

CHAPTER 4:

NATIONAL LIST- PR ELECTORAL SYSTEM: CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY

4.1: INTRODUCTION

The conceptualisation of the consolidation of democracy revolves around the notion of deepening democracy, and ultimately precipitates the institutionalisation of democracy at the highest national level.

This study of democratic consolidation further enhances an understanding of the interaction between peaceful transition and political institutions in shaping a formal and representative democracy.

The theoretical debate is backed by the approach that was provided by the research methodology used in this work and based on comparative historical analysis that evaluated different explanatory factors which accounted for divergent paths to first elections ever in Angola and Mozambique.

The significant difference as evidenced by such comparative study, suggests that democratic consolidation may be difficult to sustain alongside unstable conditions. This explains why peaceful the political transition in Mozambique enhanced and influenced the trajectory of political process that resulted in the emergence and consolidation of

democratic process in this country. By contrast, the absence of such conditions of peaceful transition in Angola ensured that the agenda for national consolidation of democracy had to be postponed.

4.2: CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY

Democratic consolidation is an integral part of the trajectory to democracy. Generally it follows the transition phase. At the centre of democratic consolidation is the conceptualisation of formal democracy that requires from all relevant actors the acceptance of the democratic rules and institutions, including accountability by elected representatives and public officials who restrain abuses of power, which are detrimental to the public interests at large.

However, some scholars like Huber et al (1997) argue that conditions like in democratic transitions are also essential for the process of democratic consolidation to flourish. They contend that conditions that prevailed in the transition phase may not necessarily persist in the democratic consolidation but must be equally favourable.

Still at the theoretical foundation, Haggard and Kaufman (1995:310) in an extensive comparative case analysis on democratic consolidation in countries like Bolivia, Mexico, Turkey, Argentina and Peru in the late 1980s and early 1990s, argue that a relatively stable democratic transition is required for the consolidation of democracy, to avoid placing the legitimacy of existing political institutions at risk. Haggard and Kaufman

suggest that lack of such conditions can strip the state of instruments that have proven to be effective in promoting democratic consolidation.

In Angola, the process of democratic consolidation, after the 1992 elections, could not be materialised. Angola's mode of transition also affected post - transition politics. Historical developments demonstrate that the main opposition, **UNITA** by resorting to war, undermined the viability of democratic institutions that were about to be put in place, and the foundations of democracy became particularly vulnerable. As Cilliers and Dietrich (2000:110) put it : "Although Unita portrayed itself as a democratic organisation its political organisation and practice are clearly Maoist.As such, Unita created very centralised structures both at the political as well as the military levels. In fact, military structures dominated the organisation in the sense that no civilians were allowed to hold leadership positions"⁶⁸. This orthodox organisation of Unita had a severe impact on Angola's post democratic transition by not willing to exercise any flexibility towards the electoral outcomes and by simply undermining the golden principle that parties are the most important reservoir of success in elections through their political behaviour and conduct.

The state had to recover its capacity to be strong and autonomous enough to ensure the rule of law, especially the protection of human and political rights, and the elimination of fear of death and brutal assassinations among the Angolans. Thus, the state avoided being the captive of the interests of an armed opposition that did not want to conform to the rules of the game. This development had a negative effect on democratic project, because it tended to virtually block the democratic reforms in that country.

In Mozambique, the prospects to strengthen the democratic consolidation were there. Both the **FRELIMO** government and the major opposition party **RENAMO** as effective political adversaries, firmly supported the 'push – through' of the establishment and consolidation of democracy. The Mozambican case - study highlights that there was willingness by all major actors to accept the democratic rules of the game. The **FRELIMO** government and **RENAMO** as the main actors in the process, accepted and embraced the democratic consolidation. **RENAMO** chose not to block democratic changes, thereby ensuring the adoption of optimal institutional rules for democracy.

As Robert Rohrschneider put it: "Like political tolerance, the acceptance of pluralism requires individuals to become accustomed to having their preferences challenged. Debates and controversies over the most desirable policy may ultimately result in political defeat of one's preferences. Therefore, individuals must be ready to accept short-term defeat so that society as a whole may reap the long-term-benefits of pluralism"⁶⁹.

Pluralism is an important component of the liberal democracy. It gives precedence to individual liberties and democratic rights so that citizens and groups can compete peacefully without any form of coercion or duress in their share of influencing in the policy - making process.

Hence, the role of the opposition parties in a pluralist context is to participate in formulating policies that are required in the diverse interests of their constituencies. Therefore, parties are discouraged to quarrel over how to divide the political cake. They should seek to promote public interests with concrete programmes and policies instead of being dedicated to promoting personal and partisan interests.

The premise central to the democratic process is that democracy cannot exist if there is no fundamental commitment to pluralist principles by the main protagonists of the political elites, and conflicts are resolved through armed violence instead of being suppressed by means of compromise.

In Angola, pluralism raised questions about an armed opposition, **UNITA**, that did not practice liberal pluralism by not allowing to be disarmed, not handing over territories under its control to the government, but resorting to war. In contrast thereto, the Mozambican case exemplifies the political scenario that emphasizes the cooperation of the major political parties to the process of pacification and political reforms.

4.3: POLITICAL PLURALISM AND DEMOCRACY

Political pluralism as the guardian of the 'core' values that inform the collective life of a specific society, constitutes the foundation of a democratic state that should have those bodies of values enshrined in the constitution and political institutions and structures.

The central principles of political pluralism are the society's ability to tolerate cultural political differences and a shared system of values based on personal autonomy, freedom of choice and independent thought. Political pluralism is valuable in a democratic state because it enables each citizen to enrich and institutionalise the culture of political differences. It also encourages a healthy competition between different political parties.

Political pluralism equated with another dimension of democracy must entail adopting a 'political culture-blind' or a 'political difference-blind' approach intended to bring about equal respect among citizens and accepting and recognizing different and sometimes incompatible viewpoints of equally different sections of the society. In practice, it helps to maintain social cohesion, badly needed in societies like Angola and Mozambique, physically fractured by wounds of long civil wars.

4.4: DEMOCRATISATION

This dimension of analysis helps to understand how the character of an armed opposition impinges on the process of democratization, whereas the building process of mutual trust, tolerance for diversity and a propensity for accommodation and compromise between opposition and government can be necessary ingredients of democratisation.

The concept of democratisation is not an abstract conception of democracy. At theoretical and empirical level, it is operationalised through the principles and practices that are the embodiment of such democratic development.

In this sense, to divorce democratisation from the consideration of democratic principles and practices through which such process can be realized, is simply misconceived and a - historical.

The two - case study of Angola and Mozambique, as far as their contextual specificity is concerned, illuminates their different historical trajectories, each pointing to a different path towards democratisation.

The issue of democratisation is particularly relevant to Africa's emergent democracies because it strives to contribute to the stability thereof. But it can only do so if the quality of democracy is achieved through overriding the internal constraints that shape political behaviour of the political parties such as authoritarian rule and armed violence. The dynamics of democratisation are inseparable from the conflict situations in which they arise, unfold, stabilise and sometimes abort. The point is that violent forms of opposition can be as threatening as making the process of democratisation inviable.

In the *Third Wave*, Huntington, (p.169) suggests that the process of democratisation is intrinsically linked to the democratic bargain and is a trade-off between participation and moderation. In other words, there must be a bargaining process between the incumbent government and the opposition for the political participation and contestation to be expanded into an institutional-building process.

Democratisation can thus be perceived as providing a politically enabling environment for governance, legitimacy, democracy and justice, human rights observance, independent judiciary and media and the rule of law. The rationale is to achieve the democratic standards that militate against unwillingness to move towards national reconciliation or the return to the single-party system, one-party democracy or even to party-state.

P.Chudi Uwazurike (1990) holds the view that is consonant with linkages postulated by scholars of democratisation like Larry Diamond, who sees the seeds of instability to first

be removed from the body politics of a given society, for democratisation to take root. The underlying premise is that democratisation should take place in such conditions of stability that a political regime be constitutionally engineered and the leadership to be accountable. This facilitates the long-term process of democratic instauration in which power is distributed through the art of 'institutionalizing compromise' or through a 'system of mutual security' and not captured by one segment of the armed population. As Larry Diamond (1989:151) puts it: "The most favourable development for democratisation is a firm and forceful commitment to the process on the part of a country's political leadership"⁷⁰.

The process of democratisation through an institutional building process encourages the emergent democratic regime to take steps to legitimate its authority by establishing and expanding the culture of democratic values vis-à-vis its citizens and by restoring their civil liberties, namely, freedom of speech, press, association, assemblies, movements and religion.

In addition to that is the full restoration of political liberties of the citizens, by suppressing censorship on political parties and their different ideologies and the creation of a powerful, effective and elected government, represented at provincial, regional and district levels. The role of democratisation is also to dislodge entrenched anti-democratic structures in order to contribute to the new form and social meaning of political reforms.