off the stigma of being seen as an absurdity in SADC and being seen as one of the outposts of tyranny at international level. By acceding to APRM, Zimbabwe will be demonstrating its willingness to normalise the costly crisis. Secondly, Zimbabwe must take advantage of the peer review to sincerely investigate what went wrong and plunged the country into crisis. The APRM participatory process is ideal for an all-stakeholders review of the governance structure of Zimbabwe. Thirdly, Zimbabwe needs a credible process to re-engage citizens the majority of whom have disengaged from the state. A peer review process offers such a platform. In Zimbabwe, the civil society and the state are largely at loggerheads and that relationship is not amenable to the imperatives of a normalisation process. APRM offers room for full participation of civil society and the private sector in coming up with a comprehensive the turn-around strategy that ZANU-PF has failed to achieve acting alone. Finally, Zimbabwe desperately needs external aid to finance whatever the turn-around programme of action will entail and those countries that have acceded to APRM are well favoured by donors.

Conclusion

The discussion and analysis deployed above is targeted at three audiences: the Zimbabwe government, SADC and the AU. For the Zimbabwean government, the plea of this discussion is to make it realise that by snubbing NEPAD and APRM is deepening its isolation and is losing an excellent opportunity to get back on normalisation track via a credible and transparent route. By acceding to the APRM, Zimbabwe has nothing to lose but its pariah status. To the AU and SADC, the plea is for these regional bodies to realise the 'grave circumstances' in Zimbabwe and work together to bring about normalcy in the beleaguered Southern African nation. The APRM will not make much sense if those countries like Zimbabwe that are 'red spots' in Africa snub it and those that are performing better aceede to it like South Africa has done. It would be a great achievement for the AU and its agencies to demonstrate to the

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1 O. Deme, *Between Hope and Scepticism: Civil Society and the African Peer Review Mechanism,* Partnership Africa, Canada, 2003, pp. 24–30.

whole world that it is able to take serious measures to institutionalise democracy and sustainable development in malfunctioning states like Zimbabwe. There is indeed still hope for Zimbabwe to mend itself via acceding to a peer review as a starting point into recovery. There is still credibility for the AU if it can be more serious about the Zimbabwe crisis. Finally, it is clear from the discussion in this paper that the 'go it alone' approach adopted by ZANU-PF and Robert Mugabe will never work and will never return Zimbabwe to normalcy in the foreseeable future.

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