

Parties, Factions and Votes:

A Comparative Study of

Electoral Politics in Post-

Colonial Namibia

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Abstract

Since Africa's 'second liberation' from authoritarianism at the beginning of the 1990s, political parties have assumed a critically important role in the processes by which social interests are articulated, institutions are legitimised and conflicts are managed. Many authors question the extent to which these organisations recognise the intrinsic value of free political competition, personal liberty, political accountability and social inclusion, although relatively few studies have attempted a comprehensive exploration of either party or voter behaviour. This research project represents a hypothesis-building case study of Namibia and addresses three areas of concern. First, it builds upon existing party system research to demonstrate that Namibia's opposition vote is characterised by acute volatility and attributes this phenomenon to weak parties, salient ethnic identities and a permissive electoral system, all of which serve to encourage party fragmentation. Second, it investigates the more proximate causes of party fragmentation and concludes that leadership succession contests tend, in Namibia, to trigger splinter group formation either when factional support has been mobilised around a divisive issue or when defeated contenders are coerced into submission. Third, it explores the nature and drivers of dominant-party motivation, challenging an assumption that ruling elites are primarily interested in gangster-style theft and demonstrating that Namibia's governing party has pursued, not only a formally legitimate path to wealth accumulation, but also a set of progressive social policies designed to empower its support base. Finally, it argues that Namibia's opposition parties are not primarily motivated by a desire to secure ministerial office through election or co-optation, as the literature would suggest, but by a determination to capture the salaries, party income and media opportunities associated with parliamentary office. Each of these four arguments is tested through comparative analysis, using secondary literature, of Namibia, South Africa and Botswana.

For Rachael and Ava

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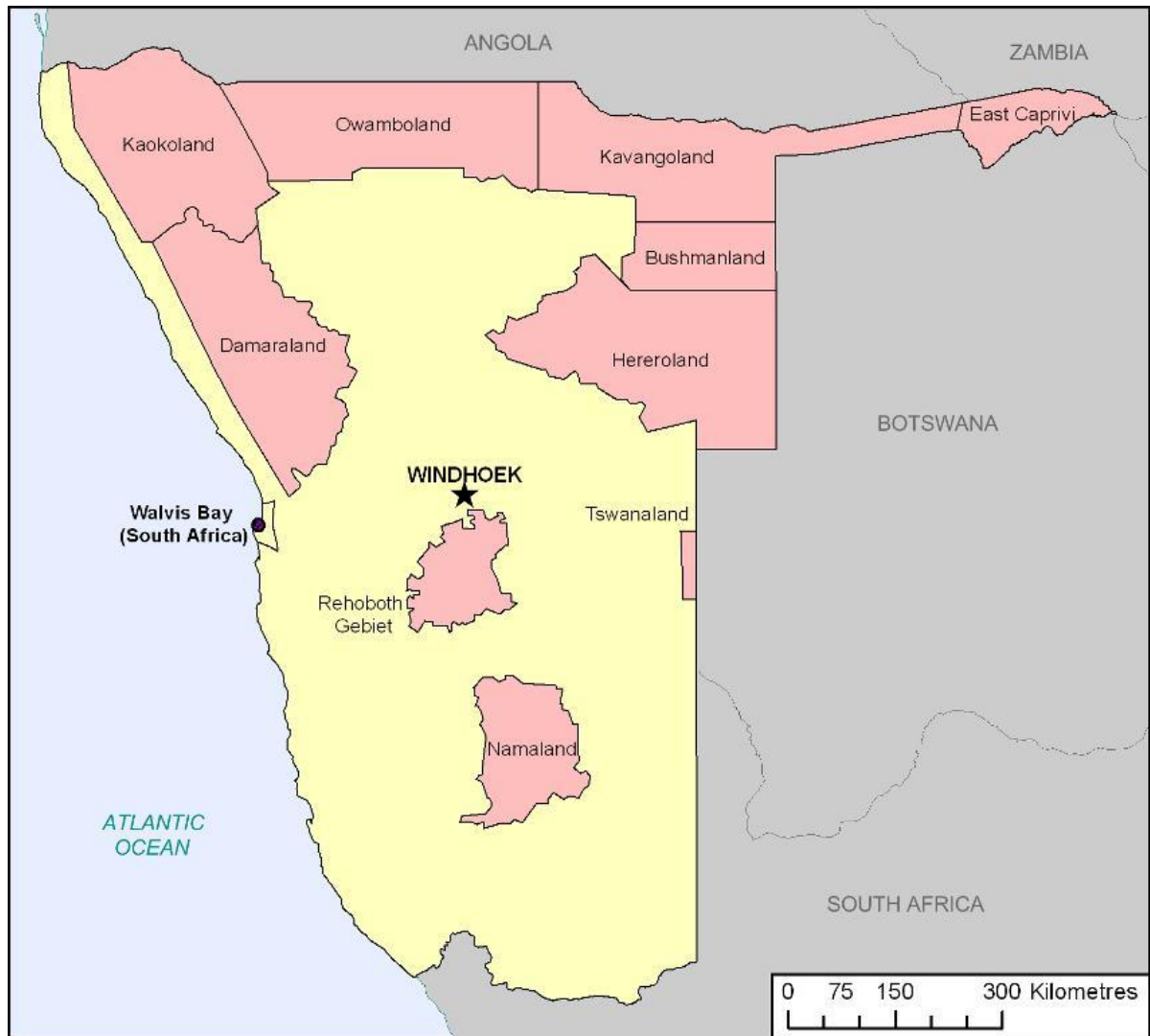
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Namibia with Major Towns, Regional Boundaries and Trunk Roads, 2012



Namibia with Bantustan Boundaries, 1980



Glossary of Terms

ACDP	African Christian Democratic Party
ACN	Action Christian National
AEB	Afrikaner Unity Movement
AKTUR	Alliance for the Preservation of the Turnhalle Principles
ANC	African National Congress
APP	All Peoples' Party
BAM	Botswana Alliance Movement
BCP	Botswana Congress Party
BDP	Botswana Democratic Party
BNF	Botswana National Front
BPP	Botswana People's Party
CANU	Caprivi African National Union
CDA	Christian Democratic Action for Social Justice
CLA	Caprivi Liberation Army
CoD	Congress of Democrats
DA	Democratic Alliance
DCN	Democratic Coalition of Namibia
DP	Democratic Party
DPN	Democratic Party of Namibia
DTA	Democratic Turnhalle Alliance of Namibia
FA	Federal Alliance
FCN	Federal Convention of Namibia
HNP	Purified National Party
ID	Independent Democrats
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
MAG	Monitor Action Group
MEC	Member of Executive Council
MF	Minority Front
MPLA	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
NANSO	Namibia National Students' Organisation
NNF	Namibia National Front
NNP	New National Party
NP	National Party
NPF	National Patriotic Front
NPSWA	National Party of South West Africa
NUDO	National Unity Democratic Organisation
NUNW	National Union of Namibian Workers
OPC	Owambo People's Congress
OPO	Owambo People's Organisation
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania
PLAN	People's Liberation Army of Namibia
RDP	Rally for Democracy and Progress
RP	Republican Party
SADF	South African Defence Force
SPYL	Swapo Party Youth League
SWANU	South West Africa National Union
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation of Namibia

SWAPO-D	South West Africa People's Organisation—Democrats
TGNU	Transitional Government of National Unity
UCDP	United Christian Democratic Party
UDF	United Democratic Front of Namibia
UDM	United Democratic Movement
UN	United Nations
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
VF+	Freedom Front Plus
WRP	Workers' Revolutionary Party
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front

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Introduction: Parties, Factions and Votes in sub-Saharan Africa

Out of Africa, always something new.

Pliny the Elder, 23 AD-79 AD

Party politics is the *sine qua non* of electoral democracy. As the principal vehicle by which social groups are represented, competing interests reconciled, political leaders recruited and institutions legitimated (Emminghaus, 2002 cited in Hunter, 2005: 3), parties ‘perform essential functions in terms of ordering the political system...[,] provide order and stability in society, [...] structure the political process and ensure that citizen participation in that process is orderly’ (Manning 2005: 717). In advanced democracies, these organisations represent a vital intermediary between state and citizenry, facilitating the exchange of information, development of programmes, education of voters and distribution of resources, whilst holding power to account and presenting choice to the electorate. Where party competition is banned, representative democracy cannot credibly be said to exist.

Thus, Africa’s experience of party politics over the past century has mirrored the fluctuating fortunes of electoral democracy. Its first major proliferation of modern political organisations—notwithstanding the small number of settler parties established in Liberia, South Africa, Rhodesia and Namibia from 1860 onwards (Erdmann, Basedau and Mehler 2007: 9)—took place after World War Two, as the rise of black nationalism and acceleration of European decline produced more than 130 groups dedicated to the struggle against colonial domination (Carbone 2007: 1). Unfortunately, despite much rhetoric emphasising the need for black empowerment, most of these parties were driven by a desire to capture state power rather than

to promote democratisation, with the result that few countries escaped the crushing of dissent, prohibition of opposition parties and imposition of single-party rule which followed independence. By 1989, thirty-eight of Africa's forty-five states were governed by civilian or military dictatorships (Olukoshi 1998: 9), whilst the total number of legal political parties had declined to an estimated eighty-four, more than one-third of which enjoyed exclusive rights to state power (Parline, 2009; African Elections Database, 2012).

As subsequent events were to demonstrate, however, many of these regimes had feet of clay. When popular discontent and donor pressure peaked during the early 1990s, provoking a wave of pro-democracy activism and insurgent violence, more than forty governments (Lindberg 2006: 14) were overthrown or compelled to concede the abolition of single-party constitutions, legalisation of opposition activity and organisation of multi-party elections. This dramatic expansion of democratic space (known as Africa's 'second liberation' from authoritarian rule) forced elites to pursue alternative strategies for the retention or capture of state power, prompting a massive proliferation of political parties which transformed electoral competition from a peripheral phenomenon to the principal arena of political conflict. As the twenty-first century dawned, party politics had become a defining feature of Africa's political landscape, determining the distribution of power, informing public policy and exercising a decisive influence upon the struggle for democratic consolidation.

Despite early optimism that Africa's 'second liberation' would herald an era of improved governance, greater accountability and increased participation, however, many scholars have concluded that political parties are failing to perform the representational, integrative or legitimising functions demanded by democratic theory. As Randall and Svåsand (2002: 31) note, parties are 'regularly perceived to be a weak link in the chain of elements that together make for a democratic state, or even to have helped undermine democracy through the irresponsible and self-interested actions of their leaders'. Monga (1997: 156-160) argues that African parties are

commonly dominated by a single individual, defined by ethnic or regional particularism, crippled by resource scarcity and prone to electoral manipulation. Fomunyoh (2001: 48) suggests that ‘weak political parties’ represent an obstacle to popular mobilisation, interest aggregation, depoliticisation of the armed forces and improved governance in francophone Africa. As van de Walle and Butler (1999: 15) note, parties tend to be ‘plagued by weak organisations, low levels of institutionalisation, and weak links to the society that they are supposed to represent. Emerging party systems... almost invariably appear to be fragile and unstable, with little programmatic differentiation, and fragmented by personalistic and ethno-regional divisions’. Party politics is widely suspected, in other words, of exacerbating rather than mitigating the challenges associated with democratic consolidation in Africa.

Given this background, my thesis will address three questions relating to African political parties and party systems:

1. *What do parties seek to achieve and what drives these choices?*
2. *Why do parties differ in their propensity towards fragmentation?*
3. *What are the causes of electoral volatility?*

These issues are to be explored on the basis of empirical evidence gathered in Namibia, with a comparative final chapter drawing upon the secondary literature pertaining to South Africa and Botswana.

Why Namibia?

Namibia is a land of fascinating contrasts and extraordinary social complexity. Its remarkable history arguably has few parallels in Sub-Saharan Africa, encompassing German settler colonialism, genocide, invasion and occupation by white South Africa, racial segregation and

apartheid, armed liberation struggle, diplomatic controversy, superpower rivalry, United Nations-supervised independence and the belated construction of a non-racial, multi-party democracy characterised by free elections, free speech and freedom of association. Significantly, Namibia is one of the few countries in Africa never to have experienced single-party, personal or military (mis)rule, partly as a result of which its armed forces recognise civilian control, its bureaucratic apparatus is strong and its relatively well-developed economy has never undergone a structural adjustment programme. Indeed, Namibia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita—at US\$5,125 in 2010 (United Nations Data, 2012)—is amongst the highest in Africa, whilst its advanced transport infrastructure boasts two international airports, a deep-water harbour, some 5,500 kilometres of tarred road and a railway system stretching from Oshikango in the north to Karasburg in the south (Weidlich, *The Namibian*, 5 December 2006). After a century of colonialism, migration and conflict, the country's demographic profile—as illustrated in Tables I and II below—is also highly unusual, combining Owambo ethnic dominance (a legacy in part of the Herero/Nama genocide, as outlined in chapter one) with a number of small but highly significant racial minorities, many of which trace their origins to Germany, the United Kingdom or South Africa. According to Hopwood (2008: 101), Namibia even boasts the only German-language daily newspaper (*Allgemeine Zeitung*) to be published in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Table I: Major Language Groups, 2001		
Language	Associated Ethnic Groups	Proportion of Households (%)
Oshiwambo	Owambo	48
Nama/Damara	Nama, Damara	11
Afrikaans	Afrikaner, Coloured,* Rehoboth Baster	11
Kavango	Kavango	11
Otjiherero	Herero, Mbanderu, Himba	8
Other	German, Tswana, Mafwe, Subia, San	11

* In southern Africa, this term is generally used to denote an individual of mixed race.

Source: National Planning Commission, 2001.

Table II: Major Racial Groups, 2010		
Racial Group	Associated Ethnic Groups	Proportion of Population (%)
Black	Owambo, Kavango, Herero, Nama, Damara, Himba, Tswana, Mafwe, Subia	87.5
Coloured	Coloured, Rehoboth Baster, San*	6.5
White	Afrikaner, German, English	6.0

* According to an informed correspondent, members of this group were classified as Coloured by the apartheid regime and, in many cases, still regard themselves as belonging to that racial category (Puckett, personal comm., 23 November 2012).

Source: Central Intelligence Agency, 2012.

This combination of ethnic domination and racial politics is rare even in southern Africa, where European imperial rivalries, mineral wealth, industrial development and favourable climatic conditions produced a level of white immigration not replicated elsewhere on the continent. Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, for example, exhibit a high level of ethnic homogeneity, but none boasts a racial minority of any demographic or even political significance. Zimbabwe's black population is generally divided into a Shona majority (77 per cent of the national population) and Ndebele (14 per cent), Kalanga (2 per cent), Tonga (1 per cent) and Venda (0.5 per cent) minorities, but its white, Coloured and Asian communities have largely disappeared since independence (Minority Rights International, 2012). Even in South Africa, where racial minorities are much larger and more diverse than in Namibia, no ethnic community can claim to represent more than one-quarter of the national population. Namibia, therefore, has an unusual and intriguing demographic configuration, a remarkable history, a relatively sophisticated economy, a functioning multi-party democracy and, by African standards, an unusually strong state.

Despite this exceptionalism, however, Namibia is in many other respects a modal African country. Its impressive GDP statistics disguise the world's worst performance on social inequality, such that 'per capita income for the ninety per cent of households with the lowest income is about [US]\$262, a hundredth of the \$25,000 for the richest two per cent of the households' (World Bank 2009: 2). In 2003/04, some 49.1 per cent of Namibia's population

lived below the US\$1.25-per-day poverty line and 62.2 per cent survived on less than \$2 per day, with 28 per cent of households classified as ‘poor’ and four per cent as ‘extremely poor’ (World Bank 2009: 2). Almost one-half of families derive their income primarily or exclusively from subsistence agriculture, whilst manufacturing industry has attained a degree of sophistication and diversification comparable only with that of under-developed Lesotho (World Bank 2009: 11). Thus, despite the affluence enjoyed by a small minority of its population, Namibia continues to grapple with the problems of poverty, underdevelopment and poor service provision familiar to many states in Africa.

Indeed, the commonalities between Namibia and its African neighbours are not confined merely to social, economic or developmental circumstances. As a former settler colony, Namibia is struggling to address the same legacies of ethnic balkanisation, racial polarisation, horizontal inequality, land expropriation and violent conflict which confronted South Africa and Zimbabwe during the early years of liberation. In each of these three countries, a negotiated transition to democracy eliminated the potential for revolutionary change but also prevented the reconfiguration of political and economic power necessary to achieve social equality. Namibia’s electoral system, which uses the highly proportional Hare formula for distributing parliamentary seats, is almost identical to the Droop model adopted by South Africa and similar to the proportional mechanisms employed in Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe, whilst sharing certain features with the mixed systems used in Lesotho, the Seychelles and Democratic Republic of Congo. Perhaps most importantly, however, Namibia’s party system—with its combination of single-party dominance and opposition fragmentation—is replicated across much of the African continent, where Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Gabon, Lesotho, Nigeria, South Africa and Tanzania are amongst the states to exhibit a similar configuration.

Namibia's value as a case study, therefore, lies not only in its remarkable history and unusual demography, which create an inherent interest for the empirical observer, but also in its 'normality' and consequent potential for theory construction. What opportunities does the country offer for investigating the dependent variables outlined at the beginning of this chapter? First, statistical analysis indicates that Namibia's opposition volatility, whilst consistently high, has fluctuated considerably over the past decade; in 1999, 2004 and 2009, the estimated proportion of opposition voters to have switched allegiance between parties was 43.0 per cent, 32.2 per cent and 53.9 per cent respectively.¹ This variation creates an opportunity to explain why electoral volatility might, on the one hand, remain high and, on the other hand, fluctuate over time.

Second, much of the literature on party factionalism has assumed that certain countries are prone, by virtue of their institutional, structural or cultural characteristics, to high levels of internecine conflict. Aronoff (1978: 113), for example, argues that 'the tendency of Jewish people to divide themselves into competing political camps' contributed to acute party fragmentation in Israel, whilst Campbell and Charlton (1978: 141) assert that 'French political culture has traditionally been fragmented by cleavages which dated, in some cases, from the French Revolution and the rise of industrialisation. This fragmentation has long been an underlying cause of party factionalism'. Key (1949, cited in Belloni and Beller 1978: 435) suggests that single-party dominance, 'machine' politics and the adoption of a direct primary system contributed to high levels of factional conflict in the Jim Crow-era American South, whilst Fukui (1978: 49) and Zariski (1978: 24) regard proportional representation as an important cause of party fragmentation in post-war Japan and Italy respectively. Each of these authors has employed a case study approach to political enquiry in which hypotheses are derived from a single observation, even though comparative analysis—when conducted within the confines of a single country—can allow the researcher to hold almost all structural, cultural and institutional

¹ See chapter two.

variables constant. Namibia represents a suitable candidate for intra-national comparative analysis because its major parties not only operate within a common party system, electoral system and political culture, but also differ substantially in their propensity towards fragmentation.

Finally, as noted later in this introductory chapter, scholars have tended to argue that Africa's political parties are primarily interested in securing executive power through either election or co-optation and that, consequently, presidential contests represent its principal arena of electoral competition. This conceptualisation presupposes that parties are *capable* either of securing a plurality of the popular vote or of negotiating entry into a coalition government and that, by implication, any party unable to challenge for power is doomed to failure. How, then, are we to explain the survival—sometimes for several decades—of political parties with no prospect of securing ministerial office? Namibia presents a valuable opportunity to explore this anomaly because, as outlined in my literature review, none of its opposition leaders has ever been brought into a coalition government or, indeed, come within fifty percentage points of winning a presidential election.

Methodology

My research project, as implied earlier in this chapter, represents a hypothesis-building case study in which theoretical insights are identified and developed through forensic examination of a single country. In the following section, I discuss the major advantages and drawbacks of this research design, propose solutions to the most important problems associated with case study work and outline the principal information sources upon which my research is based.

Case Studies

Case studies represent by no means the only method of undertaking qualitative social enquiry and are sometimes, indeed, regarded as exhibiting a number of potentially serious flaws. King, Keohane and Verba (1994: 210-211), for example, suggest that case studies are typically afflicted by three methodological problems: first, multiple hypotheses can only be tested through comparative research; second, measurement error is difficult to detect when mean values cannot be calculated; and third, the researcher has no basis upon which to assess whether his results support a particular hypothesis or arise from unforeseen phenomena. Consequently, they argue, 'the single observation is not a useful technique for testing hypotheses or theories' (King, Keohane and Verba 1994: 211). Laurence Whitehead (2002: 204) likewise argues that 'paired comparison' represents the best approach to theory construction, since case studies 'cannot be expected to validate general covering laws, or provide conclusive answers to most controversies concerning analysis of each case taken singly'.

This negative perception of single-case designs is not, however, shared by all analysts of research methodology. Lijphart (1971: 691), for example, identifies six species of case study: (a) atheoretical case studies, which are 'neither guided by... generalizations nor motivated by a desire to formulate general hypotheses'; (b) interpretative case studies, in which 'generalization is applied to a specific case with the aim of throwing light on the case rather than of improving the generalization'; (c) hypothesis-generating case studies, which 'formulate... hypotheses to be tested subsequently among a larger number of cases'; (d) theory-confirming and (e) theory-infirming case studies, which test theoretical propositions against empirical data; and (f) deviant case studies, which seek to identify 'additional variables that were not considered previously, or to refine the... definitions of some or all of the variables'. For Lijphart (1971: 692), hypothesis-generating case studies are of particularly 'great theoretical value' because original conceptual models can be developed 'in areas where no theory exists'.

Bennett and George (2004: 19-91) likewise identify four ‘strong advantages of case methods that make them valuable in testing hypotheses and particularly useful for theory development’. First, ‘many of the variables that interest social scientists, such as democracy, power, political culture, state strength, and so on are notoriously difficult to measure’ and thus require ‘a detailed consideration of contextual factors, which is extremely difficult to do in statistical studies but is common in case studies’. Factionalism, party motivation and opposition volatility clearly represent examples of this variable type. Second, it is argued that ‘case studies have powerful advantages in the heuristic identification of new variables and hypotheses through the study of deviant or outlier cases and in the course of field work... Unless statistical researchers do their own archival work, interviews or face-to-face surveys with open-ended questions in order to measure the values of the variables in their model, they have no unproblematic inductive means of identifying left-out variables’. Third, case studies ‘examine the operation of causal mechanisms in individual cases in detail... Researchers can also use theories on causal mechanisms to give historical explanations of cases’. The value of such analysis is evident in Namibia, where contemporary politics cannot be understood without a proper appreciation of colonial history. Fourth, Bennett and George argue that case studies are able ‘to accommodate complex causal relations such as equifinality’, in which a single end-point is reached by multiple routes, ‘complex interactions [sic] effects, and path dependency’. A fifth advantage of the case study methodology—which Bennett and George overlook—is that each political party can be subject to forensic examination over an extended period of time.

Yet despite making such powerful arguments in support of small-*n* analysis, Bennett and George (2004: 32) also concede that ‘studies involving only a single observation are at great risk of indeterminacy in the face of more than one possible explanation’—i.e., the researcher is faced with multiple possible causes but has no reliable means of selecting the most likely explanation.

Ironically, King et al. (1994: 208) propose the most appropriate solution to this problem, asserting that:

What may appear to be a single-case study... may indeed contain many potential observations, at different levels of analysis, that are relevant to the theory being evaluated. By increasing the number of observations, even without more data collection, the researcher can often transform an intractable problem that has an indeterminate research design into a tractable one.

Such remarks hold two important implications for this thesis. First, I minimise the potential for error by treating, where appropriate, each of Namibia's fourteen registered political parties as a discrete observation, whilst recognising that these organisations interact and cannot therefore be regarded as independent cases. Second, however, the number of observations will be increased and the opportunities for testing hypotheses maximised by concluding this thesis with a cross-national analysis of opposition volatility, party cohesion and party motivation in sub-Saharan Africa. Cases will be selected according to Mill's (1875: 452) Method of Difference, which predicts that:

if an instance in which the phenomenon under investigation occurs, and an instance in which it does not occur, have every circumstance in common save one, that one occurring only in the former; the circumstance in which alone the two circumstances differ, is the effect, or the cause, or an indispensable part of the cause, of the phenomenon.

Scholars have long debated the merits and drawbacks of this approach, although two widely-articulated objections appear to have most bearing upon my research design. On the one hand, Durkheim (1938 cited in Lijphart, 1971: 688) asserts that small-*n* comparative enquiry is unsuited to political science because 'the absolute elimination of adventitious elements is an ideal which cannot really be attained; [...] one can never be even approximately certain that two societies agree or differ in all respects save one'. Lijphart (1971: 688) counters this argument with a

suggestion that Mill's formulation should be regarded as an ideal rather than a rule and that, consequently, comparative research is legitimate when two or more cases are sufficiently similar for the number of explanatory factors to be minimised. All small-*n* studies, including the present thesis, are based upon an assumption that Durkheim and other critics have been 'too exacting' (Lijphart 1971: 688) in seeking to impose a scientific standard upon social enquiry.

A second criticism of small-*n* comparative research is articulated by Meckstroth (1975: 134), who argues that Mill's method 'provides no criteria to select among the limitless supply of attributes that might be introduced as controls or as explanations for any given phenomenon. Thus, all possibilities are equally relevant... and as long as an endless variety of possibilities must be considered, the method cannot justify conclusive statements about explanatory relationships'. This critique is most effectively countered by Peters (1998: 33), who suggests that 'a good theory in the research area... should help the investigator determine whether the right control variables are being considered'. My comparative analysis employs two theoretical building-blocks for the purpose of selecting control variables. First, case study work suggests that, in Namibia, dominant-partyism has exercised a profound influence upon political behaviour, causing opposition voters to support whichever organisation poses the greatest challenge to one-party hegemony, permitting ruling elites unfettered access to state resources and encouraging party competition at the parliamentary rather than presidential level. To determine whether these experiences are unique to Namibia or replicated elsewhere in Africa, I will need to restrict case selection to dominant-party systems and thus to control for the effects of party system type. A second theoretical foundation is provided by Sartori's (1976: 260-264) party system typology, which draws an important distinction between, on the one hand, 'dominant-authoritarian' parties forced to maintain power through coercion and, on the other hand, 'dominant-nonauthoritarian' parties able to retain control through free and fair elections. Given that any variation in the degree of political liberty might reasonably be assumed to prompt changes in both electoral and elite behaviour and that Namibia has consistently attracted praise for its commitment to

pluralism, I will control for the effects of political freedom by restricting case selection to countries with a high standard of multi-party democracy.

To summarise, therefore: my research project represents a hypothesis-building case study of the type described in Lijphart's (1971: 692) work. This approach has been chosen for its capacity to investigate qualitative dependent variables (such as party motivation), contextualise events, identify hitherto undetected causal relationships and, consequently, make a significant contribution to the scholarly literature on electoral behaviour, political parties and party systems in Africa. Given that any case study is vulnerable to the charge of 'indeterminacy' outlined by Bennett and George (2004: 32), my project will conclude with a comparative analysis in which additional countries are investigated for the purpose of hypothesis-testing. By assessing all forty-eight countries in Sub-Saharan Africa against Sartori's three-term test for single-party dominance and against Freedom House (2011) data on civil and political liberty, in chapter six I select South Africa and Botswana as the most appropriate cases for comparison.

Sources

Given my emphasis upon qualitative analysis of original data, field research was undertaken in Namibia during the periods May-July and October-December 2009. These visits involved a four-month stay in the national capital, Windhoek; short visits to the provincial towns of Walvis Bay, Swakopmund, Katima Mulilo and Rundu; attendance at several party rallies; and unpaid work as an election observer affiliated to the Institute for Public Policy Research. Three data types were identified, collected and catalogued.

First, but most important, interview testimony was gathered from government ministers, deputy ministers, backbench members of parliament, senior party officials, regional and branch organisers, academics, journalists, civil society activists and other members of Namibia's political

elite. Newspaper reports, party documents and Hopwood's (2008: 107-285) 'A to Z of Political Personalities' were used to identify most of these informants, although government ministers (whose contact details are rarely available to the public) and junior officials from all parties tended to prefer personal recommendation. Fortunately, owing to the geographic concentration of Namibia's elite, I was able to conduct eighty-one interviews with seventy-eight informants, including two Cabinet ministers, eighteen parliamentarians and the leaders of nine political parties. Each session opened with an outline of the research topic, a warning that interview material might be published and an offer of anonymity; if the latter were declined, my informant was asked whether our interview might be recorded. Fifty-four respondents agreed to this request, with twenty-four interviews conducted anonymously. Several informants concluded the session by handing over documentation, including party constitutions, election manifestos and private correspondence.

Semi-structured interviewing offers a number of significant advantages over other methods of data collection, such as survey administration, commonly used in the social sciences. By verifying comprehension and providing additional information, for example, an interviewer can ensure so far as possible that communication problems are minimised and that ethical concerns around informed consent have been satisfied. An informant's body language, expressions and demeanour are rarely recorded in opinion surveys or statistical databases, but can be readily detected by an alert interviewer and often represent a valuable source of information.² Perhaps most importantly, however, semi-structured interviewing offers an unrivalled opportunity to gather detailed information from powerful and influential figures, to probe weaknesses and to follow up claims or counter-claims made in the course of a discussion. Survey work, by contrast, tends to involve a formulaic style of questioning and is, therefore, much more limited in its capacity to test arguments or to pursue unanticipated opinion.

² SWAPO vice-president Hage Geingob (int., Windhoek, 16 July 2009), for example, became visibly animated when I asked a veiled question about his party's commitment to democracy.

Nevertheless, semi-structured interviewing also presents two significant challenges. First, when controversial developments and conflicting opinions are evaluated, the researcher must seek to avoid 'selection bias' by including the full range of ideological, partisan and other viewpoints within his sample. Second, interview testimony is not necessarily accurate; informants often forget important details, lack contextual understanding, misrepresent motivating factors, demonstrate partisan bias or choose to 'tow the party line', thus constructing a distorted account of the events under discussion. Politicians and other decision-makers often provide an extremely vivid account of party congress, central committee and politburo deliberations, but their interpretation of grassroots opinion and of voter motivation is not necessarily based upon accurate information. I have tried to tackle these problems by seeking to establish personal rapport with each informant, by prefacing sensitive questions with an additional offer of anonymity and, perhaps most importantly, by employing an evaluative technique ('triangulation') in which each assertion is regarded as unsubstantiated unless confirmed by at least three sources. Journalists, academics, civil society informants and other independent observers of Namibian politics, as well as Afrobarometer (2010) survey data, have proven particularly useful in analysing the various versions of truth offered by certain political actors.

An additional source of primary evidence employed in this thesis is newspaper material, most of which I collected either at the National Library of Namibia or from the internet. Despite its small population and modest degree of urbanisation, Namibia has a relatively large and diverse print media, boasting more than half a dozen titles published daily, weekly or monthly in English, Afrikaans, Oshiwambo and German. Most frequently cited in this research project is *The Namibian*, a privately-owned, English-language daily newspaper founded by the courageous South African-born journalist, Gwen Lister, in 1985. Its coverage tends to be descriptive or polemic rather than analytical in style, but still represents an invaluable source of material on parliamentary debates, ministerial speeches, party rallies and congress, election campaigns and

litigation, not least because—unusually—the newspaper employs several resident reporters outside Windhoek and maintains a searchable online archive. Also quoted at length in various sections of this thesis are *New Era*, a state-owned English-language daily with, despite its pedigree, a relatively independent editorial line; the *Windhoek Observer*, a privately-owned English-language weekly newspaper and occasional source of information on ruling party politics; and *Informanté*, an English-language free newspaper primarily concerned with exposing cases of government corruption, showbusiness gossip and other stories not covered widely in the print media. Given that newspaper reports cannot necessarily be considered accurate, these sources are cross-checked wherever possible, not only against each other, but also against interview and other primary material gathered in the field.

Finally, notwithstanding its focus upon the post-colonial era, my research project does employ some archive material for the purpose of exploring historical processes, explaining modern attitudes and triangulating information obtained from informants. Most of these written sources are held by the National Archives of Namibia (NAN), a state institution located in central Windhoek where reader access is easily arranged, documents are well-preserved and the number of trained advisers is relatively large. Despite these favourable conditions, however, archive research in Namibia posed two challenges. On the one hand, given my basic understanding of Afrikaans and lack of proficiency in German, I have been obliged to focus upon English-language sources and thus to neglect other sources of information. On the other hand, it has to be acknowledged that government papers, academic studies and private journals are often inaccurate, biased or selected for preservation on the basis of modern political considerations, such as the need to construct a post-colonial national identity. These problems are addressed by triangulation of sources and by giving careful consideration to the purposes for which documents were written or preserved.

My research project, therefore, draws upon three main sources of primary information: interview testimony, together with written documentation provided by informants; newspaper coverage, especially that provided by *The Namibian*, *New Era*, the *Windhoek Observer* and *Informanté*; and archive material, consisting mostly of government papers, academic studies and in-house publications. To avoid the pitfalls associated with misrepresentation, misinterpretation, invention and obfuscation, an evaluative tactic is employed whereby any assertion is regarded as unsubstantiated unless confirmed by three sources, all of which should ideally exhibit at least some independence from each other. For this reason, each substantive argument in chapters two to five inclusive is illustrated, where possible, by three sources.

Contribution to the Literature

Despite their emergence as a critical player in many highly significant and comprehensively analysed political processes, such as democratic consolidation, Africa's political parties have attracted relatively little analysis over the past two decades. This apparent lack of interest may stem from a tendency to focus upon 'big men' or from pessimism relating to the quality of African democracy, but its effect has been to foster a rather limited understanding of political competition, decision-making and conflict. The small number of studies written on modern party politics can be divided into two categories: political parties and party systems.

Political Parties

Even when compared with its party systems, Africa's political parties³ have to date attracted so little investigative work that our understanding of their internal dynamics is best characterised as embryonic, preoccupied with basic questions, reliant upon generalisation and lacking in conceptual focus or direction. Thus, Salih (2005) presents an eclectic but conceptually incoherent range of country case studies in his edited volume, *African Parliaments*; Basedau, Erdmann and Mehler (2007) offer contributions on neo-patrimonialism, representation, violence and European 'bias' in African party research; Elischer (2010) attaches typological labels to political parties in accordance with a universal scheme proposed by Gunther and Diamond (2003); and Randall and Svåsand (2002) investigate the causal relationship between political party characteristics and democratic consolidation. Few of these authors seek to engage with one another, to challenge arguments or to map out the terms of debate, perhaps because the number of unanswered questions is huge and the research field is relatively open. This thesis will address two issues associated with the internal workings of African political parties: cohesion and motivation.

Party Cohesion

Factionalism is perhaps one of the most widely recognised, but least adequately defined, phenomena in electoral politics. Laswell (1931, cited in Köllner and Basedau, 2005: 8), for example, argues that a faction is “any constituent group of a larger unit which works for the advancement of particular persons or policies”, even though such a classificatory system would exclude almost no sub-unit types, whilst Key (1949, cited in Köllner and Basedau, 2005: 8) offers the excessively restrictive view that ‘a faction denote[s] a group of people, both voters and politicians, which forms at a certain point of time in support of a given representative running

³ Throughout this thesis, I employ an amended version of the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network (2011) definition of a political party as ‘any organised group with at least roughly similar political aims that seeks (either through election or some other means) to secure and retain public office’.

for office'. Köllner and Basedau (2005: 8-9), whose work focuses upon the African experience, suggest that a faction is defined by five characteristics: it 'exists for a certain period of time', 'possesses a minimum level of organisation', 'exhibits a common group consciousness', 'actively pursues political goals' and 'can be discerned as a bloc within the party'. Given that any phenomenon can be shown to 'exist for a certain period of time' and that neither 'political goals' nor 'minimal organisation' are defined, however, my preferred formulation is to be found in Beller and Belloni's *Factional Politics*, a ground-breaking collection of essays on Western, Latin American, Soviet and Chinese politics which appeared in 1978. According to the editors (Beller and Belloni 1978: 419), who surveyed earlier efforts before offering their own definition, a faction is 'any relatively organised group that exists within the context of some other group and which (as a political faction) competes with rivals for power advantages within the larger group of which it is part'. This description is sufficiently nuanced to acknowledge the diversity in organisation, ideological orientation and strategic approach associated with factional competition, whilst excluding types of conflict prevalent within village or traditional communities and accurately describing the underlying purpose of a political faction. Largely as a result of these important advantages, it is the formulation adopted for the purposes of this study.

Hypothetically at least, outbreaks of internecine conflict should be rare in Namibia, where the adoption of a closed party list system—in which parliamentary candidates are selected and ranked by parties rather than directly elected by the population—has tended to empower leaders at the expense of other party officials (Butler 2005: 721). Yet a cursory survey of Namibia's post-colonial history would suggest that its parties have actually differed substantially in their propensity towards fragmentation. Thus, Namibia's ruling party and official opposition—the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) and the Congress of Democrats (CoD) respectively—both suffered a significant rupture during the 2005-2010

parliamentary session, whilst its second largest opposition party—the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA)—managed to avoid any such schism. How can this variation be explained?

An extensive search of the Africanist literature has produced only one comparative study of intra-party factionalism: Mac Giollabhui's (2011) paper on dominant-party cohesion in South Africa and Namibia, which tests two hypotheses developed by analysts of parliamentary candidate selection in India. The first such argument posits that, when a successful candidacy is:

contingent on support from the membership... all candidates have an easily-understood, open and predictable route to access power within the political party. Successful candidates can rely on the legitimacy of a democratic mandate; unsuccessful candidates have a realistic prospect to return to power through mobilisation of support among the party grass-roots. Losing candidates are more likely to accept defeat if they have a stable expectation of winning office in the future (Mac Giollabhui 2011: 5-6).

Second, an “exclusive/centralized” selection system can produce a balanced party list’ and, therefore, minimise indiscipline because ‘a small cartel of leaders at the national level can behave less myopically and coordinate their activities more effectively than a larger, more dispersed group at the provincial and constituency levels’ (Mac Giollabhui 2011: 7). To fulfil this expectation, however, the small cabal of party leaders responsible for selecting candidates ‘must approximate the grand coalition (of consociational fame)... [and] behave in an inclusive manner’ (Mac Giollabhui 2011: 7). Mac Giollabhui (2011: 15-17) concludes that South Africa’s ruling Tripartite Alliance (consisting of the African National Congress (ANC), South African Communist Party (SACP) and Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)) has survived in part because its candidate selection processes facilitate leftist entryism, whilst Namibia’s governing party ruptured in 2007 because its autocratic leader, Sam Nujoma, used his influence to marginalise a Kwanyama ethnic faction intent upon capturing parliamentary office.

This path-breaking analysis represents an important first attempt at applying comparative research methodologies to the study of intra-party factionalism in Africa, but nevertheless raises a number of difficulties. First, Mac Giollabhui's argument is based upon an assumption that parliamentary candidate selection represents the principal arena of factional competition in South Africa and Namibia; consequently, alternative causes of party fragmentation—such as leadership selection—are ignored. Second, given its focus upon 'closed party list' systems, Mac Giollabhui's study cannot provide an insight into the drivers of party cohesion or fragmentation in countries that employ a majoritarian electoral system, such as Botswana, Zambia or Zimbabwe. Finally, Mac Giollabhui's concern with intra-party factionalism in Namibia and intra-*Alliance* politics in South Africa not only raises the question of whether his cases are comparable, but also causes him to overlook the ANC's historic rupture in 2008, which arose as a result of conflict within the ruling party. Indeed, Mac Giollabhui might be justified in portraying South Africa's Tripartite Alliance as relatively durable and even in attributing this longevity to parliamentary candidate selection, but the ANC itself has been no more united than SWAPO over the past decade.

In Namibia, as demonstrated in chapter three, SWAPO and CoD fragmentation is likely to have been caused by intra-party leadership contestation rather than parliamentary candidate selection, whilst paradoxically the DTA's succession battle of 2005 left the party entirely unscathed. How is this puzzle to be resolved? To date, only two comparative studies of succession politics in Africa have been published. The first such analysis was conducted by Govea and Holm (1998), who identified:

a distinction between what we call a "regulated" succession and a completely unregulated succession. For example, in a monarchy there is... a well understood method of transferring power from one person to another. In other cases, the transition does not conform to a set of established rules, but is still the result of a political process... In contrast, some successions are the result of a conspiracy, and are completely self-justificatory. The legitimacy of the new administration rests only on the tactical military superiority of the new government against its

opponents. Opponents do not ratify the new arrangements; at best they acquiesce to them (Govea and Holm 1998: 134).

This hypothesis is tested by means of a statistical analysis, which incorporates 102 successions over the period 1963-1988 and concludes that ‘political crises are more directly linked to unregulated successions than economic or social crises’ (Govea and Holm 1998, 147). Whilst surprising and illuminating, however, such findings have only limited relevance for my study because violence, rather than party cohesion, is the principal dependent variable; consequently, all regime types—personal, single-party, multi-party and military—are included within the data set, alongside both constitutional and unconstitutional transfers of power. Thus, Govea and Holm’s work confirms the extent to which succession crises shape political behaviour in Africa, but does not address the question posed in this thesis.

A paper with greater direct relevance to my research, however, is Cheeseman’s (2010) study of electoral turnover in Africa, which suggests that ruling parties are less likely to retain power if an incumbent president chooses neither to seek re-election nor to promote a chosen heir. This pattern is explained in part by the tendency for mismanaged succession battles to solidify intra-party cleavages, intensify internecine conflict and trigger splinter group formation, ‘all of which makes it harder to put together a coherent and united election campaign’ (Cheeseman 2010: 143). Thus Solomon Berewa’s selection as leader of the Sierra Leone People’s Party (SLPP) caused rival candidate Charles Margai to form the breakaway People’s Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC), which split the ruling party’s vote and thereby facilitated a change of government in 2007, whilst in Ghana President John Kufuor’s unsuccessful but divisive campaign to prevent Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo from attaining the National Patriotic Party (NPP) leadership contributed to the electoral turnover of 2008 (Cheeseman 2010: 143-144). These and other examples cited by the author undoubtedly provide clear evidence of a causal relationship between succession politics, party fragmentation and electoral defeat,

although Cheeseman's focus upon electoral turnover rather than party cohesion militates against a detailed examination of the forces underpinning splinter group formation.

My contribution to the literature on party cohesion is, therefore, fourfold. First, I demonstrate that, in Namibia, leadership selection represents the principal arena of factional competition and must, therefore, constitute the focus of any research into party cohesion. Second, I seek to explain why succession battles caused SWAPO and the CoD to rupture in 2007 and 2008 respectively, whilst leaving the DTA unscathed in 2005. This analysis not only represents the first comparative, field-work based study to be undertaken on these three leadership contests, but also offers a significant methodological innovation by virtue of its concentration on a single country and resulting control for the effects of electoral system design. Third, I suggest that parties are most likely to rupture when leadership candidates mobilise support around a socially divisive issue (such as ethnicity) or when defeated contenders are coerced into submission. Finally, by applying these insights to dominant-party factionalism in South Africa and Botswana, I demonstrate not only that Namibia's ruling party is far from alone in failing to contain the destructive forces unleashed by leadership selection contests, but also that a higher standard of internal party democracy might discourage incumbent presidents from coercing defeated candidates and thereby diminish the potential for schism.

Party Motivation: Drivers, Goals and Electoral Strategy

According to the theoretical literature on advanced Western democracies, there are three drivers of party behaviour. First, a 'policy-making party', as identified by de Swaan (1973: 88), wishes to exert the maximum possible influence upon government policy. Second, a 'vote-seeking party' is principally interested in capturing 'more votes than any other' and formulates policy, not in pursuit of ideological goals, but to maximise its prospects of winning an election (Downs 1957:

28-31). Third, an 'office-seeking party' tries to maximise its 'control over political office benefits, that is, private goods bestowed on recipients of... governmental or subgovernmental appointments' by constructing a minimum electoral coalition (Strøm and Müller 1999: 5). Strøm and Müller (1999: 12), in their landmark collection on party behaviour in Western Europe, argue that all political parties represent an equilibrium of these three variables.

To what extent can these models be applied to Africa? Perhaps surprisingly, given widespread concern over the anti-democratic and semi-loyal behaviour of Africa's elites, few authors have attempted to identify the strategic goals driving its political parties, to understand the calculations underpinning these choices or to examine their role in structuring political contestation. Where these issues have been explored in depth, two areas of consensus can be identified. First, several scholars have argued that African parties are mere 'vehicles for ambitious politicians' (Randall and Svåsand 2002: 42) seeking to secure the status, wealth, employment opportunities and business contracts associated with public office. Thus, ruling elites suppress dissent and loot state coffers, diverting public wealth to personal bank accounts or to their clients, whilst opposition 'politicians create parties to compete in a single election and leverage resources from the party in power, only to evaporate once the deal is struck' (van de Walle 2003: 314). Such parties represent little more than personalised networks, held together by patronage and ethnic loyalties, which tend to wither once the leaders have succeeded in acquiring state resources.

A second area of consensus is that, given this interest in acquiring and abusing state resources, African parties tend to regard presidential elections as the principal arena of political contestation. As van de Walle (2003: 315) has argued,

The view of the state as the ultimate prize puts an enormous premium on competition for the presidency, control of which is most important for patronage and rent seeking. *Relative to the executive branch, party competition in the legislative branch is a sideshow.* The main ambition of parties is either to gain control of the state or

to gain leverage over those who have it. The struggle for legislative seats is of course a struggle for majority status, but it is also a struggle for the attention of the executive. This is particularly true for small parties, often of ethnic minorities, which know that they cannot aspire to majority status. For them, legislative elections are a way to be identified as a distinct community that needs to be accommodated [emphasis added].

This argument is supported by Mozaffar and Scarritt (2005: 415-416), who contend that:

an important strategic reason for the entry of large numbers of contenders in presidential elections is that African presidents possess substantial resources for patronage. Presidential contenders with weak winning potential often expect to demonstrate sufficient electoral support to bargain entry into post-election coalitions and secure state resources for their constituencies in return for supporting the winners.

Given these arguments, my contribution to the study of party motivation is fivefold. First, I argue that SWAPO's principal goal is to foster and protect a 'state bourgeoisie'—comprising senior politicians, bureaucrats, security chiefs, parastatal directors and black empowerment entrepreneurs—to which most of its senior members belong. Second, I suggest that SWAPO's electoral strategy involves creating, not a 'minimum winning coalition' of the type described in Riker's (1962) classic work, but a *de facto* one-party state in which opposition parties are formally tolerated but unable to secure the votes necessary for elected office to be attained. Third, I argue that existing analyses of party motivation have limited utility in Namibia, where no opposition party has any prospect of securing executive office through either election or co-optation. Fourth, I suggest that electoral system design, public sector remuneration, party funding imperatives and media practices tend to encourage party competition at the parliamentary level and that, consequently, both presidential and sub-national elections are regarded as, at best, a distraction. Finally, I demonstrate through comparative analysis that, for opposition parties, sub-national office is likely to represent a more attractive prize in South Africa than in either Namibia or Botswana and attribute this variation to differences in the configuration of state power; federalism and quasi-federalism, I argue, create an incentive to contest elections at the sub-

national level, whilst unitary systems are characterised by heightened party competition at the centre.

Party Systems

A party system, according to Basedau (2007: 108), is ‘more than just the sum of political parties in a given country. A system is about the relative size of and relations between its elements. What makes several parties work as a system are [sic] the nature of the relations between the parties and the stability of interaction between them’. Africa’s party systems have attracted a significant volume of conceptual analysis over the past decade, especially when compared with its political parties, although most of these studies appear to be focused upon just two issues: defining a ‘typical’ party system and identifying the factors responsible for producing this configuration.

Dominant-Parties and Party Systems

Early attempts to define a ‘typical’ African party system focused upon the continent’s notoriously high level of ethnic fractionalisation which tends, Widner (1992, cited in Erdmann, Basedau and Mehler, 2007: 11) argues, to encourage a proliferation of political parties and thus to promote ‘extreme’ party system fragmentation. Most recent studies have tended, by contrast, to suggest that Africa’s ‘modal party system... [comprises] a large dominant party surrounded by a bevy of small, highly volatile parties’ (van de Walle 2003: 302-303; see also Manning 2005: 716; Randall and Svåsand 2002: 35), although no consensus has yet been reached on how precisely dominance might be diagnosed. Friedman (2011), for example, proposes a qualitative definition akin to Duverger’s famous description of single-party dominance, which states that:

A party is dominant when it is identified with an epoch; when its doctrines, ideas, methods, its style, so to speak, coincide with those of the epoch.... Domination is a question of influence rather than of strength: it is also linked with belief. A dominant party is that which public opinion believes to be dominant... Even the enemies of the dominant party, even citizens who refuse to give it their vote, acknowledge its superior status and its influence; they deplore it but admit it (Duverger 1954, cited in Arian and Barnes, 1974: 594).

This description of political supremacy and opposition defeatism would probably resonate with any scholar undertaking field research in a dominant-party system, including in Namibia, but its imprecision means that operationalisation could only be achieved by collecting survey data from a random sample of politicians, bureaucrats, civil society activists and other actors engaged in political activity. Given that such an approach would be costly, time-consuming and hugely complicated if applied to cross-national analysis, most scholars have tended to employ a quantitative definition in which any party securing a certain proportion of legislative representation or a minimum number of consecutive parliamentary majorities is considered to have attained dominance. Van de Walle and Butler (1999: 28), for example, suggest that any party with sixty per cent of legislative representation should be regarded as dominant, whilst Doorenspleet (2003: 176) argues that two consecutive legislative majorities are required for this status to have been achieved. Cranenburgh (2003: 201), Bogaards (2004: 174) and Svåsand (2011) all advocate Sartori's (2005: 173-176) party system typology, which diagnoses single-party dominance after a third successive legislative majority 'provided that the electorate appears stabilized, that the absolute majority threshold is clearly surpassed, and/or that the interval is wide'. Basedau (2007: 117; Erdmann and Basedau 2007: 8) actually endorses two definitions, having advocated Doorenspleet's two-term approach in his study of electoral democracy (albeit with the proviso that a dominant-party must also control the state presidency) and Sartori's three-term approach in his co-written paper on party system classification. My own research project has been constructed around Sartori's typology, which recognises that dominance is achieved over an extended period of time and that comparativist scholars require a measurable

indicator suitable for deployment across multiple cases, although it might also be noted that SWAPO of Namibia has held more than sixty per cent of legislative representation over the past four electoral cycles and would, therefore, be regarded as dominant under any of the classificatory systems outlined here.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given this preponderance of numerical definition, scholarly attempts to identify and count Africa's dominant-parties have so far relied heavily upon statistical methods of enquiry. Bogaards (2004: 182), for example, examines fifty-nine legislative polls conducted in all eighteen countries to have held three consecutive multi-party elections before the end of 2002 and concludes that eight systems (Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Gabon, Lesotho, Mauritania, Namibia and Zimbabwe) exhibited single-party dominance. Erdmann and Basedau (2007: 8-11) assess all 139 legislative elections to have been held in Africa since 1989 and demonstrate that five of the continent's nine 'institutionalised' party systems (defined as any system in which three successive multi-party elections have been held, authoritarian and/or civil conflict has been avoided, the Pedersen index of volatility is less than forty and political parties are, on average, at least fifteen years old) are characterised by single-party dominance. Kuenzi and Lambright (2005: 430-431), though primarily concerned with exploring a hypothesised relationship between party system type and political freedom, note that fourteen of the thirty-three countries included in their sample boasted relatively few 'effective parties' and therefore exhibited party system concentration. Van de Walle (2003: 302) computes that, on average, the largest party to emerge from each of Africa's forty-one founding elections secured 63.1 per cent of legislative representation, with second and third elections producing a mean parliamentary majority of 69.6 per cent and 64.3 per cent respectively. Opposition fragmentation has, not unreasonably, attracted much less scholarly attention than single-party dominance, although van de Walle (2003: 302) does calculate that, of the eighty-seven legislatures for which data were then available, almost one-fifth (19.5 per cent) boasted ten or more parties and a further one-eighth

(16.1 per cent) featured between seven and nine parties, whilst the average number of parliamentary parties increased from 6.3 at the founding election to 6.5 at the following contest. Statistical analysis has served, therefore, to reinforce a widespread perception that dominant-partyism and opposition fragmentation represent the most significant features of electoral politics in contemporary Africa.

Scholarly attempts to explain this particular configuration have so far been conducted, as Mac Giollabhuí and Wall (2007) note, ‘within the confines of two (more or less) discrete camps’. On the one hand, structuralist perspectives tend to emphasise the importance of social cleavages and, thus, to downplay the role of institutions in shaping political competition. Erdmann and Basedau (2007: 18), for example, argue that Africa’s unusually large number of dominant parties can be traced to high levels of ethnic fragmentation, which oblige any political operator seeking executive power to construct a ‘maximum winning coalition’ capable of uniting multiple ethnic communities around a single leader. Doorenspleet (2003: 181) suggests that, in southern Africa, ‘ruling parties still profit from their role during the fight for independence. This political goodwill earned in the popular mobilisations for independence or liberation can provide a basis for the development of a dominant one-party system’. Van de Walle and Butler (1999: 23) hypothesise that opposition volatility is associated with neopatrimonialism, which ‘creates disincentives for party consolidation and incentives for individual “big men” to maintain highly personalized parties. In effect, having one’s own party provides additional leverage to access state resources in negotiations with the party in power’. To understand party system formation and reproduction in Africa, in other words, it is necessary to explore the deep-seated societal mores and processes which inform political behaviour.

Institutionalist perspectives, on the other hand, tend to regard dominant-partyism and/or opposition fragmentation as derived from legal, regulatory or political frameworks rather than from social phenomena. Randall and Svåsand (2002: 36), for example, note that incumbent

advantage can often be employed for the purpose of achieving dominance, since ruling parties typically exploit state resources ‘to the full. This enables them to outcompete newer parties that lack a national organisational network, have limited access to newspaper and other media resources, and inadequate party finance’. Reynolds (1999b: 223) suggests that party system type is correlated with electoral system design, since ‘the evidence from southern Africa clearly shows that if there is any hope for some degree of opposition to one-party hegemony it comes from inclusive power-sharing arrangements and not exclusionary first-past-the-post systems. Empirically, plurality elections... give rise to the classic elements of a *de facto* one-party state’. Van de Walle (2003: 303) counters this argument with a finding that, on average, the largest party to emerge under systems of proportional representation actually secured some 60.2 per cent of legislative representation, although his analysis does also show that Westminster-style, plurality systems correlate with low levels of opposition fragmentation. Institutionalists, in other words, tend to regard political incentives as a function of legal and bureaucratic rather than social structures.

An alternative to these dominant paradigms is offered by Mozaffar, Scarritt and Galaich (2003), who argue that structural and institutional variables *interact* to determine party system type and that statistical analysis, employing the results of sixty-two elections held in thirty-four African countries between 1980 and 2000, validates this hypothesis. Four arguments are outlined in their study. First, it is assumed that—since ‘electoral institutions are new and their incentives and outcomes not well known or understood by political actors’ (Mozaffar *et al.* 2003: 380)—ethnic identity represents the most important organising cleavage in Africa, regardless of differences in colonial heritage, economic structure or regime type. Second, party system concentration is considered to be correlated with high levels of ethnic fragmentation, which allegedly cause electoral support either to disperse across a large number of very small, politically insignificant parties or to cluster around a few ‘ethnic congress’ parties of the type described by Gunther and Diamond (2003); both scenarios, the authors argue, tend to produce a small

number of *effective* parties and, thus, to promote dominant-partyism. Third, it is argued that, when ethnic communities exhibit a high level of spatial concentration, the ‘transaction costs’ involved in ‘forging and sustaining group identity’ (Mozaffar *et al.* 2003: 385) are diminished, political mobilisation is eased and party system fragmentation can be expected. Finally, the authors suggest that ethnic configuration and population distribution interact with district magnitude (defined as the number of elected seats in each voting district) to determine party system type (Mozaffar *et al.* 2003: 381-387). This complex interaction model can be summarised as follows: (a) large district magnitudes reinforce the tendency for ethnic fragmentation and spatial dispersion to produce party system concentration; (b) large district magnitudes also reinforce the tendency for ethnic fragmentation and spatial concentration to produce party system fragmentation; (c) small district magnitudes reinforce the tendency for ethnic fragmentation and spatial dispersion to produce party system concentration; and (d) small district magnitudes also reinforce the tendency for ethnic fragmentation and spatial concentration to produce party system fragmentation. South Africa and Benin, the authors argue, exhibit a similarly high level of social fragmentation, but the former country has a much more concentrated party system because its racial communities are spatially dispersed and its electoral system is highly permissive (Mozaffar *et al.* 2003: 387).

These arguments were to be developed by Mozaffar and Scarritt (2005) in a further statistical enquiry, published two years later, which compared ninety-one elections across twenty-eight countries and purported to show that single-party dominance, low levels of electoral competition and acute electoral volatility constitute key features of a ‘typical’ African polity. Given that party system concentration might reasonably be expected to coincide with low levels of electoral volatility, this reported outcome was deemed to represent an ‘African puzzle’ and explained as follows:

Political restrictions under authoritarian regimes produced severe information deficit concerning electoral mobilization, strategic coordination and the collective action problems that typically attend party formation and coalition-building. Under these constraints, political actors in Africa's emerging democracies established political parties to preserve their fragmented power bases and relied on presidential elections and ethno-political cleavages as alternative sources of strategic coordination over votes and seats and electoral coalition-building. The result is the entry of large numbers of short-lived political parties, producing high volatility, and the electoral and legislative dominance of a small number of large parties producing low party system fragmentation (Mozaffar and Scarritt 2005: 399).

Criticism of these attempts to integrate structuralist and institutionalist perspectives has, however, been withering. Brambor, Clark and Golder (2007), for example, identify errors in the data set, attack the research design, highlight misinterpreted results and conclude, after undertaking their own statistical analysis, that African party systems 'do not seem to be particularly distinctive at all' (Brambor *et al* 2007: 316). For Bogaards (2008: 113-123), Mozaffar and Scarritt's work exhibits three additional shortcomings. First, its 'analysis is based on a database of electoral system features and election results that is only summarily described, but appears to include almost all Sub-Saharan African countries with multiparty elections, irrespective of the nature of the regime, the quality of the elections and the number of consecutive elections'. Second, Mozaffar *et al.* fail to offer a definition of single-party dominance and utilise a measure of party system concentration, the Laakso-Taagepera index,⁴ which many scholars consider to be problematic. Third, it is noted that,

To describe "party system structure" in Africa, Mozaffar and Scarritt provide continent-wide averages of the mean, median and standard deviation of vote-share and seat-share of the largest party as well as the effective number of electoral and parliamentary parties. For electoral and legislative volatility too, only Africa-wide averages are given. By consequence, it is very difficult if not impossible to make statements about *national* party systems. There is the risk of an ecological fallacy in concluding from Africa-wide averages of party system concentration and volatility that the same relationship exists at the national level.

⁴ The Laakso-Taagepera index for effective number of legislative parties is calculated by dividing one by the sum of the squares of each party's share of parliamentary representation.

On the contrary, it is likely that important differences exist among African countries and that the continent displays a diversity of constellations [original emphasis] (Bogaards 2008: 114).

This objection is shared by Erdmann, Basedau and Mehler (2007: 238), who complain that '[i]t is hardly sufficient to identify a kind of "average" political party system for more than forty different party systems in Africa. What is the meaning of such an average system for all these countries? Nobody would try to apply this kind of approach to party systems in Europe'. Such remarks capture a suspicion that double standards are applied to African party system research and yet, in devising alternative methods of enquiry, authors have tended to emulate Mozaffar and Scarritt in eschewing qualitative evidence. Indeed, not one of these critics has chosen to highlight the remarkable and entirely unsubstantiated assertion—made in both Mozaffar *et al.* (2003: 380) and Mozaffar and Scarritt (2005: 409)—that African party leaders are driven to ethnic mobilisation by their poor understanding of the opportunities, incentives and hazards associated with electoral institutions. To understand why ethnicity is exploited, dominance is achieved or opposition support is fragmented, qualitative research—involving interviews, observation and archive work—must be undertaken.

My contribution to the party system literature is, therefore, twofold. First, I employ basic statistical analysis to estimate the degree of electoral volatility in Namibia and, upon discovering that an extremely high proportion of opposition voters can be expected to shift allegiance at any given election, use interview and newspaper material to investigate this phenomenon. Three causal factors are identified and elucidated: the politicisation of ethno-racial identities, adoption of proportional representation and weakness of established parties, all of which serve to encourage splinter group formation and, thus, to precipitate shifts in political allegiance. Second, I demonstrate that Botswana exhibits a much lower level of opposition volatility than either Namibia or South Africa and argue, using electoral statistics and secondary literature, that its

exceptionalism is explained partly by differences in electoral system design and partly by the comparative absence of ethnic particularism.

Namibia's Party System

Given its complex history of white settlement, apartheid and black nationalist struggle, as well as its sizeable academic community, Namibia has attracted a considerable volume of analysis during the two decades since decolonisation. Most of these studies rightly echo Keulder's (2002: 5) assertion that 'the Namibian party system... is characterised by a single-dominant party, and a number of very small parties', although discussion has emerged over three questions arising from this diagnosis.

First, what are the causes of single-party dominance? For Du Pisani and Lindeke (2009: 11-15), SWAPO's electoral strength is a function of five phenomena: the 'independence honeymoon' associated with its position as Namibia's former liberation movement; the adoption of a distinct electoral system at each tier of government, which undermines 'opposition effectiveness' by failing to provide a uniform incentive structure; the government's strong macro-economic record; a political culture that 'discourages party volatility' and scarcely recognises the notion of loyal opposition; and the benefits of incumbency, which include access to public funds and 'a very effective spoils system of employment opportunities'. This list of explanatory factors is augmented by Bauer (1999: 440), Hopwood (2005: 132), Melber (2007: 70), Soiri (2002: 139), Voizey (1994: 184) and Weiland (1996: 190), who variously argue that opposition parties' pragmatism, poor leadership, historical baggage and ethnic particularism have contributed to their own delegitimation and thus to the consolidation of single-party dominance.

A second area of scholarly debate concerns the impact of party system type: does single-party dominance enhance or diminish the prospects of democratic consolidation in Namibia?

According to du Toit (1999: 214-216), dominant parties serve as ‘bridge-builders to a system of multi-party politics or as bridgeheads to single-party hegemony’, depending upon their capacity to manage succession issues, promote constitutionalism, advance ‘compelling’ ideological programmes and foster political tolerance. Unfortunately, many analysts have identified several factors militating against SWAPO’s assumption of a ‘bridge-building’ role. First, given parliament’s small size, ‘Ministers or Deputy Ministers make up about forty-four per cent of the seventy-eight members[,] leaving just seventeen members on the SWAPO backbenches and seventeen on the opposition benches’ (Tjirera and Hopwood 2009: 8); thus, “‘as far as the ruling party is concerned, the National Assembly is little more than the executive in disguise’” (Keulder, 2000 cited in Bauer, 2001: 38). Second, parliament’s failure to exercise its oversight function has facilitated a concentration of presidential power, such that policy decisions are taken without consultation or debate (Good 1997: 562-563). Third, dominant-party rule has produced an erosion of the distinction between state, government and party which ‘encourages the misperception that the government is supposed to serve the party and that the state is the property of the government’ (Melber 2003: 18). Finally, given that critics of the ruling party are routinely accused of treachery or portrayed as ‘stooges’ of Western imperialism, SWAPO has largely failed to nurture a political culture in which dissent is viewed as a critical mode of accountability rather than a form of subversion. Namibia, it would seem, represents a case of democratic survival rather than democratic consolidation.

A final area of debate relates to the causes of opposition fragmentation, a relatively recent phenomenon in which the number of legislative parties (excluding SWAPO) has increased from four in 1999 to six in 2004 and eight in 2009. According to Hopwood (2008: 33), whose *Guide to Namibian Politics* represents an outstanding source of election statistics, background information and biographical detail:

Namibia's [proportional representation] system deliberately benefits the smaller parties... Some countries have a threshold system whereby parties must gain a minimum level of support... to be given representation in parliament. Namibia does not have a legal threshold and... [t]he effective threshold for one seat in the [National Assembly] is 1.39 percent of the vote... This has encouraged more small parties with ethnic support bases to partake in National Assembly elections.

Given that Namibia operates a distinct electoral system at each tier of government, with majoritarianism at the presidential level, a single-constituency closed party list system at the National Assembly level, a plurality system at the regional authority level and a multi-constituency closed party list system at the local authority level, Keulder (2002: 5) tests this argument by comparing the degree of party competition and party system concentration across, on the one hand, two elections held at the parliamentary level and, on the other hand, two elections held at the regional level. He concludes (Keulder, 2002: 5) that National Assembly contests involve 'almost twice as many competing parties' as and produce 'slightly more' party system fragmentation than regional authority elections because, in Keulder's judgement, opposition parties 'have a better chance of winning seats under proportional representation' than under a plurality system. This disparity is in turn explained by two unique features of Namibia's single-constituency closed party list system: its high district magnitude (i.e., the large number of representatives elected in each constituency), which tends to diminish the vote share needed to win a single seat; and its largest remainder system, which guarantees representation for the largest party failing to qualify automatically for legislative office (Keulder 2002: 7). For Keulder, as for Hopwood, therefore, opposition fragmentation can be attributed primarily to the mechanical effects of electoral system design.

Neither of these authors, however, address the question of timing: why did minority parties proliferate during the second decade of independence rather than at an earlier stage in Namibia's political development? Du Pisani and Lindeke (2009: 18) suggest that:

First, Namibia's political elites have a long history of relocating to new parties... A second reason has to do with the re-emergence of ethnic identities after a long period of colonial destruction (including genocide and cultural obliteration)... Perhaps most important of all is the perceived need for elites, ethnic groups, and political parties to negotiate a new relationship with SWAPO and the government due to the perceived, continuing overwhelming dominance of SWAPO. After years of SWAPO domination of politics and government many groups and leaders seem to be seeking a new relationship with the centres of power for recognition as well as development. Political parties constitute one path for such a renegotiation.

Despite its commendable emphasis upon explaining change over time, however, this analysis raises a number of questions. First, *why* do Namibia's political elites have a 'long history of relocating to new parties'? If elite behaviour of the past is used to explain elite behaviour in the present, a circular argument would appear to have been made. Second, notwithstanding the notorious Herero/Nama genocide of 1904/07, it is by no means clear that German or South African colonialism involved a sustained attempt to 'obliterate' or 'destroy' ethnic identity; indeed, the apartheid regime's bantustan project had precisely the opposite object. Finally, as demonstrated in chapter five, most opposition parties are driven, not by any desire to represent ethnic grievances, secure recognition or tackle underdevelopment, as du Pisani and Lindeke imply, but by a determination to appropriate the salaries, pensions and other perks associated with parliamentary representation. Opposition fragmentation probably cannot, therefore, be attributed primarily to past practices, resurgent ethnic identities or elite renegotiation.

My contribution to the literature on Namibia's party system is twofold. On the one hand, I suggest that opposition parties have proliferated because, in 2004, two DTA splinter groups secured legislative representation with less than five per cent of the vote; this achievement demonstrated conclusively that, given Namibia's highly permissive electoral system, ethnic particularism and poorly-institutionalised opposition parties, any political actor with even a modicum of popular support can reasonably hope to capture a seat in parliament. Perhaps unsurprisingly, many defeated party leadership candidates and other disgruntled politicians, as

well as some ‘outsiders’ with no previous experience of parliamentary life, have since 2004 shown an increased willingness to take the social, political and financial risks involved in establishing a new party. On the other hand, I argue that electoral volatility can be traced to high rates of *splinter party* formation, since any organisation formed within the established political class has at least some prospect of attracting prominent personalities, raising money and, therefore, mobilising enough support to reconfigure the opposition electorate. Given that a substantial proportion of opposition voters are primarily interested in supporting whichever party poses the greatest challenge to single-party dominance, as outlined in chapter two, any group with a realistic prospect of appropriating SWAPO’s winning electoral discourse—its role in liberating the country from colonialism—is likely to exert a particularly powerful effect upon opposition support. In 1999 and 2009, therefore, opposition volatility peaked because Namibia’s ruling party had recently ruptured, creating splinter groups with a strong claim to the liberation narrative.

Chapter Outline

Given its focus upon party factionalism, intra-party decision-making processes and electoral volatility in southern Africa, this thesis encompasses six substantive chapters arranged on a thematic basis.

In chapter one, I explore Namibia’s historical development from the earliest human settlement to the achievement of national liberation in 1990. My commentary describes pre-colonial patterns of migration, the imposition of colonial rule, consolidation of apartheid, emergence of black nationalism and origins of Namibia’s independence settlement, whilst exploring the importance of these events in shaping modern attitudes, electoral patterns and elite

behaviour. As such, the chapter provides essential background information and underpins the subsequent analysis of post-colonial Namibian politics.

The four chapters which follow this historical overview are primarily concerned with post-colonial Namibian politics and use original data, including interview and archive material, to evaluate established theories, to propose new causal mechanisms where appropriate and to test hypotheses against a range of political outcomes. Chapter two is focused upon Namibia's party system and demonstrates that dominance does not necessarily imply low levels of electoral volatility; SWAPO's support base might have exhibited a remarkable degree of stability since independence, but its opposition rivals appear to be in a perpetual state of flux. This volatility is attributed to two factors. On the one hand, Namibia has a high rate of party formation because its permissive electoral system, ethnic particularism and lack of party system institutionalisation tend to minimise the risks involved in launching a political party. On the other hand, a constant stream of these new parties has succeeded, for reasons fully elucidated in chapter two, in mobilising enough popular support to reconfigure opposition politics.

In chapter three, I ask the question: why did succession crises cause SWAPO and the CoD to split in 2007 and 2008 respectively, but leave the DTA unscathed in 2005? After outlining the course of events in each of these cases, I theorise that a party's capacity to manage succession battles is positively correlated with the manner in which its leadership candidates mobilise support. Thus SWAPO and the CoD ruptured largely because their succession contests were characterised by a combination of ethnic mobilisation and outright coercion, which served in each case to alienate the defeated candidate and his supporters, whilst DTA cohesion was facilitated by the activation of identities with relatively little political salience, such as age. This variation is attributed to a range of structural and institutional factors, including the processes by which candidates are selected, the temporary separation of party and state leadership produced

by SWAPO's 'two-stage' leadership contest and the pernicious legacies of liberation-era intolerance, authoritarianism and repression.

In chapter four, I pose the question: what does Namibia's dominant party, SWAPO, wish to achieve? My analysis begins with an assertion, supported by empirical data, that its interests, priorities and policies are principally determined by a small elite clustered around party president Hifikepunye Pohamba. I argue that its distribution of public resources on the basis of partisan affiliation and personal association, rather than professional merit, has contributed to a process of class formation in which accumulation and proximity to power are indelibly linked. The party's secondary objective, as demonstrated by its undeniably impressive record on service delivery and investment, is to pursue a policy of 'empowerment through development' on behalf of Namibia's black population.

Given that not one of Namibia's opposition politicians has since independence either won a presidential election or secured ministerial office, chapter five asks the question: what do the country's opposition parties wish to achieve? My analysis begins with an assertion that each of these organisations, with only two partial exceptions, is dominated by its leader and that professed concern for the future of Namibian democracy should be regarded as an unreliable indicator of personal motivation. It then offers a detailed examination of the incentive structure associated with each tier of government and concludes that—for reasons of publicity, party finance, electoral system design and personal gain—parliamentary office represents the principal prize in opposition politics. Indeed, my discussion indicates that Namibia's opposition leaders contest presidential elections in order, not to secure ministerial office through subsequent co-optation, but to enhance their prospects of attaining or retaining legislative representation.

In chapter six, I conclude the thesis with a comparative analysis of opposition volatility, party cohesion and party motivation in Namibia, South Africa and Botswana, using secondary sources and testimony obtained from local observers to test a range of hypotheses developed

during the preceding chapters. I begin with a discussion of the opportunities associated with studying these three cases, before proceeding to a detailed comparison of electoral behaviour. I demonstrate, first, that opposition support is characterised by much greater volatility in Namibia and South Africa than in Botswana; and second, that differences in party formation rate represent the most important source of this variation. After discussing these phenomena in some depth, I pose a second substantive question: why do leadership succession battles differ in their propensity for triggering dominant-party fragmentation? My analysis suggests that Botswana's ruling party has, until recently, been much more successful than its Namibian and South African counterparts in managing the centrifugal forces unleashed by leadership selection and that differences in mobilisational strategy, as well as in the deployment of state power, are primarily responsible for this disparity. In my third comparative study, I argue that all three dominant-parties are driven by a desire to foster and reproduce social privilege, although—given its origins within collaborationist politics—Botswana's elite has reached this destination by a distinct route. Finally, I address a puzzle relating to opposition motivation: why is sub-national office regarded as a more attractive prize in South Africa than in either Botswana or Namibia? My analysis suggests that, when power is overwhelmingly concentrated at the centre, as in Namibia and Botswana, parliamentary representation offers the best opportunities for an opposition party to raise income and to communicate with the electorate; when power is devolved to provincial or municipal governments, as in South Africa, sub-national office becomes a more attractive proposition. After presenting a detailed account of these causal mechanisms, I conclude the thesis with an overview of the contributions made by my research and with suggestions for further enquiry.

1. From Origins to Independence: A History of Namibia to 1990

When the history of a free and independent Namibia is written one day, SWAPO will go down as having stood firm where others wavered: that it sacrificed for the sacred cause of liberation where others have compromised.

SWAPO President Sam Nujoma, 1978

Reminders of past triumphs, tragedies, heroes and villains are omnipresent in Namibia. The country's parliament, for example, meets in a colonial-era building overlooked, until recently, by the *Reiterdenkmal*, a statue erected in honour of European troops responsible for massacring thousands of Otjiherero-speaking Namibians at the turn of the twentieth century. When national television broadcast a series of debates during the week preceding Namibia's 2009 Presidential and National Assembly elections, political party representatives deliberated at length upon the legacies of apartheid and nationalist struggle, racial imbalances in land distribution and a demand for German reparations in respect of the Otjiherero genocide; one member of parliament even claimed (*Talk of the Nation*, 16 November 2009) that countries with an experience of apartheid tended to enjoy a greater degree of economic development than their counterparts elsewhere in Africa.

Such phenomena illustrate the extent to which attitudes, controversies and voting behaviour continue to be influenced by divergent interpretations of Namibia's complex and divisive history. Contemporary political and socio-economic issues, such as poverty, crime and HIV/AIDS, have 'so far played a minimal role in determining the outcome of elections in Namibia... Instead, the history of the liberation struggle, personalities and tribal identity appear to be primary factors in determining the way voters cast their ballots' (Hopwood 2008: 81). Indeed, partisan loyalties can be strong, as one SWAPO official (Interview O, male, regional co-

ordinator, Windhoek, 19 November 2009) illustrated when asked about his allegiance to the ruling party: 'History is the blood of Namibian society... For those who joined SWAPO during the struggle, SWAPO is a biological thing; it is in the blood... SWAPO liberated us from the bondage of colonialism, so where [else would] we go?' Thus, to analyse electoral volatility, priority selection and factional mobilisation since independence, it is necessary to develop a comprehensive analysis of major developments during the pre-colonial and colonial periods of Namibian history.

The chapter is divided into five sections. First, I present an overview of the literature on Namibia's colonial and struggle-era history, noting that many contemporary accounts are strongly normative in tone but that several studies published since independence, such as Saul and Leys' (1995) edited collection on the liberation struggle, have tried to offer a more balanced picture of the period. In the second section, I discuss the imposition and consolidation of German colonialism (1884-1915), focusing upon the Herero/Nama genocide and its impact upon political competition in post-apartheid Namibia. Third, I outline developments during the early period of South African rule (1915-1960), recounting the German surrender to Allied forces during World War One, the League of Nations mandate granted to South Africa in 1919, the introduction of apartheid legislation after 1948 and the rise of black nationalism soon thereafter. Fourth, I analyse the middle period of South African rule (1960-1975), describing the government's imposition of a 'bantustan' or homeland system after 1964, SWAPO's emergence as the principal voice of black nationalism, its launch of an armed anti-colonial struggle and its heavy-handed response to early outbreaks of internal dissent. Finally, I explore developments during the final period of South African rule (1975-1990), including the government's attempt to impose a neo-colonial independence settlement, SWAPO's suppression of an internal revolt and its brutal persecution of suspected enemy spies, the protracted diplomatic wrangling over Namibia's future and the United Nations-supervised election that preceded majority rule.

A Note on the Literature

Despite having a small number of indigenous scholars and little influence on the world stage, Namibia has attracted a substantial body of literature relating to its pre-colonial and colonial history. This research was influenced by the attitudes, assumptions and priorities prevailing during three phases in the country's development.

The first period of writing on Namibian history is associated with a number of white explorers, administrators, missionaries and academics, whose journals and anthropological studies were sought by European audiences at the beginning of the twentieth century. Imbued with racial arrogance and replete with dismissive references to indigenous culture, these publications sought to justify white hegemony on the grounds that pre-colonial society had been repressive and wracked by armed conflict. Heinrich Vedder, for example, used data gathered from a 'small marginalised and impoverished group of people' living in the Otavi Highlands to assert that the Damara 'nation' had been enslaved by the Herero (Rohde 1993: 11). Such methods were exposed and discredited by Brigitte Lau during the 1980s and are no longer endorsed by students of Namibian history.

A second tranche of publications was to emerge during the 1960s and 1970s, as Namibia's newly-formed liberation movement launched a guerrilla war against colonial forces and sought to intensify South African isolation from the international community; scholarly interest reached its peak during the 'Second Cold War' of 1981-89, when an increase in global tensions led to superpower involvement in the conflict. As Western attitudes towards race started to become more liberal and the number of African universities increased, these studies evolved from works of historical enquiry into a body of solidarity literature which sought to expose the horrors of apartheid, elicit support for SWAPO and so contribute to the realisation of national liberation. Alfred Moleah (1983), for example, prefaced his book as follows:

SWAPO and PLAN are but the embodiment and expression of the Namibian people. To destroy them effectively, [South Africa] will have to destroy the Namibian people... This simple historic equation completely escapes the jaundiced eye of racists and imperialists... Their futile machinations and frantic, though exceedingly brutal, attacks are but convulsive kicks of a doomed and dying order. This revolutionary process has become inexorable and revolutionary victory has become inevitable.

Such unquestioning support for SWAPO has been problematic for modern historians of the liberation struggle. Although much of the solidarity literature contains rich information on European colonisation, the brutality of apartheid and development of black nationalism—such topics were integral to the authors’ message—it tended also to exaggerate SWAPO’s military achievements and to downplay the organisation’s own shortcomings. Perhaps most significant in this regard is the failure to analyse SWAPO’s political culture, which deteriorated during the 1970s as a result of increased authoritarianism and declining respect for human rights. Moleah (1983), Soggot (1986) and Green et al. (1981) chose to ignore the movement’s ruthless suppression of dissent during an aborted rebellion in 1976, whilst Katjavivi (1988) overlooked the ‘spy drama’ of 1981-89 in which SWAPO members accused of collaborating with South Africa were detained, tortured and murdered at the Lubango camp in Angola.

Thus, a third body of literature on Namibian history, which emerged after independence, has focused upon addressing these gaps in our understanding of the liberation struggle. John Saul and Colin Leys were perhaps the first authors to attempt an in-depth analysis of SWAPO’s political culture, arguing in a 1995 edited volume that its authoritarianism could be traced to Nujoma’s status as a unifying figure, his demand to receive the ‘deference and largely unquestioned loyalty’ (Saul and Leys 1995: 43) enjoyed by other African presidents and the role played by Zambia and Tanzania in buttressing his authority. Significantly, their book also contained an appraisal of the ‘spy drama’ which criticised SWAPO’s role in precipitating the crisis and alleged that divisions between ‘hard-liners’, ‘soft guys’ and ‘securocrats’ had solidified since independence (Saul and Leys 1995: 198). Although subsequent events were to indicate that

factional competition ran along different lines, Saul and Leys highlighted a number of issues hitherto ignored by scholars and thus added an important dimension to the debate on SWAPO's history.

Another challenge to existing perceptions of the liberation movement was mounted by Lauren Dobell (1998), whose book—entitled *SWAPO's Struggle for Namibia: War by Other Means*—appeared three years after the publication of Saul and Leys' work. Whereas many analysts had assumed that SWAPO's endorsement of 'scientific socialism' in 1976 reflected a leftward shift in its ideological orientation, driven by the 'inability of the United Nations to enforce its decisions on Namibia and the West's reluctance to support sanctions... against South Africa' (Katjavivi 1988: 109), Dobell argued that these changes had been largely cosmetic. Thus, 'SWAPO's real political thinking during this period, despite its own public claims and those of both allies and enemies, never moved beyond its nationalist programme of the 1960s. The socialist rhetoric of its 1976 documents was a consequence of pragmatism, not conviction, and was as easily revived or abandoned when circumstances demanded' (Dobell 1988: 59). This important insight was to be underscored in 1989 when, faced with the need to find a negotiated path to independence, SWAPO abandoned its commitment to scientific socialism in favour of capitalism and liberal democracy.

The publication of 'revisionist' works by Saul and Leys, Dobell and some other authors caused considerable outrage within SWAPO's leadership group, particularly when issues relating to the 'spy drama' were raised, but it has also facilitated a less partisan approach to the analysis of Namibian history. As a study of the post-colonial political landscape, this thesis will not make a substantive contribution to our understanding of the liberation struggle, but in using certain aspects of Namibia's heritage to explain the behaviour of current elites, it does lean heavily upon research associated with the 'solidarity' and 'revisionist' traditions in Namibianist scholarship. Indeed, both bodies of literature are extensively utilised in this chapter and should be considered

indispensable to any analysis of elite behaviour, social cleavages and electoral outcomes in contemporary Namibia.

German Colonisation, 1884-1915

In 1884, as the European ‘scramble for Africa’ gathered pace, *Reichkanzler* von Bismarck declared that the coastal zone bounded by Southern Africa’s Orange and Kunene Rivers—except for Walvis Bay, which Britain had seized six years earlier—was to be annexed by Germany. A newly-appointed commissioner, Heinrich Göring, persuaded indigenous communities to sign treaties promising protection in return for limited European settlement (Katjavivi 1988: 7), but when it became clear that he lacked the firepower to fulfil these obligations, German officials were attacked by Herero rebels and driven to the safety of British-ruled Walvis Bay. Determined to avenge this humiliation, Berlin despatched a military force under *Hauptmann* von François which—in a brief but decisive campaign—suppressed the revolt and routed Hendrik Witbooi, a powerful Nama chief uninvolved in the Herero revolt, at the Battle of Naukluft in 1894 (Olusoga and Erichsen 2010: 80-83).

The dominant leader in central Namibia, Herero paramount chief Samuel Maherero, hoped to avoid Witbooi’s fate by permitting limited European encroachment upon his territory, but during the late 1890s ‘a flood of German settlers... poured into Hereroland and behaved like a “conquering army”, confiscating thousands of cattle and exploiting the Hereros’ “unworldliness” by fixing exorbitant prices for their goods’ (Soggot 1986: 5). Worse still, imperial legal codes were amended to permit the flogging of Africans, racial arrogance began to permeate the judicial system and, after the arrival of Governor Theodor Leutwein in 1894, tensions between Herero, Mbanderu and Nama were cynically exploited for the purpose of consolidating

colonial rule. Finally becoming convinced that his people were threatened with extinction, Maherero declared war on Germany in 1904.

The conflict which ensued, later drawing in the Nama under Hendrik Witbooi, has been extensively analysed elsewhere and does not require detailed discussion here (Gewald, 1999; Olusoga and Erichsen 2010; Pakenham, 1991). After mounting a series of attacks against European towns and farms, Herero forces were defeated at the Battle of Waterberg and driven into the Omaheke desert; General von Trotha, the German military commander, then issued an ‘extermination order’ stating that ‘within the German boundaries, every Herero, whether found armed or unarmed, with or without cattle, will be shot’ (Pakenham 1991: 611). By 1908, some 35-50 per cent of the pre-war Nama population and eighty per cent of Herero, as well as an unknown number of Damara, had perished in the twentieth century’s first genocide (Katjavivi 1988: 10; Kiljunen 1981: 146). Survivors were incarcerated in slave labour camps and their possessions expropriated by white settlers, as traditional social structures were destroyed, segregationist laws extended and almost all fertile land in southern and central Namibia taken into white ownership (Katjavivi 1988: 11).

These tragic events continue to exercise an influence upon Namibian politics in two respects. First, the annihilation of Herero communities meant that the Owambo—who took no part in the fighting—emerged as Namibia’s largest ethno-linguistic group, accounting for approximately fifty per cent of the national population. Given that ethnic and partisan identities were later to become entwined, with Owambos overwhelmingly supporting the South West Africa People’s Organisation (SWAPO) and many Hereros voting for either the National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO) or the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), it is possible that post-colonial election results would have been different had von Trotha’s genocidal campaign not taken place. Second, the demand for German reparations is still used by political

actors, such as the Herero paramount chief Kuaima Riruako, to mobilise electoral support on the basis of ethnic identity (Hopwood 2005: 128).

Exploitation and Resistance under South African Rule, 1915-1960

Shortly after the outbreak of World War One in 1914, South African forces—acting upon a request from the British government—invaded Namibia, defeated its German garrison and placed the country under military rule. Five years later, the newly-formed League of Nations granted South Africa a mandate to govern Namibia and, thus, civilian rule was restored on 1 January 1921.

Early Resistance and the Emergence of Black Nationalism

To secure its mandate from the international community, South Africa had pledged in 1920 ‘to promote to the utmost the material and moral well-being, and the social progress’ (Katjavivi 1988: 13) of Namibia’s population as a ‘sacred trust of civilisation’ (Catholic Institute 1981: 10). Its early actions, however, provided an indication that contempt for world opinion and undisguised pursuit of white interests were to become hallmarks of South African policy. In 1917, South African and Portuguese troops destroyed the Kwanyama kingdom in northern Namibia; Mandume Ndemufayo, the last Owambo king, committed suicide rather than be taken prisoner (Soggot 1986: 19). Five years later, South African aircraft bombed an encampment of Bondelswart Nama rebels in southern Namibia, killing over one hundred men, women and children. By 1924, the regime had introduced forced labour practices, imposed pass laws and established a system of ‘native reserves’ in which 3.5 per cent of available land was allocated to ninety per cent of the country’s population (Katjavivi 1988: 14). Finally, in 1948, the newly-elected Afrikaner Nationalist Party (NP) government rejected United Nations (UN) supervision

of the mandate system, declared Namibia to be a *de facto* fifth province of South Africa and began to extend the full gamut of apartheid legislation, including racial classification and Bantu Education, to its colonial dependency.

Paradoxically, as South Africa tightened its grip on Namibia during the 1950s, other imperialist powers were embarking upon processes of disengagement that would eventually lead to decolonisation. These developments had been driven in part by a wave of black nationalism which, from its birthplace in West Africa, had inspired oppressed peoples throughout the continent. Namibia could hardly remain unaffected by these developments and soon began to experience a rising tide of nationalist agitation from three sources: labour, intellectuals and traditional leaders.

As Wedel and Goering (1976: 6-7) noted, contract labourers were amongst the most exploited members of Namibia's workforce.

Although contract labour is the only channel to employment for tribesmen outside their "homelands" an employee had no choice of jobs and no voice in defining wages, working and living conditions... Instead of living with their families eight men typically roomed [sic] together in a compound and each labourer had only a concrete locker-type bed... Thus, it was not uncommon for a man to be severed from his wife and family two-thirds of his life. Striking, breaking of the contract by an employee, and the formation of trade unions were forbidden... An employee wishing to file a complaint must express his grievances to the police or nearest magistrate, but if he is discovered absent from his place of employment without his boss's permission, he may have been charged with desertion.

Early attempts to organise these workers met with little success, owing to poor organisation and state repression. In 1950, however, the South African Food and Canning Workers' Union established a branch in Lüderitz which, two years later, led a major strike in support of improved pay and conditions; this action proved moderately successful and was followed in 1953 by a

larger strike, which temporarily paralysed the local lobster industry (Soggot 1986: 25). Police responded by firing on workers and suppressing all black trade union activity.

Four years later, the Owambo People's Congress (OPC) was established by migrant workers and students living in Cape Town. Though founded 'as a labour movement, with the abolition of... the hated contract labour system as its primary goal' (Dobell 1998: 28-29), OPC enjoyed close links with the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa and many of its members 'anticipated being part of a broad congress movement' (Katjavivi 1988: 20). When Andimba Toivo ja Toivo, OPC's leader, was forcibly relocated from Cape Town to Owamboland in retaliation for smuggling a petition to the United Nations, he used the opportunity to investigate the possibility of establishing a nationalist movement for Namibia. Partly as a result of these initiatives, OPC was dissolved and the Owambo People's Organisation (OPO) formed in 1959.

The second major source of nationalist agitation during these years was a group of intellectuals, principally students living in South Africa, whose exposure to the ANC's Defiance Campaign inspired the formation in 1952 of the South West Africa Student Body (SWASB). Four years later, this pressure group was reconstituted as the South West Africa Progressive Association (SWAPA), a cultural organisation which sought to 'campaign for better education for blacks and to advise black students on how to secure admission to schools and colleges in South Africa' (Emmett 1987: 517). Given their elitist image and limited objectives, however, neither organisation was able to develop a support base beyond 'teachers, clerical workers and other quasi-intellectuals in Windhoek' (Du Pisani 1986: 146).

The third strand of African nationalism was represented by traditional authorities which, though later condemned by some radicals, played a critical role in maintaining Namibia's world profile and uniting the disparate groups opposed to colonial rule. Following a successful campaign against government efforts to annexe Namibia in 1946-47, Herero paramount chief

Hosea Kutako ‘continued to compile information on conditions in Namibia’ (Katjavivi 1988: 39) for use in petitioning international institutions and co-opted the influential Nama chief Samuel Witbooi, as well as various Owambo and Damara representatives and the SWAPA leader Jariretundu Kozonguizi, on to his governing body, the Herero Chiefs’ Council. In 1959, this group founded a political party, the South West Africa National Union (SWANU), as a vehicle for bringing ‘together the different elements of anti-colonial resistance into a single nationalist organisation’ (Emmett, 1987 cited in Katjavivi, 1988: 43). Kozonguizi was elected president and Sam Nujoma, the OPO leader, agreed to serve on its executive committee.

Yet within months of SWANU’s formation, relations between the party and Chiefs’ Council had deteriorated. The latter proved to be highly ‘protective of its standing as a body that had led anti-South African protest for many years’ (Katjavivi 1988: 44) and seemed interested in merely ‘graft[ing] the modern machinery of a mass organisation upon the traditional system of authority,’ (Ngavirue, 1972 cited in Cliffe et al., 1994: 18) whilst Kozonguizi and other radicals wished to distance themselves from the ‘tribalism’ associated with Kutako’s Council. Nevertheless, as 1959 drew to a close, Namibia’s largest anti-apartheid organisations—the Herero Chiefs’ Council, SWANU and OPO—agreed to launch a joint campaign against forced removals in Windhoek. Municipal services were boycotted and demonstrations organised but, on 10 December, police fired at protestors in the city’s ‘Old Location’; thirteen people died and fifty-four were wounded (Moleah 1983: 99). Although a confluence of events—notably the growth of industrial militancy, radicalisation of intellectuals, formation of black empowerment groups and estrangement of SWANU from the Herero Chiefs’ Council—had produced a political climate favourable to the emergence of a new nationalist party, it was this massacre which finally triggered a re-alignment in black politics. As one nationalist leader explained later, ‘the events of 10 December 1959 [indicated] that a labour movement alone could not hope to resolve the grievances of the people... We realised that everything, including labour matters,

would fall into line behind a political movement' (Andreas Shipanga cited in Dobell 1998: 31). Thus, in June 1960, OPO was reconstituted as the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), with Sam Nujoma as president.

Competition, SWAPO's Ascent and the Odendaal Report, 1960-75

Dobell (1998: 32), in summarising the political significance of SWAPO's formation, commented that whilst 'OPO had aimed to "achieve UN Trusteeship and ultimate independence" [for Namibia] SWAPO adopted the Pan-Africanist rallying cry of the early 1960s in calling for "complete national independence now under an African government and not later than 1963"'. The party's Political Programme, published in 1960, envisaged a 'centralised Republican form of government elected by universal adult suffrage, the elimination of all forms of discrimination, and freedom of speech, press, assembly and religion' (Dobell 1998: 32). Contract labour would be abolished, free education provided and key industries—including rail, mining and fisheries—taken into public ownership (Katjavivi 1988: 46). These demands were used by South Africa to portray SWAPO as a communist organisation, but in reality the party had positioned itself in the mainstream of nationalist politics, with policies that differed little from those adopted by other Pan-Africanist organisations during the 1960s.

SWAPO's Ascendancy

During these early years of political mobilisation, SWAPO's relationship with its only significant competitor in nationalist circles, SWANU, was characterised by differences in approach rather than substance. The two parties tended to draw support from discrete sources, with SWANU attracting intellectuals and the Mbenderu community whilst SWAPO mobilised Owambo contract workers, but their only substantive disagreement revolved around 'SWAPO's continued

reliance on the United Nations to play a substantial role in achieving Namibia's independence, which contrasted sharply with SWANU's emphasis on self-reliance' (Dobell 1998: 32). Tensions were exacerbated by personality clashes in New York, where distrust contributed to the failure of several attempts at co-operation; by 1962, open competition and even confrontation had replaced hopes of unity.

Given that SWANU enjoyed a number of advantages over SWAPO during these early years, including limited diplomatic recognition, how did SWAPO usurp its position to become Namibia's principal liberation movement? Three factors are worthy of note. First, SWANU leaders were 'scattered and largely based in Europe as students, whereas SWAPO leaders abroad were concentrated in Dar es Salaam and other African centres and were full-time political activists' (Katjavivi 1988: 53) engaged in lobbying the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Second, whilst SWAPO adopted a non-aligned course at this stage of the Cold War, SWANU alienated both Washington and Moscow by expressing support for China (Soggot 1986: 28). Third, but most importantly, SWAPO's decision in 1962 to launch an armed campaign 'distinguished it from SWANU in the eyes of international supporters as the genuine vanguard of the nationalist struggle, and the legitimate recipient of any assistance that was forthcoming' (Dobell 1998: 34). Two years later, the OAU gave its entire allocation for the liberation of Namibia to SWAPO and declared the party to be 'the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people' (Dobell 1998: 35). Soon afterwards, SWANU was consumed by internal squabbling which forced Kozonguizi's resignation and precipitated its retreat to the margin of Namibian politics.

Thus, on 26 August 1966, Namibia's war of liberation began with a clash between colonial forces and SWAPO fighters at Omgulumbashe in the Omusati Region; attacks against government officials and chiefs followed, as guerrillas infiltrated Caprivi and Owamboland from bases in Zambia. Pretoria responded by detaining thirty-seven members of SWAPO's internal

leadership, including Toivo ja Toivo, in a security crackdown which crippled the party's structures within Namibia. The result was a concentration of power in the hands of SWAPO's external leadership, which preferred diplomatic activity to mass mobilisation and has dominated party decision-making to the present day.

In 1969, SWAPO's first congress in exile was held at Tanga in Tanzania. Attended by twenty-eight party delegates, it produced few substantive changes in policy or organisational structure but did provide a glimpse of the party's evolving political culture. According to Dobell (1998: 38),

In his opening address to the Congress Nujoma responded to criticisms by SWAPO members in a way which was to become standard practice among the leadership—by adopting the more militant language of the critics, while turning their charges against them. The speech was the first to warn officially (and ominously) against the “enemy agents” who would subsequently be found to be at the root of each successive crisis in the movement, thereby providing a convenient explanation for inconvenient manifestations of discontent in the ranks, and evading time and again the need for critical self-examination.

SWAPO's tendency to dismiss internal critics as ‘spies’ would eventually produce an autocratic political culture in which opponents risked disciplinary action, expulsion or even persecution; on three occasions since the Tanga Congress, in 1976, 1999 and 2007, this intolerance of dissent has contributed to political fragmentation and the formation of splinter parties.

Yet despite growing evidence of its internal deficiencies, SWAPO scored a number of significant diplomatic successes during the decade after 1966. Indeed, within two months of the armed clash at Omgulumbashe, Pretoria's mandate to govern Namibia had been terminated by the UN General Assembly; this decision was supported by a Security Council resolution in 1968, which declared South Africa's occupation to be in ‘violation of the law’ (Soggot 1986: 29) and established a ‘Council for Namibia’ charged with preparing the country for independence. Three years later, the International Court of Justice overturned an earlier judgement to rule that South

Africa had breached its mandatory obligations with respect to Namibia. Perhaps the most far-reaching decision was taken in 1973, however, when the UN designated SWAPO as the 'authentic representative of the Namibian people' and thus legitimated its claim to be the only credible source of opposition to colonial rule.

As Green and Kiljunen (1981: 4) observed, however, 'legal and legislative victories were one thing; enforcing them... proved [to be] quite another'. South Africa's willingness to defy international opinion was clearly illustrated in 1964, when the government-appointed Odendaal Commission recommended that 'separate development' should be extended to Namibia (Republic of South Africa 1964: 55). This exercise in balkanisation would serve, it was hoped, to divide opponents, foster the development of conservative black elites and permit the refutation of foreign criticism by arguing that population groups were being given the opportunity to develop according to their own wishes. Nevertheless, the report ignored ethnic divisions within Namibia's white community and cynically suggested that blacks should be 'persuaded' (Republic of South Africa 1964: 97) to vacate white areas in favour of their designated homelands. By 1980 ten bantustans had been established, of which four—Owamboland, Kavangoland, East Caprivi and Basterland—exercised a limited form of self-rule.

As argued in chapter two, this segregationist project was to have a significant, lasting and, on the whole, adverse effect upon Namibia's political geography. In East Caprivi, where Flint (2003: 418-419) conducted anthropological research after independence, the colonial regime banned white settlement, established secondary schools and a teacher training college, provided opportunities for school leavers to attend institutes of higher education in South Africa and Rhodesia, instructed officials to communicate with local people in English rather than Afrikaans, and established a legislative assembly responsible for managing certain aspects of local governance. In Rehoboth school buildings, sports grounds, shops and a water-storage dam, leisure resort, museum, library, agricultural college and sewage plant were constructed,

administrative facilities were segregated into white, Baster and 'Bantu' zones, and non-Baster residents were often prevented from acquiring land (Britz *et al* 1999: 48-52). These and other efforts undoubtedly influenced popular perceptions of identity and community (Flint 2003: 418), sharpened ethnic differences and diluted the sense of nationhood so assiduously cultivated by the liberation movement. Indeed, Afrobarometer (2010) data collected in 2008—almost two decades after the homelands had been abolished—suggest that 9.5 per cent of Namibians feel no sense of national identity whatsoever, compared with 5.4 per cent of Zambians, 4.6 per cent of Nigerians, 3.1 per cent of Kenyans, and a mere 2.4 per cent of South Africans. As noted in chapter two, these sentiments have contributed greatly to the acute electoral volatility experienced in Namibia since independence, not only because traditionalists tend to favour whichever party is endorsed by their own traditional leader, but also because many politicians regard ethnicity as an easily and cheaply manipulated resource for mobilising electoral support.

Why did apartheid balkanisation not serve, as in South Africa, to delegitimise ethnicity as an instrument of oppression? This puzzle has yet to attract systematic academic research, although one difference is perhaps worthy of attention. In South Africa, on the one hand, separate development represented a gargantuan social experiment: thousands of white-owned farms were expropriated (Beinart 2001: 224), some 3.5 million Africans were forcibly uprooted (van der Westhuizen 2007: 101) and every resident of the four nominally independent homelands—Transkei, Boputhatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC)—was stripped of his or her South African citizenship. Indeed, several bantustans soon acquired a deserved reputation for instability, corruption and repression; Transkei president Kaiser Matanzima, for example, received the largest remuneration package of any South African politician (Nugent 2004: 135), whilst homeland soldiers loyal to the Ciskeian military ruler Joshua Gqozo opened fire on an ANC march at Bisho in 1992, killing twenty-nine people. In Namibia, on the other hand, Pretoria's long-standing diplomatic tussle with the international community and, from 1975, its

recognition of a right to *national* self-determination (see below) militated against the creation of nominally independent homelands endowed with military and police forces, budgetary autonomy, legislative authority and institutes of higher education. Separate development therefore came to be associated, not with police brutality, corruption and the removal of citizenship rights, as in South Africa, but with economic development, infrastructural investment and cultural revival. Namibia's special international status had prevented apartheid strategists from imposing the policy of separate development in its most radical form but not, ironically, from institutionalising ethnicity as an instrument of political control.

Towards Independence: Interim Governments and SWAPO Internal Politics, 1975-1989

The collapse of Portuguese colonialism in 1974 produced an irrevocable change in the geo-strategic landscape of Southern Africa, as Angola and Mozambique achieved independence under leftist governments dedicated to the cause of black liberation and determined to assist nationalist movements in their struggle against white minority rule. Pretoria responded to these threats with a combination of political manipulation and military force; paramilitary police units were withdrawn from Rhodesia (in the hope of forcing Salisbury to reach agreement with 'moderate' nationalists) and a black conservative movement fostered in Namibia, whilst commando units attacked guerrilla bases in neighbouring countries and apartheid-sponsored insurgent groups, such as the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), destabilised governments sympathetic to the liberation movement. A full-scale invasion of Angola in 1976 ended in disaster, however, when thousands of Cuban troops were deployed around Luanda in order to prevent the installation of a UNITA-led government; South Africa's subsequent withdrawal represented a major humiliation for the apartheid regime, which soon found itself menaced by a semi-permanent Cuban presence throughout central and southern parts of the country. For Pretoria and its Cold War allies in Washington, the question of

Namibian independence was now subordinated to the imperative of securing a withdrawal of communist forces from Angola.

SWAPO: The 'Shipanga Rebellion' and its Implications

In 1975, at Luanda's invitation, SWAPO moved many of its core operations from Zambia to southern Angola and established a network of camps within striking distance of the border. Guerrilla attacks spread throughout Owamboland and even penetrated as far south as Windhoek, prompting a security crackdown in which prompted more than four thousand people fled to Angola. When the Owambo chief minister, Filemon Elifas, was assassinated by unidentified gunmen on 16 August 1975, South Africa intensified its assault on the liberation movement and a substantial number of SWAPO Youth League (SYL) cadres, fearing imminent arrest, also sought refuge in Angola. Some of these activists had played a leading role in the internal resistance movements⁵ of 1971-74 (Katjavivi 1988: 67-69) and thus expected to be awarded prominent positions within SWAPO's external organisation, although most wished merely to be sheltered or to undertake guerrilla training in preparation for a return to Namibia.

Unfortunately, SWAPO's external wing had not anticipated such a massive influx of exiles; its structures struggled to provide even humanitarian assistance and proved reluctant to embrace suggestions emanating from the radical, young and well-educated SYL cadres. As a result, 'frustration with their enforced inactivity, disappointment with the state of the movement in exile, and a desire to make themselves heard combined in the youths' call for a Congress... where their concerns could be democratically discussed and resolved' (Dobell 1998: 48). These demands for change were supported by certain members of SWAPO's military wing, the People's Liberation of Namibia (PLAN), whose complaints over 'acute shortages of weapons,

⁵ A major strike paralysed the contract labour system in 1971 and a coalition of parties, known as the National Convention, organised protest meetings during 1971-73.

food, clothing and other supplies at the front, the absence of proper medical care for wounded comrades and serious transportation problems' led to a small-scale revolt in March 1976 (Dobell 1998: 48). Zambian government forces were used to restore order and, over the following weeks, more than 1,600 people were detained on suspicion of sympathising with the rebels, including seven SYL leaders and two members of the party's politburo, Andreas Shipanga and Solomon Mifima (Dobell 1998: 49). These individuals were held in Zambian and Tanzanian prisons until May 1978, when an international campaign resulted in their release from detention.

The 'Shipanga Rebellion', as this episode became known, held two implications for the character and direction of Namibian politics. First, SWAPO's willingness to support the Zambian crackdown and, later, to portray the dissidents as 'saboteurs' illustrated its growing authoritarianism and intolerance of criticism; although a subsequent inquiry acknowledged that 'official shortcomings and incompetence' had contributed to the unrest, it also sought to re-write history by 'downplay[ing] the depth and breadth of genuine dissatisfaction' and 'holding Shipanga responsible for masterminding' the rebellion (Dobell 1988: 48; Katjavivi 1988: 107).

Second, SWAPO tried to anticipate future dissent by adopting a new Political Programme. This latter document represented a 'textbook example of Soviet phraseology' (Dobell 1998: 57) and committed the party to:

unite all Namibian people, particularly the working class, the peasantry and progressive intellectuals into a vanguard party capable of safe-guarding national independence and of building a classless, non-exploitative society based on the ideals and principles of scientific socialism (SWAPO 1976: 3).

Although some contemporary commentators (Katjavivi 1988: 109) attributed this leftward shift to frustration arising from Western support for South Africa, recent research has shown that its principal purpose was in fact to pre-empt criticism from radical elements within the party and to cement ties with Angola's pro-Soviet government. Indeed, a key architect of the 'socialist'

programme adopted in 1976, SWAPO secretary for information and publicity Hidipo Hamutenya, was later to serve as Namibia's minister of trade and industry, to impose a no-strike rule within specially-designated 'Export Processing Zones' and to receive the title 'African Personality of the Year' from *fDi* magazine, a subsidiary of the *Financial Times*, for his efforts in attracting capitalist investment (Hopwood 2008: 145).

The Turnhalle Constitutional Conference

In 1974, as Portugal's collapse heralded a new phase in the struggle between white racism and black nationalism in Southern Africa, Pretoria reversed six decades of official policy on Namibia by recognising the country's right to self-determination and declaring that all population groups should play a role in devising its post-independence constitution. This process of consultation and negotiation would commence at a constitutional conference hosted by the National Party of South West Africa (NPSWA) at the Turnhalle complex, a historic building in Windhoek, during the following year.

As many contemporary commentators suspected, however, the calculations underpinning South African policy were considerably more cynical than those admitted in government propaganda; indeed, Pretoria's determination to fight SWAPO and to resist the demands for UN-supervised elections remained undimmed. As Kiljunen (1981: 9) noted, the regime's principal objective in convening the conference was to 'create a Namibian political class, or rather a series of sub-classes... to whom it would be safe to entrust the appearance of power in an independent Namibia'. By extending some of the benefits associated with political office (such as status, patronage, salaries and transport) to certain elites, South Africa hoped to foster a black middle class willing to accept existing socio-economic structures and to govern in its interest following decolonisation.

Moreover, Pretoria was determined to frustrate SWAPO's hopes of attaining power in any post-independence dispensation and, to this end, imposed two conditions upon the negotiation process. First, decisions were to be reached by consensus; though justified as a mechanism for ensuring that 'no population group would be forced into a dispensation against its will' (Soggot 1986: 184), the effect was to preserve a white veto over the content and direction of conference deliberations. Second, political parties were barred on the grounds that they represented 'unknown quantities [with] unknown leaders', whose participation would 'lead to a "Babylonian confusion"' (Soggot 1986: 186). The effect was to exclude those organisations demanding an unconditional South African withdrawal from Namibia, such as SWAPO, in favour of homeland government elites whose willingness to collaborate with the regime could be taken for granted.

Nevertheless, when the Turnhalle conference opened on 1 September 1975, Namibia's anti-colonial movement faced an unprecedented challenge to its credibility and cohesion. Given the massive state resources available to conference participants, organisations choosing to remain outside the process faced two options: either to join SWAPO (which had described the talks as a 'circus') or to establish a coalition operating independently of the liberation movement (SWAPO 1976: 3; Voizey 1994: 63). Hendrik Witbooi's Nama Council, the Association for the Preservation of the Tjamuaha-Maherero Royal House and the Rehoboth Volksparty chose the former option, whilst Justus //Garoëb's Damara Council combined with SWANU, the Mbanderu Council and four small parties to found the Namibia National Front (NNF). Operating under //Garoëb's leadership, this highly decentralised coalition adopted a 'left-of-centre' (Du Pisani 1986: 416) political platform characterised by demands for 'a unitary independent Namibia, free from South African control; the abolition of apartheid and all discriminatory laws; a bill of basic human rights [and]... compulsory education for all Namibians' (Du Pisani 1986: 334).

In March 1977, the Turnhalle Conference petitioned South Africa to grant self-government on the basis of a three-tier constitutional framework, which Katjavivi (1998: 98) explained as follows:

At a national level was an elected National Assembly with members drawn from each ethnic group[;] one delegate from each group would also be on a Ministers' Council, headed by a President appointed by the South African state president. The second-tier level was that of the ethnic group or Bantustan... They were to have responsibility over all members of that particular ethnic group, with powers over land tenure, primary and secondary, but not tertiary, education, social welfare and housing, traditional administration of justice, among others. The third tier was that of the local or municipal authorities, with responsibility for managing urban areas, although this was still done on an ethnic basis.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given its role in stage-managing the conference, South Africa accepted the proposals and announced that a first step towards 'self-government', the election of a Constituent Assembly, would take place in December 1978. This poll was to be conducted on the basis of universal franchise—the first time in Namibian history that voting rights had not been restricted by race—but overseen by South Africa's most senior representative in the country, the Administrator-General. Such an official could not possibly act as a neutral arbiter between political parties and so the elections were not only boycotted by SWAPO and the NNF but condemned by the international community, which demanded UN supervision of the process and passed UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 435 to that effect.

The constitutional changes envisaged by South Africa might have seemed modest to many external observers, but in Namibia their impact upon white politics was to be dramatic. As the Purified National Party (HNP) and other extremist groups threatened to resist any moves towards independence on the basis of majority rule, squabbling within the ruling NPSWA over such concepts as racial equality and political decentralisation culminated in a bitter factional struggle between its conservative leader Eben van Zijl and his centrist deputy Dirk Mudge (Du Pisani 1986: 334-335). This conflict ended only in September 1977, when Mudge's defeat in a

leadership election prompted his resignation from the NPSWA and his formation of the Republican Party (RP) as a vehicle for fellow reform-minded whites. One month later, black and Coloured delegates to the constitutional conference joined with him in establishing an umbrella body known as the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA).

Three important indications of the DTA's character, direction and future political fortunes were evident at its inception. First, party policies and rhetoric were largely defined by antagonism towards SWAPO, which DTA leaders frequently denounced as a 'murder organisation' whose leaders were 'self-centred men in pursuit of pleasure, luxurious homes and Cadillacs' (Soggot 1986: 247). As the Congress of Democrats (CoD) was to discover in a later era, such negative campaigning increased the difficulties involved in establishing an identity and restricted the party's appeal to communities with a history of antagonism towards the liberation movement. Second, the DTA relied heavily upon South Africa for the political, logistical and financial support necessary to mount an effective campaign; abandoning any pretence of impartiality, South Africa's Administrator-General abolished some of the most hated apartheid regulations, including the pass laws (Green and Kiljunen 1981: 10), in order to mobilise black support for the party, whilst government-appointed chiefs in Owamboland coerced people into registering for the elections and thugs disrupted SWAPO meetings in Katutura, Walvis Bay, Lüderitz, Tsumeb and Katima Mulilo (Soggot 1986: 211-213). Such tactics may have helped the DTA to achieve electoral successes over the short term, but the perception of collaboration to which they gave rise has hampered the party's electoral fortunes to the present day. Third, the DTA's desire to portray itself as a national party and simultaneously to mobilise support on the basis of ethnic loyalties led to the adoption of a highly decentralised party constitution which permitted affiliate groups to retain their own structures, customs and identity; the effect was, however, to render the Alliance peculiarly vulnerable to fragmentation, especially once a decline in its electoral fortunes had caused affiliate parties to question the benefits of membership.

Namibia's interim election took place during 4-8 December 1978 and was contested by five groups: the DTA, under Dirk Mudge and Cornelius Ndjoba; the Alliance for the Retention of the Turnhalle Principles (AKTUR), a right-wing coalition led by the NPSWA; the Reconstituted National Party (HNP), representing the reactionary fringe of white politics; the Rehoboth Liberation Front (RLF); and the Namibian Christian Democratic Party (Du Pisani 1986: 420). A massive security operation in northern regions of the country frustrated SWAPO hopes of a boycott and allowed South Africa to claim that seventy-nine per cent of eligible voters had cast their ballots, although 'enforced registration, bribery, intimidation and electoral fraud on a massive scale' (Catholic Institute 1981: 24-25) meant that the election was widely judged to have been neither free nor fair. Final results indicated that the DTA had taken 82.1 per cent of the vote and forty-one seats in the Constituent Assembly, whilst AKTUR took six seats and the other parties one seat each (Voizey 1994: 77-78). The DTA used these figures to claim support from all population groups and in each region of the country, although a majority of whites had voted for AKTUR and the HNP.

As Voizey (1994: 65) argued, the interim elections marked a watershed in Namibian history because '[t]he question of participation had forged a three (or perhaps a three and a half) party system' that was to endure, with only 'superficial modifications', until independence. Forced to choose between collaboration and resistance, elites re-assessed their strategies for political survival and abandoned old loyalties, forging new alliances as they coalesced around SWAPO, the DTA, NNF and AKTUR. Given its quasi-nationalist rhetoric and massive resource base, the DTA initially posed a challenge to SWAPO but its internal contradictions, structural flaws and transparent dependence upon South African patronage were soon to initiate a process of disintegration that has continued to the present day. Indeed, by absorbing certain influential organisations operating in central and southern regions of the country—such as the Nama Council—SWAPO was able to counter accusations of Owambo domination more effectively

and thus, ironically, to emerge from the Turnhalle exercise in a stronger position than it had occupied previously.

Transitional Government of National Unity (TGNU)

In June 1979, South Africa delegated powers to a 'Cabinet of the National Assembly' and an 'Advisory Council to the Administrator-General' (later the Ministers' Council) which, following AKTUR's refusal to accept an offer of two seats, exclusively consisted of DTA appointees (Voizey 1994: 80). This executive sought to secure popular legitimacy by abolishing certain aspects of 'petty apartheid', such as the ban on blacks obtaining property in 'whites-only' areas, but its efforts were thwarted by police and military forces which remained under South African control and failed to enforce desegregation. As a result, education provision remained segregated, hotel owners continued to turn away black clients and little progress was made in addressing the chronic under-funding of social services available to black communities. Worse still, the DTA seemed unwilling to provoke a confrontation with South Africa over these inequities and even practised discrimination within its own structures—the Republican Party, for example, retained a whites-only membership policy until 1986.

The DTA's failure to address these contradictions fatally undermined its credibility and swiftly led to the collapse of South Africa's Turnhalle experiment. This process of disintegration began with the bantustan elections of 1980—when Damaraland and the white assembly were captured by the UDF and NPSWA respectively—and accelerated over the following two years, as the RLF withdrew from the National Assembly, NUDO expelled two Assembly members for sitting as independents and the DTA's president, Peter Kalangula, resigned over its failure to adopt a unitary structure; his party, Christian Democratic Action for Social Justice (CDA), subsequently took control of the Owamboland government. Finally, in 1983, the DTA Ministers'

Council resigned over the Administrator-General's refusal to abolish South African public holidays (Mudge 2010: 129), leaving Pretoria with little alternative but to abolish the interim authority and so lend credibility to SWAPO's contention that 'self-government' had always been a charade.

The re-imposition of direct rule occurred two years after //Garoëb's NNF coalition had collapsed and so created opportunities for a re-alignment of political organisations operating within Namibia. In November 1983, a 'Multi-Party Conference' was convened by seven such parties: the DTA; Damara Council; RLF; NPSWA, under Kosie Pretorius; SWANU, which had split into collaborationist and liberation factions; Andreas Shipanga's SWAPO-Democrats; and the Namibia Christian Democratic Party (*Namibia Information Service* 1984: 2). These organisations represented a broad spectrum of opinion, ranging from Afrikaner supremacism to black nationalism, but nevertheless agreed a statement of 'Basic Principles' in February 1984 which declared that 'all men are created equal' (Multi-Party Conference 1984a: 2) and argued that an executive should be 'installed for a provisional period of... three to five years' (Multi-Party Conference 1984b). The Conference suffered a setback in March 1984, when //Garoëb withdrew in protest at South African 'infiltration' of the process (Voizey 1994: 94), but its constitutional recommendations formed the basis of a 'Transitional Government of National Unity' established by South Africa twelve months later. This body, comprising a Cabinet, National Assembly and Constitutional Council, was granted many of the powers hitherto exercised by South Africa's Administrator-General but, unlike the DTA government of 1979-83, its members were appointed by Pretoria rather than elected (however imperfectly) by the Namibian population. Consequently, the Cabinet consisted of three ministers from the DTA and one each from the Labour Party, NPSWA, RLF, SWANU and SWAPO-Democrats.

Two aspects of this final 'interim government', which held office from 1985 to 1989, are worthy of note. First, though denounced by SWAPO as a 'puppet show' (SWAPO 1986: 5), its

constituent parties were not stooges of the apartheid regime; they demanded independence on terms acceptable to the international community, recognised the inevitability of UN-supervised elections and viewed the TGNU as a tool for bolstering domestic support through targeted distribution of patronage. Such organisations could be accused of collaboration, but their alliance with South Africa was based upon ‘shared opposition... to SWAPO and the United Nations’ recognition’ (Voizey 1994: 103) of that party as the ‘sole and legitimate representative of the Namibian people’, rather than upon traitorous intent. Second, however, the TGNU’s ideological diversity and reliance upon South African support prevented its pursuit of policies—such as the desegregation of education and abolition of bantustan governments—that might, if undertaken, have allowed the construction of a durable support base within the country. Tarnished by their association with Pretoria and mired in allegations of corruption, the internal parties failed to undermine SWAPO’s popularity as the only organisation committed to waging war against the colonial regime.

The CANU Crisis and Lubango: SWAPO’s Political Development, 1976-1989

SWAPO’s brutal suppression of the ‘Shipanga Rebellion’ and subsequent embrace of scientific socialism did little to erode its domestic support base or to diminish the flow of aid from solidarity groups, church alliances, Nordic and Eastern bloc countries, the UN, OAU and other foreign organisations, which showed a considerable reluctance to use their leverage for the promotion of internal democracy, transparency and respect for human rights. Indeed, the effect of supplying financial and military aid in vast quantities and on a largely unconditional basis was to obviate the need for mass support within Namibia and so to increase the power of SWAPO’s external wing at the expense of internal structures, insulating its leadership from expressions of dissent and accelerating the drift towards authoritarianism witnessed after the Tanga Congress in 1969.

Thus, SWAPO's intolerance of dissent grew during the final phase of colonial rule, producing a significant deterioration in respect for human rights and precipitating two internal crises that arguably came close to destroying the movement. The first such episode was provoked by a small number of Caprivian cadres stationed in Zambia and Tanzania, who in 1978 complained of ethnic discrimination and apparently discussed the possibility of reviving a 'tribal' party, the Caprivi African National Union (CANU), that had merged with SWAPO fourteen years earlier. SWAPO's response was characteristically ruthless: Mishake Muyongo, its vice-president and a leader of the dissident faction, was detained, imprisoned for eighteen months and deported to Senegal, whilst every former CANU member sitting on SWAPO's Central Committee was expelled from the movement (Fisch 1999: 19-20). Muyongo went on to embrace collaborationist politics, returning to Namibia in 1985 and becoming president of the DTA two years later.

The second crisis to engulf SWAPO, commonly known as the 'spy drama', originated in a Central Committee decision—taken during 1980 or 1981—to create a security organisation for the purpose of identifying and apprehending South African agents active within SWAPO's external structures. This unit consisted of approximately 250 men and was led by PLAN's deputy commander, Solomon Hawala, who reported exclusively to Nujoma (Groth 1995: 100) and enjoyed almost limitless authority to arrest and detain individuals suspected of spying for the apartheid regime. As Saul and Leys (1995: 55-56) noted:

[A]lmost one thousand SWAPO members in exile were arrested, taken to [SWAPO's detention camp at] Lubango, and forced to 'confess' to being South African agents, if necessary by being beaten or otherwise tortured to the point of death, and then detained, with poor food and little or no medical care, in covered pits in the ground where some, certainly, died... At first people were shocked to hear that so-and-so was accused of being a spy, but refused to believe that SWAPO would have arrested him (or her) without strong grounds for suspicion. But eventually everyone knew someone who had been arrested and who they knew could never... [have] been a spy, and finally it was obvious that the arrests

had a deadly irrational momentum of their own which had nothing to do with spying: in truth the revolution was consuming its children.

As terror spread to all sections of the external organisation, even Nujoma's wife and brother-in-law were detained on suspicion of spying; according to Groth, Hawala had become the 'most powerful man in SWAPO and was feared by everyone, including the leadership' (Groth 1995: 100). Although his organisation probably apprehended a number of enemy agents then operating within SWAPO's ranks, it is likely that many of the cadres arrested, tortured and murdered at Lubango were innocent of the accusations made against them (Saul and Leys 1993: 342).

What were the political consequences of these tragic events? Namibia's collaborationist parties, backed by South African propagandists, naturally recognised in the scandal an unparalleled opportunity to bolster their domestic support by stoking fears of the liberation movement; tales of torture in SWAPO 'hell camps' played to anxieties, prevalent amongst whites and some other minority groups, that the international community wished to hand over Namibia to a ruthless organisation schooled in the use of terror. Perhaps more damaging to SWAPO's political prospects, however, was an allegation that members of minority ethnic groups had suffered disproportionately at the hands of Hawala's interrogators, who—according to some opposition parties—lied about having released all of their prisoners prior to a deadline imposed in 1989. These claims were denied by SWAPO and partly discredited by a UN investigation but, for groups such as the Damara Council, they represented a useful 'vehicle for the articulation of ethnic politics' (Cliffe et al. 1994: 166) during the 1989 independence elections and subsequent campaigns. Indeed, Saul and Leys (1995: 57) argued that 'without the salience of the detainees' issue... SWAPO would probably have won the two-thirds majority in the elections for the constituent assembly necessary to give it the formal power to dictate constitutional outcomes'; such an assertion cannot be substantiated or dismissed, but it is possible that SWAPO's relatively

poor performance in Damaraland and certain southern districts in 1989 was at least partly related to its handling of this question.

Endgame: War, Diplomacy and the New York Accords

As we have seen, SWAPO's relocation from Zambia to southern Angola in 1975 facilitated a substantial escalation of its armed campaign in the heavily-populated region of Owamboland, where co-operation between South African and Portuguese forces had previously limited the extent of guerrilla infiltration. According to Brown (1995: 29),

In 1978 'incidents'—sabotage, assassination, land-mine explosions... increase[d] tenfold over the previous year. At this stage, between 1978 and 1980, there were no-go areas for the [South African forces] in parts of Owamboland. The presence and mobility of PLAN units was one reason; another was the increasing use of land-mines. Morale was high in PLAN and among SWAPO supporters countrywide.

South Africa responded to these developments with a four-part strategy designed to recapture the initiative and to reduce, or if possible destroy, SWAPO's war-making capacity. Its first move was to intensify the repression of northern Namibia by transferring responsibility for counter-insurgency operations to the South African Defence Force (SADF), which doubled the number of troops deployed in the country to thirty thousand (Dreyer 1994: 106, 151), placed Owamboland, Kavango and Caprivi under a form of martial law and evicted several thousand peasants from their homes in order to make way for a 'free-fire zone' along the Angolan border. This militarisation of the northern regions was accompanied by a 'hearts and minds' campaign in which 'doctors, teachers and technicians from the Army were seconded to hospitals, schools and colleges' (Soggot 1986: 180) in Owamboland, although any resulting goodwill was counteracted by the SADF's use of search powers and its tendency to launch reprisals against people living in

areas affected by guerrilla infiltration. Third, SWAPO rear bases were destroyed and the Angolan government destabilised by means of conventional attacks, air strikes, commando raids and the provision of aid to UNITA. By the late 1970s, some of these operations were being mounted by 'ethnic battalions' raised within Namibia, such as the Owambo (101 Battalion), which engaged SWAPO forces in combat and eventually formed the nucleus of an SADF sub-command called the South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF). Black Namibians also formed the backbone of a counter-insurgency police unit, *koevoet* ('crowbar'), which rapidly earned a reputation for the use of torture, murder and other acts of brutality. Unsurprisingly, such efforts to 'Namibianise' the government's war effort engendered a legacy of bitterness and social division that has yet to be erased.

Nevertheless, by 1981, South Africa had regained the initiative in its struggle against Namibia's liberation movement. As Brown noted (1995: 32), 'SWAPO's ability to strike at will into the Owambo area of Namibia... began to diminish rapidly. PLAN combatants, previously based within a few kilometres of the Namibian border, were forced hundreds of kilometres back into the Angolan hinterland. The long trek south was impossible without water, so PLAN operations became restricted to the rainy season between November and March'. South Africa's position was strengthened by the election in 1980 of US President Ronald Reagan, whose determination to prevent the spread of Soviet influence led to a tacit alliance with the apartheid regime and provided some protection from the threat of international sanctions. Shortly after taking office in 1981, Reagan's Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Chester Crocker, argued that the 'independence of Namibia should be tied to "a withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola and a commitment by the Marxist leaders in Angola to share power with [W]estern backed guerrillas"' (Dreyer 1994: 146). This policy became known as 'linkage' and was eagerly embraced by the South African government, which recognised an opportunity to delay the UN-

sponsored independence process and thus to buy time for its policy of fostering a conservative black elite within Namibia.

The deadlock over linkage produced renewed diplomatic efforts to find a solution acceptable to the many parties involved in Namibia's independence struggle. In 1982, the Western Contact Group (comprising Britain, France, West Germany, Canada and the United States) published a set of 'Constitutional Principles' designed to reassure investors and place limits upon SWAPO's capacity to undertake social or economic reforms at independence; civil liberties would be guaranteed, the right to property ownership respected and a Constituent Assembly elected to devise the post-colonial constitution 'by a two-thirds majority of its total membership' (Dreyer 1994: 147). Perhaps surprisingly, both Pretoria and SWAPO accepted these proposals without demur, although South African intransigence over the question of linkage was to prevent progress over the next few years.

Time, however, was not on South Africa's side. Relations with Washington had soured by 1986, as Pretoria's claim to represent a bulwark against communism was devalued by the reduction in superpower tensions and its brutal suppression of township unrest led to the imposition of congressional sanctions. These measures formed part of an international disinvestment campaign, orchestrated by developing countries and Western solidarity organisations, which exacerbated South Africa's economic difficulties and undermined its ability to source military hardware, weaponry and spare parts on the world market. Thus, when Fidel Castro decided to reinforce the Cuban expeditionary force in Angola, hoping that military victory would facilitate an 'honourable exit' (Dreyer 1994: 167) from the country, South African forces no longer enjoyed the overwhelming superiority in technology and firepower that had once existed. During a series of battles fought in 1987 and 1988, Cuban, MPLA and SWAPO units thwarted SADF/UNITA attempts to capture the Angolan town of Cuito Cuanavale and re-occupied positions along the southern border, but lacked the capacity to destroy UNITA or to

launch an invasion of Namibia; thus, as Brown (1995: 37) argued, the ‘conventional war had boiled down to a stalemate—the only circumstance which could have kept all parties coming back to the negotiating table’.

After a tortuous process of multilateral talks, the New York Accords were signed by South Africa, Angola, Cuba, the United States and Soviet Union on 22 December 1988. These agreements embodied the concept of ‘linkage’ and allowed both sides to claim victory: South Africa consented to Namibian independence under UN supervision, in return for a Cuban withdrawal from Angola. SWAPO, however, had been excluded from the negotiations and was forced to accept a number of important concessions to South Africa. As Dobell (1998: 75) noted:

Of all the parties concerned, it was SWAPO... that conceded the most. Substantial revisions in South Africa’s favour were made to the terms of the transition process[,] significantly improving the prospects for preventing SWAPO from winning a two-thirds majority in the elections. Most crucial was the role ceded to the Administrator-General in the transition, in effect giving him control over every stage of the process.

Such realities were to be obscured after independence, as SWAPO reproduced a dominant-party system on the basis of its claim to have ‘defeated’ South Africa, but their role in shaping electoral outcomes in 1989 and in limiting the liberation movement’s subsequent choice of social, economic and political policy priorities should not be under-estimated.

The Road to Independence

Though widely expected to win the Constituent Assembly elections by a wide margin, SWAPO faced three key challenges during the early months of 1989. First, there existed ‘two separate structures... seeking integration: one returning from exile, one emerging from internal repression’

(Cliffe et al. 1994: 146). These formations had performed separate functions, developed different organisational forms and communicated only sporadically during the struggle; executive power was principally exercised by the external wing, which controlled diplomatic activity, military strategy and policy-making, but by the late 1980s SWAPO's internal wing had begun to flex its muscles through the mobilisation of students, trade unionists and other civil society actors. Thus, a key challenge facing SWAPO in 1989 was to unite these disparate formations into a cohesive movement capable of winning the election and thereafter governing the country.

This process of integration had to be undertaken alongside the task of transforming SWAPO from a quasi-clandestine liberation movement with 'virtually no offices and barely any local formal structure' (Cliffe et al. 1994: 164) into a political party capable of mobilising its supporters on a nationwide basis. Efforts to build administrative capacity and recruit fieldworkers were frustrated by DTA-aligned chiefs or white farmers in Kaokoland, Hereroland and some southern districts of the country, but met with considerable success in Windhoek and the north, where a substantial number of offices opened and party workers engaged in door-to-door campaigning. Such activities may or may not have exercised a decisive influence on electoral outcomes in 1989, but there can be little doubt that SWAPO's administrative capacity—a key asset underpinning all of its election victories *since* independence—was developed and strengthened during this critical period in the party's history.

A third major challenge facing the liberation movement in 1989 was posed by Pretoria's role in the elections process and its determination to minimise, using any means necessary, the scale of SWAPO's victory. As Dobell (1998: 90) noted, 'South African-sponsored subterfuge took many shapes[,] includ[ing] the biased draft election and Constituent Assembly proclamations issued by the Administrator-General, the registration of some ten thousand South African citizens as voters under too-broad definitions of residency, bribery of SWAPO supporters, violent attacks on SWAPO rallies by members of the Koevoet, the obvious partiality

of the state-run radio and television (SWABC), and a R1m secret slush fund made available to SWAPO's election opponents'. Such tactics probably did 'some harm to SWAPO's fortunes in the election' (Dobell 1998: 91), but were later to backfire on the DTA, whose credibility was severely damaged by an admission in 1991 that it had received covert funding from the apartheid regime.

As the election date approached, Namibia's minor parties—realising that they could not hope to match the resources available to either SWAPO or the DTA—underwent a series of realignments designed to improve their prospects of obtaining representation in the Constituent Assembly. Perhaps most significant was the alliance of //Garoëb's Damara Council with CANU-UDF, the Labour Party, Original People's Party of Namibia, Namibia National Independence Party, Caprivi Alliance Party, Workers' Revolutionary Party and Parents' Unity Movement to form the United Democratic Front (UDF), a 'curious hotchpotch of tribal interests, hardline socialists, Caprivian politicians, and former SWAPO detainees' (Hopwood 2008: 75) which sought to represent a 'third way' between the liberation movement and DTA. It was dominated by the Damara Council and led by //Garoëb, whose status as chief of the Damara community was to represent a considerable asset during the elections. Also formed at approximately this time were Action Christian National (ACN), a right-wing alliance comprising the NPSWA and German Action/German South West Africa Committee; the Namibia National Front (NNF), comprising the Namibia Independence Party (NIP) and SWANU-Rekoro; the National Patriotic Front (NPF), comprising CANU-NPF, Action National Settlement and SWANU-Katjiuongua; and the Federal Convention of Namibia (FCN), comprising the Liberation Party and five smaller groups (Cliffe *et al.* 1994: 151-155).

The arguments, appeals and campaign tactics used in 1989 were to become familiar over the following decades: SWAPO emphasised its history of anti-colonial resistance and warned against support for collaborationist leaders, whilst the DTA and some minor parties focused

upon attacking the liberation movement rather than developing a set of alternative policies. Programmatic differences were marginal, as the parties 'had... fairly similar-sounding election platforms, stressing democracy (though SWAPO continued to hint at the possibility of single-party democracy), a mixed economy, and the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms (Dobell 1998: 96). Indeed, SWAPO's ambiguity on the merits of multipartyism suggested a reluctance to abandon its self-proclaimed role as 'vanguard party' for the Namibian 'revolution', rather than a determination to pursue socialist paths to development.

Thus, Namibia's first democratic election was held between 7 and 11 November 1989. Official results showed that, on a turnout of ninety-seven per cent, SWAPO won forty-one seats in the Constituent Assembly, the DTA took twenty-one seats, the UDF four seats, ACN three seats and the FCN, NPF and NNF one seat each. Controversy raged both at the time and later about the extent to which 'apartheid-entrenched ethnic affiliations' (Dobell 1998: 97) had dictated voting patterns at the regional level; Potgieter (1991: 39), for example, viewed SWAPO's ninety-two per cent majority in Owamboland and concomitant failure to penetrate Hereroland or Damaraland as clear evidence of 'tribal voting', whilst Cliffe *et al.* (1994: 256-257) and Lindeke, Wanzala and Tonchi (1992: 129-138) argued that these outcomes were related to intimidation, contrasting experiences of the liberation struggle and the use of patronage by parties linked to former bantustan governments, rather than ethnic primordialism. It is likely that all of the variables identified by Cliffe *et al.* (1994) and Lindeke *et al.* (1992) played a role in shaping electoral behaviour, although manipulation of communal identities was also widespread and undoubtedly contributed to opposition parties' success in attracting votes from minority communities. As Dobell (1998: 98-99) noted,

The election results were not ideal from any one party's perspective, but were perhaps the best possible outcome in terms of Namibia's prospects for democracy. SWAPO won 57.4 per cent of the total vote—nine per cent short of the two-thirds majority which would have enabled it to unilaterally draft and

adopt a national constitution, but a sufficiently comfortable majority... that SWAPO was not inclined to challenge the outcome... By the end of the transition, it was clear that to all intents and purposes, SWAPO's vision no longer differed significantly, either officially or unofficially, from that of the main opposition.

This emerging consensus was evident when the Constituent Assembly convened in November 1989, amidst remarkable scenes of 'co-operation and even camaraderie between the former arch-enemies' (Dobell 1998: 100). DTA chairman Dirk Mudge even suggested that SWAPO's draft constitution should be used as the starting point for negotiation and, proceeding on this basis, Assembly members reached compromise on the relatively few areas of dispute; SWAPO, for example, conceded DTA demands for proportional representation, a bicameral parliament and the abolition of emergency powers in return for an executive presidency and unitary system of government (Dobell 1998: 101). Therefore, Namibia's post-independence constitution was produced by a series of 'inter-party "pacts"' which maximised inclusion and ensured widespread acceptance, but 'imposed crucial limitations on... socio-economic restructuring' (Dobell 1998: 99-100). By guaranteeing the right to private property and adopting a cautious approach to the question of black empowerment, the parties had legitimised existing patterns of accumulation and rejected a radical solution to the inequalities bequeathed by apartheid.

From a DTA perspective, moreover, the adoption of proportional representation was to prove a mixed blessing. Closed party list systems for distributing political office tend, as noted in chapters two and five, to facilitate the inclusion of parties with a highly dispersed pattern of electoral support, whilst first-past-the-post systems exclude parties unable to muster a district-level plurality of the vote. In Table 1.1 below, I have used official data to compare the actual distribution of parliamentary seats created by Namibia's four post-apartheid elections—all of which took place under a system of proportional representation—with the outcomes likely to have been produced, *ceteris paribus*, by a plurality mechanism.

Table 1.1: DTA Performance in National Assembly Elections, 1994-2009				
Election	1994	1999	2004	2009
Share of national vote (%)	20.8	9.5	5.1	3.2
Number of seats won	15	7	4	2
Number of voting districts in which a plurality achieved	Not known	10	2	1

Source: Own calculations, from Electoral Commission of Namibia 2010.

Two points can perhaps be drawn from these data. On the one hand, proportional representation appears to have accentuated a collapse in DTA support in 1999, when the party shed more than half of its national voting base and eight of its fifteen seats in parliament; my analysis indicates that, had this election been conducted under a plurality system, three of these eight lost seats would have been retained. On the other hand, DTA representation is likely to have declined more rapidly under a plurality than under a proportional system thereafter, since the number of voting districts in which the party achieved a plurality was consistently lower than the total number of seats captured. Party chairman Dirk Mudge and his associates may have advocated a system of proportional representation in the hope that its distributional formula would complement their own patterns of electoral support, in other words, but this strategy spectacularly misfired in 1999 and served thereafter merely to moderate the DTA's seemingly inexorable slide towards political oblivion.

On 21 March 1990, as South Africa's flag was lowered at Windhoek sports stadium for the last time, however, these events lay far into the future. During more than a century of colonial rule, the country had endured racist governance, land expropriation, genocide, contract labour, police brutality, forced removals, Bantu Education and a liberation war that cost perhaps 14,000 lives (Brown 1995: 37); but it had now adopted a liberal constitution and was widely heralded as one of the brightest hopes for African democracy. As Sam Nujoma, recently elected state president by the Constituent Assembly, remarked in his speech marking Namibian

independence: 'This is the day for which tens of thousands of Namibian people laid down their lives, shed their blood, suffered imprisonment and endured a difficult life in exile. Today, our hearts are filled with great joy and jubilation because our deepest and longest yearning has been realised... The destiny of this country is now fully in our hands. We should, therefore, look to the future with confidence and hope' (Republic of Namibia 1999: 2-3).

Conclusion

The expression of such sentiments did not mean, of course, that Namibia's history of colonialism, apartheid and resistance had been forgotten; indeed, conflicting interpretations of these phenomena remain prominent in contemporary discourse and have played a vital role in forging the country's single party dominant system. As it was argued at the beginning of this chapter, four epochs have left a permanent imprint upon Namibia's society, economy and polity.

Namibia might have been settled by San and other nomadic groups during the first millennium AD, but the development of its modern state can be traced to German annexation in 1884 and von François' arrival at the head of a military expedition some eight years later. These and subsequent events were to have three effects on the Namibian body politic: first, commercial farming areas were separated from communal districts to the north; second, four-fifths of the Herero population was annihilated, leading to a numerical superiority of Owambo; and third, traditional governance structures were dismantled in the south and replaced by white magistrates or state-appointed chiefs. Nationalist resistance to these and subsequent abuses was to emerge during the 1940s, as intensified repression and the spread of pan-Africanism produced an upsurge of political activism amongst traditional leaders, contract workers and students. Early attempts to organise such groups were hampered by a tendency to make parochial demands and draw support from ethnic communities, but in 1959 the Herero paramount chief, Hosea Kutako,

oversaw the formation of a broad-based party, SWANU, which advocated nationalist policies and brought a range of leaders, including OPO president Sam Nujoma, on to its executive committee. When this cross-class alliance broke down, Kutako joined other nationalists in encouraging Nujoma to transform his organisation into a rival party. In 1960 OPO was reconstituted as SWAPO, a broad-based nationalist movement under Nujoma's leadership which adopted the pan-Africanist rallying cry of 'complete national independence now' (Dobell 1998: 32).

Thus, SWANU and SWAPO can be distinguished from all other Namibian political parties by the circumstances in which they were formed; though traditional authorities had played an important role in promoting co-operation and building administrative structures, the nationalist parties emerged from complex processes of mobilisation and so represented an organisational expression of societal grievances, rather than 'elite projects' founded upon personal ambition. These unique origins provided an unparalleled opportunity to mobilise mass support and recruit elites which SWAPO (though not SWANU) exploited during the early years of its existence, enlisting hundreds of inexperienced cadres and establishing a political hegemony amongst migrant workers, members of the Owambo ethnic community, the urban poor and students that was to endure for many decades.

Throughout the liberation struggle, SWAPO's strategy for achieving decolonisation rested upon two interlocking pillars: diplomacy and guerrilla warfare. This approach produced significant gains during the 1960s and 1970s, when world institutions declared apartheid colonialism illegal and proclaimed SWAPO to be the 'sole, legitimate and authentic representative of the Namibian people', but failed to secure Western sanctions against South Africa and—perhaps more worryingly—exacerbated a deterioration in the liberation movement's own political culture and decision-making processes. As cadres based in New York and other centres of international power began to dominate strategic planning, diplomatic activity and

military operations, a latent division between SWAPO's internal and external wings became increasingly institutionalised, such that party cadres performed distinct tasks from and enjoyed minimal contact with comrades belonging to the other faction. Moreover, Nujoma's demand to be treated with the deference commanded by many African leaders, as well as foreign donors' unwillingness to promote a human rights agenda and the widespread fear of South African infiltration, contributed to the development of an authoritarian political culture within SWAPO's external wing, which showed an increased willingness to equate criticism with treachery and to use force in the suppression of dissent. These tendencies were to culminate in the 'Shipanga Rebellion' of 1976-77 and 'spy drama' of 1982-89, when hundreds of SWAPO supporters were detained, tortured or killed by the movement's own security agents.

Yet SWAPO was to remain an essentially pragmatic organisation, continually adjusting its rhetoric and policies in order to maximise international support for the cause of Namibian independence. For example, the adoption of a leftist Political Programme in 1976 convinced some commentators (Katjavivi 1988: 109) that SWAPO had rejected capitalism in favour of scientific socialism; as subsequent events were to show, however, its change of direction was largely superficial and had been driven by a range of tactical concerns—above all, the need to secure Angolan and Soviet aid—rather than any ideological re-orientation. The realisation of Namibian independence, rather than any political system, remained SWAPO's core objective throughout its struggle with the apartheid state.

South African attempts to counter SWAPO's growing influence by fostering a conservative black middle class began with the Odendaal Report of 1964, which recommended that bantustan policy should be extended to Namibia. This exercise in differentiation, segregation and balkanisation was to exert a powerful influence upon the country's long-term political development, creating a sense of group competition and anti-Owambo prejudice that remains prevalent to this day; indeed, as noted in chapter two, ethnic particularism has been so frequently

manipulated that contemporary opposition politics is characterised by high levels of electoral volatility. Nevertheless, South Africa's divide-and-rule strategy was to culminate in the Turnhalle conference of 1975-77, which held three important implications for the Namibian polity. First, SWAPO's claim to represent all Namibians was strengthened by its absorption of several organisations opposed to the Turnhalle process, such as the Nama Chiefs' Council. Second, a number of parties opposed to the negotiations but unwilling to join SWAPO, including the Damara Council and SWANU, formed a confederation known as the Namibia National Front (NNF); this organisation collapsed in 1982, but its claim to represent a progressive alternative to SWAPO was resurrected seven years later, when the UDF emerged under //Garoëb's leadership. Finally, having formed the Republican Party as a 'progressive' alternative to the NPSWA, Dirk Mudge collaborated with the other Turnhalle delegates in establishing a confederation of ethnic parties, the DTA, which claimed to represent all Namibians but quickly emerged as a vehicle for imposing constitutional structures amenable to South Africa. The DTA achieved an overwhelming victory in the flawed internal election of 1978, but its contradictions and weaknesses soon initiated a process of decline that has persisted to the present day. By endorsing neo-apartheid structures and denigrating SWAPO, the Alliance attracted sufficient government support to conduct effective political campaigns and distribute patronage, but its collaborationism and failure to desegregate education meant that popular legitimacy remained elusive. As opponents gained ground in subsequent elections, the DTA's system of institutionalised factionalism became an increasingly serious political liability, encouraging a process of fragmentation in which affiliated parties withdrew from the Alliance to compete for power at the bantustan level. Such problems indicated that the DTA's core strengths—access to state resources and patronage, links with chiefly institutions and institutionalised inclusiveness—were not only insufficient to establish a hegemonic position within Namibian politics, but actually contained the seeds of its own destruction. The party's post-colonial decline has been

moderated, rather than reversed, by its successful advocacy at independence of proportional representation.

In 1989, as Namibia prepared for UN-supervised elections, SWAPO faced a different set of political and logistical difficulties: the absence of administrative and mobilisational capacity, especially in central and southern regions of the country; high illiteracy rates amongst core supporters; and a lingering division between its internal and external wings. Whilst voter education and capacity-building efforts achieved a remarkable degree of success during the months prior to Namibia's election, the failure to address or even acknowledge factional divisions was reflected in Nujoma's tendency to promote cadres from the former external wing, who came to dominate SWAPO's upper echelons and thus to shape the character and direction of post-colonial governments. Such practices were to rebound on the movement ten years later, when many disgruntled members of SWAPO's former internal wing defected to the Congress of Democrats (CoD).

As Dobell (1998: 98-99) implied, the distribution of seats produced by Namibia's 1989 election was uniquely suited to the realisation of democratic outcomes: SWAPO failed to obtain a two-thirds majority and so lacked the authority to dictate a constitution of its own choosing, whilst opposition parties secured a level of support sufficient to ensure their commitment to peaceful means of political contestation. Yet the election results also revealed the extent to which South Africa's policies of divide and rule, especially the bantustan and Turnhalle projects, had exacerbated social cleavages and thus influenced voter behaviour. As post-independence elections would confirm, Namibia's population had become divided into camps distinguished by their opposing perceptions of the liberation struggle; many whites, Coloureds and bantustan residents formed an 'anti-SWAPO' voting bloc associated with opposition politics, whilst people living in the central-north and in squatter camps around Windhoek displayed considerable loyalty towards the nationalist movement. These liberation-era cleavages were to endure for many years

after independence, permitting SWAPO to secure overwhelming victories in all subsequent elections and thus facilitating the reproduction of single party dominance.

2. Opposition Politics in Crisis? Single-party Dominance and Electoral Volatility in Namibia

When your chief has politics, then you follow the chief.

NUDO party worker to the author, 18 May 2009.

Party systems, unlike political parties, have been extensively analysed in the literature on African democratisation. Since the late 1990s, when electoral democracy more clearly emerged as the continent's principal form of governance, many comparativist scholars have tried to map the contours of a 'typical' African polity, using various types of statistical analysis to calculate the average effective number of parties or to assess the relationship between party system type and personal freedom. These studies produced a substantial degree of consensus on the nature and trajectory of democratic politics, with single-party dominance commonly described as prevalent (Bogaards, 2004; Erdmann and Basedau, 2007; Doorenspleet, 2003; van de Walle, 2003) and opposition parties dismissed as weak, fragmented, strategically insignificant and, therefore, unworthy of detailed analysis (Randall and Svåsand 2002: 302-303). According to Giovanni Carbone (2007: 10), for example, 'in-depth analyses of individual parties have been hardly attempted' because 'party organisations are often so weak that, in a sense, there appears to be little to observe'.

Yet even under conditions of single-party dominance, opposition politics is rarely a mere abstraction. Africa's minor parties have wielded enough influence to shape the terms of debate, manipulate ethnic consciousness, provide a limited degree of parliamentary oversight, force policy changes or to shape popular perceptions of electoral democracy. In some cases, such as

South Africa and Zambia, they have garnered enough support to dilute a super-majority or even to seize power. Elsewhere, opposition politics represents the principal arena of electoral competition, as numerous minor parties—having reluctantly accepted their inability to challenge for power—struggle endlessly to attract the relatively small number of voters unreconciled with dominant-party rule. To ignore opposition parties is, therefore, to construct an incomplete picture of democratic politics in contemporary Africa.

Given this background, my chapter seeks to answer the following question: *what are the causes of electoral volatility within a dominant-party system?* It is divided into three parts. In the first section, I provide an overview of Namibia's political and electoral history since independence, with a summary of the socio-economic challenges facing its SWAPO-led government, a breakdown of National Assembly voting patterns, a discussion of SWAPO's apparent lurch towards autocratic governance and an account of the factional struggles which incapacitated several of the country's most prominent parties after 1998. This analysis is used as a basis for arguing that Namibia's post-colonial political landscape has been characterised, first, by single-party dominance and, second, by a high level of electoral volatility within opposition politics.

In the second section, I argue that Namibia's acute opposition volatility can be traced to its high rate of party formation, summarise my argument (developed in chapter five) that opposition parties are principally interested in securing parliamentary representation and suggest that, in any given polity, processes of party formation are driven by an interaction of 'facilitating' (long-term) and 'triggering' (short-term) variables. I then identify and discuss three facilitating factors responsible for creating a political environment conducive to high rates of party formation: ethnic and racial particularism; the weakness of established opposition parties; and acute electoral system permissiveness at the parliamentary level. This discussion is followed by an analysis of the two triggering factors which, acting either in combination or in isolation, provide political entrepreneurs with an immediate incentive for taking action: personal defeat in the

context of intra-party factional conflict and the demonstration effects associated with Namibia's 2004 national elections.

Nevertheless, the third section of my chapter begins with an acknowledgement that, whilst party formation undoubtedly represents a prerequisite of electoral volatility, the magnitude of any party system re-alignment is determined by the mobilisational capacity of each new party. In Namibia, two factors distinguish 'viable' new parties from their unsuccessful counterparts. First, given that SWAPO's principal electoral asset is its role in the anti-colonial struggle and that opposition voters appear to be primarily concerned with finding a credible challenge to single-party dominance, any SWAPO splinter group is likely to boast a strong liberation narrative and, therefore, to attract a considerable degree of popular support. Second, where a new party cannot demonstrate strong liberation credentials, its mobilisational capacity is determined by organisational origin because splinter groups, unlike the 'outsider parties' formed beyond Namibia's political class, are often led by 'big men' whose public persona, personal resources and ethnic support networks can be harnessed effectively during an election campaign.

Thus, I conclude by arguing that, in Namibian opposition politics, electoral volatility is positively correlated with a high rate of splinter party formation. Two factors are highlighted as contributing to the prevalence of breakaway parties. First, owing to a number of variables more fully explored in chapter three, Namibian politics is characterised by a high level of centrifugal factionalism. Second, but perhaps most importantly, my analysis suggests that parties tend to be established by political entrepreneurs with a record of successful mobilisation rather than 'outsiders' lacking an objective basis for expectations of electoral success. Chronic electoral volatility is therefore a function of elite circulation, as opportunistic politicians repeatedly embrace and abandon political parties according to their short-term interests.

The Evolution of Namibia's Party System

At independence, Namibia faced a formidable array of problems associated with its colonial history, including racial polarisation, political intolerance, poverty and the legacies of violent conflict. Recognising the potential for unrest and yet determined to prevent a damaging outflow of capital, the country's first post-colonial government pursued a moderate course characterised by efforts to promote 'national reconciliation', re-assure the business community, integrate the administrative structures created under apartheid, inculcate a national identity and reduce inequality. Although insufficiently radical to eradicate many of the problems bequeathed by apartheid, these measures did facilitate the reproduction of a strong state, promote political stability and lay the foundations for macro-economic growth, whilst strengthening SWAPO's claim to represent the virtues of reconciliation, national unity and good governance.

Given that Namibia's independence election had been administered by South Africa and supervised by the international community, parliament legislated in 1992 to create a statutory body, the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN), responsible for enrolling voters, registering parties, supervising candidate nomination, organising elections, counting votes and announcing results (Hopwood 2008: 36). Electoral registration is undertaken once in every ten years, with supplementary registration generally conducted during the weeks preceding a national election; each voter is required to produce an identity card, passport, birth certificate, driving licence or, in the absence of any such official documentation, two sworn statements verifying his or her identity. Nevertheless, electoral registration has often been mired in allegations of incompetence, inefficiency and petty corruption, with a considerable number of deceased individuals apparently appearing on the roll and some ECN officials seeking to maximise their own remuneration by repeatedly registering voters (Hopwood 2008: 36-37). In 2009, ECN chairman Victor Tonchi announced that 1.3 million people had been enrolled during supplementary registration, before revising this figure to 1.2 million; a printed summary of the electoral roll subsequently made

available to journalists apparently contained the names of 961,000 registered voters, whilst ECN director Moses Ndjarakana declared shortly before polling day that 1.1 million people were eligible to vote (Duddy, *The Namibian*, 24 November 2009). Yet even if Namibia's voting roll is regarded, at best, as a blunt instrument for measuring its electorate (Hopwood 2008: 37), the underlying turnout patterns suggested by official data (see Table 2.1 below) are not necessarily implausible.

Table 2.1: Turnout in National Assembly Elections, 1989-2009					
	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009
No. registered voters (thousands)	701.5	654.2	878.9	977.7	1181.8
No. votes cast (thousands)	680.8	497.5	541.1	829.3	811.1
No. valid votes (thousands)	670.8	489.6	536.0	818.4	800.6
Turnout (%)	97.0	76.0	61.6	84.8	68.6

Source: Electoral Commission of Namibia, 2012; Hopwood 2008: 45.

Turnout, as measured by these official statistics, declined substantially during the first decade of independence, before rising significantly in 2004 and falling back again in 2009. Perhaps surprisingly, this pattern is to some extent corroborated by Afrobarometer (2010) survey data, which indicate that sixty-one per cent of Namibians discussed politics with their friends and family in 1999/2001, compared with seventy per cent in 2005/2006 and sixty-one per cent in 2008/2009. How can these trends be explained? On the one hand, Namibia's independence election—in which ninety-seven per cent of eligible voters allegedly participated—not only witnessed fraud, illicit voting and double-counting on a considerable scale, especially in districts traditionally aligned with the DTA (Cliffe *et al.* 1994: 125), but also attracted a degree of popular excitement that could not possibly be sustained. This sense of increased apathy may have been exacerbated by SWAPO's subsequent construction and reproduction of a single-party dominant system, which necessarily involved a considerable routinisation of campaign themes, communication strategies and election outcomes unlikely to stimulate popular interest in politics.

On the other hand, President Nujoma's retirement from state office—and the accompanying controversy over his heavy-handed support for heir apparent Hifikepunye Pohamba (see chapter three)—may have reinvigorated the electorate in 2004, whilst Pohamba's unremarkable record as state president and his decision to seek a second term in 2009 perhaps caused voters once again to lose interest in party politics. Electoral turnout would therefore appear to be correlated with changes in SWAPO rather than in opposition politics, although almost all parties (except the DTA) managed to benefit from increased levels of voter participation in 2004.

Namibia's first Presidential and National Assembly elections, as indicated in Tables 2.2 and 2.3 below, were held in 1994. Bolstered by its liberation history, post-colonial achievements, incumbent advantage and charismatic leadership, SWAPO achieved a landslide victory in both of these contests, taking almost three-quarters of the vote and thus securing its first super-majority in the National Assembly. The Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) retained its position as official opposition but lost six of its twenty-one parliamentary seats, whilst the Federal Convention of Namibia (FCN) collapsed, the United Democratic Front (UDF) shed two of its four seats and the white conservative vote—as measured by Action Christian National (ACN) support at independence and by Monitor Action Group (MAG) support thereafter—shrank from 3.5 per cent in 1989 to 0.81 per cent in 1994.

Table 2.2: Presidential Elections, 1994-2009					
Party	Candidate Name	1994	1999	2004	2009
		Vote share (%)	Vote share (%)	Vote share (%)	Vote share (%)
South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO)	Sam Nujoma Hifikepunye Pohamba	76.3	76.9	76.4	76.4
Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA)	Mishake Muyongo Katuutire Kaura	23.7	9.6	5.1	3.0
United Democratic Front (UDF)	Justus //Garoëb		3.0	3.8	2.4
Monitor Action Group (MAG)	Kosie Pretorius		1.2		
South West Africa National Union (SWANU)	Usutuaije Maamberua			0.4	
Congress of Democrats (CoD)	Ben Ulenga		10.5	7.3	0.7
National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO)	Kuaima Riruako			4.2	3.0
Republican Party (RP)	Henk Mudge			2.0	1.2
Namibia Democratic Movement for Change (NDMC)	Frans /Goagoseb				0.0
Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP)	Hidipo Hamutenya				11.1
All People's Party (APP)	Ignatius Shixwameni				1.2
Democratic Party of Namibia (DPN)	Salomon Isaacs				0.2
Communist Party (CP)	Attie Beukes				0.1
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	99.7

Source: Electoral Commission of Namibia

Table 2.3: National Assembly Elections, 1989-2009										
Party	1989*		1994		1999		2004		2009	
	Vote share (%)	No. Seats	Vote share (%)	No. Seats	Vote share (%)	No. Seats	Vote share (%)	No. Seats	Vote share (%)	No. Seats
South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO)	57.3	41	73.9	53	76.2	55	76.1	55	75.3	54
Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA)	28.6	21	20.8	15	9.5	7	5.1	4	3.2	2
United Democratic Front (UDF)	5.7	4	2.7	2	2.9	2	3.6	3	2.4	2
Federal Convention of Namibia (FCN)	1.6	1	0.2	0	0.1	0				
Workers' Revolutionary Party (WRP)			0.2	0						
Action Christian National (ACN)	3.5	3								
Namibia Patriotic Front (NPF)	1.6	1								
Namibia National Front (NNF)	0.8	1								
SWAPO-Democrats	0.5	0								
Christian Democratic Action for Social Justice (CDA)	0.4	0								
Namibia National Democratic Party (NNDP)	0.2	0								
Monitor Action Group (MAG)			0.8	1	0.7	1	0.9	1	0.6	0
Democratic Coalition of Namibia (DCN)			0.8	1	0.3	0				
South West Africa National Union (SWANU)			0.5	0	0.4	0	0.4	0	0.6	1
Congress of Democrats (CoD)					9.9	7	7.3	5	0.7	1
National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO)							4.2	3	3.1	2
Republican Party (RP)							2.0	1	0.8	1
Namibia Democratic Movement for Change (NDMC)							0.5	0	0.2	0
Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP)									11.3	8
All People's Party (APP)									1.4	1
Democratic Party of Namibia (DPN)									0.2	0
Communist Party (CP)									0.1	0
Total	100.2	72	99.9	72	100	72	100.1	72	99.9	72

* This election was for a Constituent Assembly, which became Namibia's first National Assembly upon independence in March 1990.

Source: Electoral Commission of Namibia

Table 2.4: Regional Authority Elections, 1992-2010								
Party	1992		1998		2004		2010	
	Vote share (%)	No. Seats	Vote share (%)	No. Seats	Vote share (%)	No. Seats	Vote share (%)	No. Seats
South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO)	68.8	71	69.6	82	79.1	97	79.0	97
Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA)	27.7	21	24.5	16	5.3	2	2.7	2
United Democratic Front (UDF)	2.5	3	4.6	4	3.2	4	2.2	3
Workers' Revolutionary Party (WRP)	0.0	0						
Namibia Patriotic Front (NPF)	0.2	0						
South West Africa National Union (SWANU)	0.7	0			1.6	1	0.4	0
Independents/local associations	0.1	0	1.2	0	0.1		0.6	0
Federal Convention of Namibia (FCN)			0.2	0				
Congress of Democrats (CoD)					5.4	0	0.6	0
National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO)					3.5	3	3.4	4
Republican Party (RP)					1.3	0		
Namibia Democratic Movement for Change (NDMC)					0.7	0		
Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP)							9.4	1
All People's Party (APP)							1.3	0
Democratic Party of Namibia (DPN)							0.2	0
United People's Movement (UPM)							0.2	0
Total	100	95	100.1	102	100.2	107	100.0	107

Source: Electoral Commission of Namibia, own calculations.

Table 2.5: Local Authority Elections, 1992-2010								
Party	1992		1998		2004		2010	
	Vote share (%)	No. Seats	Vote share (%)	No. Seats	Vote share (%)	No. Seats	Vote share (%)*	No. Seats
South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO)	58.0	184	58.8	187	64.4	173	67.4	226
Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA)	33.3	116	25.5	99	7.9	32	2.7	16
United Democratic Front (UDF)	5.9	18	6.7	26	6.3	26	7.5	23
Workers' Revolutionary Party (WRP)	0.1	0	0.1	0				
Namibia Patriotic Front (NPF)	0.1	0						
South West Africa National Union (SWANU)	1.5	1	0.2	0			0.0	0
Independents/local associations	1.2	1	8.2	16	4.2	7	2.9	3
Democratic Coalition of Namibia (DCN)			0.5	2				
Congress of Democrats (CoD)					10.4	34	0.6	0
National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO)					4.6	9	0.9	9
Republican Party (RP)					2.0	7		
Namibia Democratic Movement for Change (NDMC)					0.1	2		
Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP)							14.7	48
All People's Party (APP)							0.4	2
Democratic Party of Namibia (DPN)							0.8	0
United People's Movement (UPM)							2.1	3
Total	100.1	320	100.0	330	99.9	290	100.0	330

* These figures are approximate, since the data for three of Namibia's thirty-seven councils are unavailable (a shortcoming which probably explains the apparent over-representation of both NUDO and the DTA).

Source: Electoral Commission of Namibia, own calculations.

Perhaps emboldened by this success, during the second post-apartheid parliament (1995-2000) SWAPO abandoned its emphasis upon consensus, constructed a single-party executive, launched fierce rhetorical attacks against critics, centralised power and began to treat oversight bodies with disdain. In 1998, President Nujoma even committed Namibian forces to an armed intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) without consulting parliament and secured, courtesy of SWAPO's super-majority in the National Assembly, a constitutional amendment permitting him to seek a third term in office. These manoeuvres produced a backlash within the ruling party, however, which culminated in Ben Ulenga's resignation as High Commissioner to the United Kingdom and his formation of a splinter party, the Congress of Democrats (CoD), in March 1999. SWAPO responded with an ill-tempered and slanderous attack on the new party, accusing its leaders of being 'political malcontents... driven... by personal ambitions and infantile opportunism' and insinuating that Ulenga had revealed secrets when arrested by South African forces in 1976 (Bauer 2001: 44). More worryingly, Lodge (2000: 204-207) recorded more than twenty acts of intimidation during the subsequent election campaign, including attacks on CoD members, disruption of meetings and destruction of campaign materials.

Thus, notwithstanding the peaceful environment prevailing on polling day and the integrity with which ballots were counted, Namibia's second post-apartheid elections are widely judged to have been 'free but not completely fair' (Hopwood 2008: 40). Confounding predictions of a significant erosion in support, SWAPO retained its monopoly on the northern regions, increased its vote by 2.3 per cent and 2.4 per cent in the Presidential and parliamentary elections respectively and captured two additional seats in the National Assembly. The CoD took 10.1 per cent of the vote and seven seats in parliament, but its success was primarily achieved at the expense of the DTA, whose support base contracted from 20.5 per cent of the vote in 1994 to 9.5 per cent in 1999 (Hopwood 2005: 125; Lodge 2000: 226; Du Pisani and Lindeke 2009: 7).

Given widespread expectations that President Nujoma would not seek an additional term in office, Namibia's third parliament (2000-2005) was dominated by the issue of succession. Prime Minister Hage Geingob proved 'too obvious in garnering support within the party' (Interview W, male, civil society activist, Windhoek, 24 June 2009) and was sacked in 2002, but when two years later Nujoma finally confirmed his plan to retire from the state presidency, SWAPO's Politburo took the unprecedented step of nominating three candidates to contest the succession: lands minister, Hifikepunye Pohamba; foreign minister, Hidipo Hamutenya; and education minister, Nahas Angula. Pohamba emerged triumphant at an extraordinary congress held in 2004, although he had to wait a further three years before becoming president of the party.

As SWAPO grappled with its succession issue, the DTA appeared to be on the verge of collapse. Though transformed into a single party shortly after independence, its most powerful factions—the Republican Party (RP) and National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO)—had been permitted to retain their distinctive corporate, ethnic and political identities. Thus, in 2003 Henry 'Henk' Mudge (son of the DTA's co-founder, Dirk Mudge) announced that the RP had been re-activated and withdrawn from the party, whilst the Herero paramount chief, Kuaima Riruako, made a similar declaration with respect to NUDO a few months later (Hopwood 2008: 60-2). Frans /Goagoseb, a DTA National Councillor and Damara traditional leader, compounded the sense of crisis by registering a third splinter party, Namibia Democratic Movement for Change (NDMC), in February 2004 (Maletsky, *The Namibian*, 13 February 2004).

Thus, Namibia's third post-apartheid national election, which took place in November 2004, was contested by a 'new' SWAPO presidential candidate and an expanded field of opposition parties. There were fewer incidents of violence than in 1999, although official results demonstrated a remarkable degree of continuity with previous contests: Pohamba attracted 76.5 per cent of votes in the Presidential election, whilst SWAPO's parliamentary majority remained

unchanged at thirty-eight seats. The opposition vote underwent considerable fragmentation, as CoD shed two seats and the DTA lost one seat, whilst NUDO, the UDF and RP either obtained or increased the size of their parliamentary representation.

The tendency towards party fragmentation was to become increasingly marked during Namibia's fourth post-apartheid parliament (2005-2010), when several parties suffered the depredations of internecine conflict. At an extraordinary congress held in 2007, for example, the CoD ruptured into three factions organised around party president Ben Ulenga, vice-president Nora Schimming-Chase and former secretary-general Ignatius Shixwameni.⁶ After months of bickering and legal wrangling, Shixwameni resigned in September 2008 to form the All People's Party (APP), whilst Schimming-Chase and her followers walked out a year later, leaving CoD in the hands of Ulenga and a small rump of his supporters.

SWAPO's difficulties began in 2005, when Jesaya Nyamu—its minister of trade and industry—was expelled for writing a 'subversive' document (Interview R, male, journalist, Windhoek, 10 July 2009) setting out the options available to defeated presidential aspirant Hidipo Hamutenya. Two years later, as Pohamba prepared to assume the SWAPO leadership, Hamutenya resigned from the party and joined Nyamu in establishing a splinter group, the Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP), which swiftly attracted an array of individuals disaffected with the ruling party. In a repeat of the events witnessed in 1999, SWAPO cadres responded by attacking opposition supporters, disrupting meetings and attempting to prevent the RDP from campaigning in some staunchly pro-SWAPO areas.

Thus, Namibia's fourth Presidential and National Assembly elections were held in November 2009 amidst considerable tension. Results indicated that SWAPO had largely retained its core support base, capturing 75.3 per cent of the vote in the Presidential election and

⁶ Shixwameni will repeatedly feature in this thesis so it is worth noting that his name is pronounced, 'Shi-*ch*wa-may-nee', with the *ch* as a guttural sound akin to the Scottish 'loch'.

retaining a monopolistic hold upon the former Owamboland, whilst losing one seat in the National Assembly. Despite the participation of fourteen registered parties, a number not surpassed since the days of apartheid balkanisation, RDP's emergence prompted a consolidation of opposition support, as voters deserted the CoD, DTA, NUDO, UDF, RP and MAG in favour of Hamutenya's party; a few months later it was announced that the RP and RDP would unite, creating an official opposition with nine seats in parliament (Weidlich, *The Namibian*, 8 September 2010).

* * * * *

What conclusions can be drawn from this overview of post-colonial history? First, given that SWAPO has secured four consecutive legislative majorities since independence, Namibia clearly satisfies the three-term test for dominance outlined in Sartori's (2005: 173-176) classic treatise. Second, Namibia's party system appears to be characterised by a high level of electoral stability. The effective number of legislative parties, as defined by Laakso and Taagepera, has been low and relatively static since independence, falling from 2.41 in 1989 to 1.71 in 1994 and 1.66 in 1999 before rising to 1.68 in 2004 and 1.73 in 2009. Such incremental change reflects the institutionalisation of single-party dominance and the remarkable durability of SWAPO's support base, which stabilised at three-quarters of the electorate in 1994 and which subsequently facilitated four successive parliamentary majorities of almost identical size. Moreover, survey data suggest that Namibians exhibit an unusually high level of partisan loyalty. In a poll undertaken during the late 1990s, for example, Keulder (2000: 280) found that 87.3 per cent of informants displayed a 'strong' or 'very strong' allegiance to their preferred party, with only 9.1 per cent having considered voting for an alternative.

Yet the Laakso-Taagepera index, as several authors have shown, is a fundamentally unreliable tool for describing party systems or for assessing the extent of electoral volatility. According to Lindberg (2006: 40) and Bogaards (2008: 123) respectively,

The main problem with effective number of parties as an indicator of real levels of competition is that multiple distinct outcomes can be represented by the same number on the index and some of these can be very misleading.

We know that countries with a similar effective number of parties may have different party systems... Cape Verde has on average 1.9 [effective] parties, but has witnessed two alternations [of ruling party] already and is non-dominant, whereas Namibia with the same average effective number of parties has a dominant party system.

More importantly perhaps, the impression of electoral stability created by Namibia's Laakso-Taagepera scores is also misleading, because the overwhelming size and remarkable cohesion of SWAPO's support base serves to obscure the extremely high level of volatility within opposition politics. This latter phenomenon is captured in Table 2.6 below, where Pedersen's index of volatility has been used to estimate the electoral gains and losses incurred by Namibia's opposition parties at each of the parliamentary elections held since 1994.

Table 2.6: Opposition volatility in Namibia, 1994-2009				
Measure	1999	2004	2009	Mean
Total opposition vote (%)	23.8	23.9	24.7	24.1
Pedersen score (party system)	12.4	7.6	13.3	11.1
Pedersen score (opposition)	43.0	32.2	53.9	43.0

Source: Own calculations, from Electoral Commission of Namibia.

These data represent only an estimate of opposition volatility, since SWAPO supporters are assumed never to have cast a vote for an opposition party and vice versa—in other words, total opposition support is (unrealistically) considered to have a volatility score of zero. Nevertheless, it would appear reasonable to suggest that up to one-half of the total opposition vote can be expected to shift between opposition parties at any given election, with the contests in 1999 and

2009 having produced the greatest degree of volatility.⁷ Why does opposition politics exhibit such chronic levels of instability? It is this question which I seek to answer in the present chapter.

Party Formation

In any multi-party democracy, electoral volatility might be caused by one of several independent variables. A formal merger or coalition between established parties, for example—such as that between South Africa’s Democratic Party, New National Party and Federal Alliance in 2000—could prompt a consolidation of support around the new organisation. Second, floor-crossing can promote the re-organisation of partisan allegiances in parliament, as in South Africa between 2004 and 2007 (Lemon 2009: 671). Third, a party can be disproportionately affected by changed patterns of voter turnout. Fourth, voters might re-locate to the established minor parties *en masse*, as occurred in Britain after 1970. Finally, newly-created parties can attract a degree of support sufficient to re-align the party system, as Zimbabwe’s Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) did in 2000.

Which of these processes is responsible for the high levels of electoral volatility observed in Namibia? Floor-crossing and coalition-building can be readily discarded as credible variables, since the former has been subject to a constitutional prohibition and the latter almost entirely absent since independence. Weiland’s (1995: 349-357) claim that SWAPO’s electoral breakthrough in 1994 was related to a low turnout of opposition voters, rather than a surge in support for the ruling party, can also be dismissed as inconsistent with the patterns witnessed in subsequent elections. Thus, it is possible to suggest that Namibia’s high rate of volatility should be attributed to large-scale and repeated shifts in partisan allegiance. Given that established

⁷ The Pedersen index of volatility is calculated by adding each percentage change in party support and dividing by two (Carbone 2005: 427).

opposition parties rarely benefit from electoral volatility—the UDF is exceptional in having exhibited growth between any two elections— party formation would appear to represent the most likely cause of this phenomenon in Namibia.

What is the evidence that Namibia exhibits a high rate of party formation? In Tables 2.7 and 2.8 below, I have displayed information relating to the number of opposition parties competing in each of Namibia’s democratic elections and to the number of parties registered at the ECN respectively.

Table 2.7: Electoral Contestation, 1989-2009	
Year	Number of Parties
1989	10
1994	8
1999	7*
2004	9
2009	14

Table 2.8: No. New Parties Registered, 1990-2012	
Period	Number of Parties**
1990-1994	3
1995-2000	1
2000-2005	3
2005-2010	5
2010-	1

*This figure excludes the Federal Convention of Namibia (FCN) which, though registered with the ECN, ‘never did any visible campaigning and did not issue a manifesto’ (Hopwood 2008: 76).

**These figures do not include residents’ associations, which have to date competed only in local authority elections. Source: Hopwood 2008: 42-44.

Three conclusions can be drawn on the basis of such data. First, Namibia has a large number of political parties, with fourteen organisations competing for 1.2 million votes in 2009 (Duddy, *The Namibian*, 24 November 2009). Second, given that at least one group has received ECN recognition during each of the past five electoral cycles, party formation can be regarded a perennial feature of Namibian politics. Finally, as illustrated in Table 2.8, Namibia’s party formation rate has accelerated since 1995, with more than one-third of the fourteen participants in its most recent National Assembly election having been established during the 2005-2010 parliamentary cycle. Why have these developments taken place and what are the implications for opposition politics?

As two recent articles (Mozaffar and Scarritt 2005: 407; Randall and Svåsand 2002: 33) note, party formation is commonly attributed either to the 'bottom-up' organisation of societal cleavages or to the 'top-down' imposition of bureaucratic structures by 'ambitious politicians' seeking a 'means to political advancement'. In Namibia, the absence of policy debate and lack of dialogue with civil society would suggest that parties conform to the latter characterisation; indeed, whilst Emminghaus (2002 cited in Hunter, 2005: 3) asserts that a principal function of Western parties is to recruit elites, in Namibia it is the elites which recruit political parties. To understand the causes of acute electoral volatility, it is necessary therefore to begin with two questions about opposition politics, elite behaviour and party formation in the Namibian context.

First, what do opposition party leaders wish to achieve? In chapter five, I argue that each of the opposition parties is driven by a desire to capture parliamentary representation and that four factors have contributed to this choice of objective. First, the single-constituency closed party list system used in National Assembly elections is more permissive than the majoritarian, plurality and multi-constituency closed party list mechanisms employed at presidential, regional and local level respectively. Second, opposition party leaders derive a substantial range of personal benefits from their election to parliament, including a generous salary, pension and expenses package, myriad travel opportunities and considerable social privilege. Third, Namibia provides a small amount of public money to its parliamentary parties, which each receive a bloc grant worth up to N\$20,000 (US\$2,900) per seat per annum, but disburses nothing either to parties competing in their debut election or to groups with representation only at the regional/local level. Finally, given that National Assembly business is often reported by the television, radio and printed media, parties can expect to derive considerable publicity from their participation in ceremonies, debates and committee work.

The other major puzzle relating to opposition politics can be summarised as follows: why do so many of Namibia's political entrepreneurs have enough confidence in their chances of mobilising electoral support to form and to lead a political party? To answer this question, it will be necessary to identify and to explore the two sets of factors responsible for informing elite attitudes, perceptions and responses: first, the long-term 'facilitating' variables, such as ethnic particularism and electoral system design, which create an environment conducive to the capture of parliamentary office; and second, the short-term 'triggering' factors, including intra-party factionalism, which present political entrepreneurs with an immediate incentive for taking action. I begin with an examination of the former category.

Facilitating Variables

Ethnic Polarisation

Ethnicity is perhaps one of the most contested concepts in social science. Colonial-era anthropologists and other advocates of the 'primordialist' school, for example, tended to define it as:

A basic form of affiliation that naturally emerges as people are socialised into cultures with long histories; children are born into ethnic groups and develop deep-seated attachments to them. The most extreme primordial position is taken by socio-biologists, who believe that ethnicity is a legacy of the struggle for food and shelter. In this controversial perspective, ethnic solidarity is seen as an extension of the biologically driven feelings that link individuals to their nuclear family and kin (Johnston, Gregory, Pratt and Watts 2000: 236).

Such analyses are however rejected by most contemporary scholars, including myself, in favour of a 'constructivist' perspective such as that advanced by Erdmann and Basedau (2007: 17):

Ethnicity is... a historically, socially, and politically constructed identity; it is multifaceted, changeable, and can have multiple meanings... Ethnic identity... covers different kinds of socio-political identities or societal selfconsciousness which is moulded by social (including habitual or cultural), economic and political factors.

As importantly for our present purposes perhaps, these two authors also argue that the extent to which ethnic identity drives party formation is determined by four variables. First, the ‘numbers and relative sizes [sic] of the ethnic groups’ exert a significant influence upon the political expression of identity (Erdmann and Basedau 2007: 17). As noted in my introductory chapter, Namibia’s ethnic configuration is highly unusual: while almost one-half of citizens are Owambo, the largest minority community boasts only eleven per cent of the population. Fear of Owambo domination has been a prominent aspect of minority discourse since the colonial era, when South Africa encouraged suspicions that independence would lead to the oppression of minority groups by an ‘Owambo’ liberation movement and alleged that Nama, Damara and Herero cadres were persecuted at SWAPO’s camp in Lubango. This legacy of distrust is today reflected in the apparently sincere belief that SWAPO has constructed an ‘Owambo-dominated’ government since independence (Interview A2, female, Windhoek, 27 May 2009), even though only thirteen of the country’s twenty-four ministers were drawn from the Oshiwambo-speaking community in June 2008.⁸

A second factor highlighted by Erdmann and Basedau (2007: 17) relates to the ‘physical distribution of [ethnic] groups whether concentrated or dispersed’. When a country’s political geography is characterised by high levels of spatial proximity and ethnic homogeneity, such that people live in densely-populated but mono-ethnic regions, the ‘physical proximity engendered by group concentration facilitates the strategic face-to-face interaction of small groups, which helps to solidify the otherwise loose links among the subgroups. The associated affinity of place,

⁸ Members of the Oshiwambo-speaking group were identified by surname and birthplace, using the list of ministers found in Hopwood (2008: 294).

moreover, helps to define the common interests of the emergent, spatially anchored larger group in electoral competition with similarly constructed groups' (Mozaffar, Scarritt and Galaich 2003: 386). High levels of concentration serve to enhance group solidarity, to reduce the difficulties involved in communicating ideas and, therefore, to facilitate ethnic mobilisation.

Namibia's most recent census exercise was undertaken in 2001 and chose to ignore ethnic identity, although it did reveal a high degree of demographic concentration and *linguistic* homogeneity. Most strikingly, the 'Four O' regions of north-central Namibia—Oshikoto, Oshana, Omusati and Ohangwena—collectively account for 10.3 per cent of the country's land area but 42.6 per cent of its inhabitants, of whom some 93.5 per cent belong to the Oshiwambo-speaking community (Republic of Namibia, 2001). Indeed, whilst many other regions of the country appear to have a low population density and a relatively high level of linguistic heterogeneity, such headline figures can be deceptive: arid landscapes, lack of transport and poor agricultural conditions have obliged people to cluster around isolated towns, villages and other centres of population. Namibia's combination of spatial concentration and ethnic homogeneity is conducive to the 'unmediated communication of ideas, strategies, and resources' which, according to Mozaffar *et al.* (2003: 386), underpins successful political mobilisation.

Third, Erdmann and Basedau (2007: 17) urge scholars to consider 'the quality (or intensities) of the various ethnic identities, i.e. the degree to which coexisting ethnicities are politically mobilised or not'. Anecdotal evidence would suggest that, in Namibia, prejudice and stereotyping are prevalent at all levels of society. According to a middle-ranking party official, for example,

Damara people are easy to communicate with and others are abusing that. Although the Hereros are a minority in this country, they are very tribal and if they dominate in a particular area they will use that power to take all your cattle (Interview S, female, UDF regional co-ordinator, Swakopmund, 1 November 2009).

According to a letter published in *The Namibian* newspaper and reproduced by Diener (2001: 256),

We hear that, according to acceptable African values, especially in the Oshikwanyama tradition, to qualify as a leader a person should be tall and huge so that all people can see and respect him. And Kwanyamas, as tall people, are born to rule other tribes (letter, 1996 cited in Diener, 2001: 256).

A white hostel worker and self-confessed ‘Southwester’ was even more crude in her use of ethno-racial stereotypes, telling me that:

White people here like to spend money on their houses, but they [black people] prefer to spend it on their cars. I am not racist and I would get angry if someone accused me of being racist... But if I am driving in my car and someone cuts me up... I will say to myself, “Bloody *keaffir*!” (Interview Z, female, hotel worker, Windhoek, 12 July 2009)

To what extent is this anecdotal evidence of ethno-racial politicisation supported by survey data? In 2005 and 2008, Afrobarometer (2010) asked a representative sample of 1,200 Namibian citizens to choose between their ethnic and national identities; the results are summarised in Table 2.9 below.

Table 2.9: Salience of Ethnic Identities in Namibia, 2005-2008				
Question	Response	2005	2008	Change
Let us suppose that you had to choose between [your national and ethnic identity]. Which of the following statements best expresses your feelings?	Ethnic identity only	3.1	9.4	+6.3
	Ethnic more than national identity	5.4	10.3	+4.9
	National and ethnic identities equal	33.8	44.5	+10.7
	National more than ethnic identity	9.6	10.8	+1.2
	National identity only	40.1	23.9	-16.2
	Not applicable	7.6	0.7	-6.9
	Don't know	0.4	0.3	-0.1
Total		100	99.9	

Source: Afrobarometer (2010).

Two patterns can be discerned in these data. On the one hand, a significant majority (64.2 per cent) of respondents questioned in 2008 appear to have regarded ethnic identity as more than or equally as important as national identity, whilst a sizeable minority (9.4 per cent) felt entirely detached from the nation-building project. On the other hand, despite long-running government efforts to combat ‘tribalism’, ethnicity has become an increasingly important source of political identity over the past few years, with half as many informants articulating no ethnic affiliation—and three times as many professing no national identity—in 2008 as in 2005. Such evidence tends to reinforce the claim, made in du Pisani and Lindeke’s recent study (2009: 18) of democratic consolidation, that Namibia is undergoing a process of ‘retribalisation’ in which ethnic identities are revived, revitalised and reproduced for the purposes of political mobilisation. Its causes have yet to be systematically investigated, although one clue may lie in Table 2.10 below.

Table 2.10: Perceptions of Political Influence in Namibia, 2005-2008			
Question	Response	2005	2008
Think about the condition of [your ethnic group]. Do they have less, the same or more influence in politics than other groups in this country?	Much more	20.1	22.8
	More	21.3	18.6
	Same	36.2	29.4
	Less	10.2	19.7
	Much less	2.2	7.1
	Not applicable	7.6	0.7
	Don't know	2.3	1.7
Total		99.9	100

Source: Afrobarometer (2010).

As these Afrobarometer (2010) data indicate, the proportion of Namibians believing that ethnic or racial identity has no bearing upon political influence (as denoted by the ‘same’ category above) declined from 36.2 per cent in 2005 to 29.4 per cent in 2008, whilst the proportion perceiving their own group to enjoy ‘less’ or ‘much less’ influence than other communities more than doubled—from 12.4 per cent to 26.8 per cent—over that same period. By 2008, indeed,

some 70.6 per cent of respondents believed that ethnic or racial identity and political power were to some extent correlated. This marked shift in popular opinion could not be fully investigated by Afrobarometer, which necessarily posed a rigid schedule of questions, but it did coincide with the creation of several splinter parties, such as NUDO, the RP and the NDMC, willing to construct electoral narratives around the perceived danger of Owambo domination and the expectation, prevalent in some rural areas, of loyalty to traditional authority. ‘Retribalisation’, in other words, might be attributed not only to Namibia’s peculiar political geography, with its combination of Owambo preponderance and minority fragmentation, but also to the mobilisational strategies adopted by a number of newly-established parties.

Finally, Erdmann and Basedau (2007: 17) suggest that ‘some degree of historical contingency matters, particularly under circumstances of fluidity of both ethnic identity and political institutions’. In Namibia, a number of minority communities which benefited from racial segregation, or otherwise collaborated with the apartheid regime, have had a difficult relationship with SWAPO since independence. Despite the government’s professed commitment to non-racialism and to nation-building, for example, whites are occasionally denounced at SWAPO rallies and accused of failing to embrace the spirit of national reconciliation. Namibia’s mixed-race Baster community, which settled at Rehoboth in 1870 and is generally considered to be distinct from its Coloured population, enjoyed considerable autonomy during the apartheid period and continues to demand the return of communal property seized by the government at independence (McNab, 2008). In the Caprivi Region, SWAPO’s willingness to seek partisan advantage from a long-running conflict between the Subia and Mafwe traditional authorities has served to deepen a reservoir of anti-government sentiment in Linyanti and even to provoke an outbreak of secessionist violence (Fisch, 1999). Such hostility towards the ruling party has caused many Mafwe voters, as well as a considerable number of whites and Rehoboth Basters, to eschew partisan loyalty in favour of supporting whichever group poses the most credible challenge to single-party dominance.

This alienation is illustrated in Table 2.11 below, where Afrobarometer (2010) survey data on popular attitudes towards the ruling party have been aggregated and displayed.

Table 2.11: To What Extent do you Trust the Ruling Party?						
	Not at all	Just a little	Somewhat	A lot	Don't know	Total
Owambo	8.8	14.0	22.7	53.0	1.5	100.0
Herero	24.7	22.5	29.2	23.6	1.1	100.0
Caprivian*	24.1	35.2	25.9	24.1	5.6	100.0
Kavango	16.0	30.4	26.4	26.4	0.8	100.0
White**	21.6	21.6	19.6	35.3	3.9	100.0
Nama	14.7	25.0	26.5	35.3	0.0	100.0
Damara	27.5	21.6	19.6	27.5	3.9	100.0
Coloured***	17.8	22.2	24.4	35.6	2.2	100.0
Tswana	33.3	16.7	25.0	25.0	0.0	100.0
San	37.5	0.1	0.0	12.5	37.5	100.0
Other	11.1	22.2	22.2	44.4	0.0	100.0
Mean	21.6	21.0	22.0	31.2	5.1	100.0

* Includes Caprivian, Lozi, Subia and Mufwe.

** Includes English, Afrikaner, German and Portuguese.

*** Includes Basters.

Source: Afrobarometer (2010).

Given that Afrobarometer data are collected from a randomised cross-section of Namibia's population, it must be noted that any resultant findings will be more robust when applied to the Owambo community ($n=613$) than to its Kavango ($n=125$), Damara ($n=102$), Herero ($n=89$), Nama ($n=68$), Caprivian ($n=65$), white ($n=55$), Coloured ($n=45$) and San ($n=8$) counterparts. Nevertheless, sufficient evidence can be derived from the survey data to suggest that ethno-racial identity and political alienation are to some extent correlated. On the one hand, some 75.7 per cent of Owambo respondents trusted SWAPO 'somewhat' or 'a lot', compared with 54.9 per cent of whites, 52.8 per cent of Herero, 50.0 per cent of Caprivians and 47.1 per cent of Damara; indeed, more than half of Owambo participants, but only one-quarter of Herero, Kavango and Caprivians, expressed absolute trust in the ruling party. On the other hand, some 16.0 per cent of Kavango, 21.6 per cent of whites, 24.7 per cent of Herero and 27.5 per cent of Damara expressed no trust whatsoever in the former liberation movement, compared with only 8.8 per

cent of Owambo. This correlation between ethnic identity and political partisanship is further illustrated in Table 2.12 below, where Afrobarometer (2010) data on voting intention has been cross-matched with group self-identification.

Table 2.12: Political Partisanship by Ethno-Racial Group, 2008												
	Proportion of Electoral Support (%)											
	APP	CoD	DTA	NUDO	RDP	SWAPO	UDF	Other	Would not vote	Refused to answer	Don't know	Total
Ovambo	0.2	1.5	1.0	0.3	8.6	66.4	0.0	1.3	3.6	11.1	6.0	100.0
Herero	1.1	2.2	7.9	27.0	13.5	21.3	1.1	6.7	6.7	7.9	4.5	99.9
Caprivian	1.5	3.1	9.2	0.0	10.8	44.6	0.0	1.5	15.4	9.2	4.6	99.9
Kavango	17.5	3.2	1.6	0.0	7.1	47.6	0.0	4.0	8.7	8.7	1.6	100.0
White	1.8	0.0	8.9	3.6	12.5	19.6	0.0	5.4	7.1	23.2	17.9	100.0
Nama	0.0	8.8	10.3	0.0	10.3	38.2	2.9	1.5	2.9	8.8	16.2	99.9
Damara	0.0	5.0	7.9	2.0	5.9	28.7	15.8	4.0	14.9	6.9	8.9	100.0
Coloured	2.2	8.9	11.1	0.0	2.2	31.1	0.0	2.2	15.6	11.1	15.6	100.0
Tswana	0.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	21.4	21.4	7.1	0.0	7.1	14.3	14.3	99.9
San	0.0	12.5	25.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	12.5	25.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Other	0.0	11.1	0.0	0.0	11.1	44.4	0.0	0.0	11.1	11.1	11.1	99.9

Source: Afrobarometer (2010).

Four points can perhaps be extrapolated from these data. First, none of the parties listed in Table 2.12 is mono-ethnic in character; SWAPO, the DTA, RDP and CoD each appear to have drawn support from a broad cross-section of the national population, whilst even NUDO, the APP and UDF managed to attract followers from four or more of the communities featured. Second, however, ethno-racial identity *is* to some extent correlated with political partisanship because the distribution of electoral support, as predicted by Afrobarometer’s 2008 survey, varies considerably by population group. Thus non-Owambo respondents are by far the most likely to favour opposition parties, whilst APP, NUDO and UDF support is most prevalent within the Kavango, Herero and Damara communities respectively. Finally, but most importantly, ethno-racial identity is also to some extent correlated with partisan non-alignment, since 15.6 per cent of Coloureds, 16.2 per cent of Nama and 17.9 per cent of whites—but only 6.0 per cent of Owambo, 4.5 per cent of Herero and 1.6 per cent of Kavango—were unsure as to which party would receive their vote. When combined with the clear evidence of an interaction between minority identity and political alienation, this finding suggests that a significant proportion of opposition voters do indeed ‘float’ rather than adhere to any particular party.

* * * * *

What is the evidence that political entrepreneurs seek to exploit this combination of minority discourse, spatial concentration, linguistic homogeneity and historical animosities for the purpose of establishing political parties? In some cases, the formation of a party is accompanied by explicit appeals to ethnic identity. When the Republican Party re-formed in 2003, for example, a press report noted that:

Party representatives met in Windhoek... a week ago. The meeting said there was a need for the previously advantaged [i.e., whites] to organise themselves in political parties, trade unions and other representative organisations as others had done since Independence. “The Republican Party... intends to accept this role and wants to make a meaningful contribution towards the solution of a problem which has up to now led to friction and misunderstanding”, Republican Party

Secretary-General Carola Englebrecht said in a statement (Staff Reporter, *The Namibian*, 22 April 2003).

More commonly, however, ethnic mobilisation is accomplished by highlighting issues or promoting symbols which resonate with particular sections of the population. Thus, parties seeking to secure the white vote have attacked SWAPO's position on land expropriation in Zimbabwe, its policy on affirmative action and its alleged mismanagement of Air Namibia (Mudge to Holtzhausen, personal comm., 27 July 2009). Kuaima Riruako's NUDO, which defected from the DTA in 2003, has repeatedly 'mobilised Hereros around the demand for reparations from the German government for the 1904-07 genocide' (Hopwood 2005: 128), as well as around the call for a resettlement policy which 'recognise[s] that some indigenous communities have been dispossessed of land more than others' (Election Watch, 2010). Despite its claim to 'welcome everyone, irrespective of their race, colour, ethnic or tribal origin' (Kangueehi, *New Era*, 17 March 2008) the APP's inaugural congress 'called upon the government and the [Namibian Broadcasting Corporation] to make sure that LOZI, RUKAVANGO and the SAN services are immediately connected to the national service so that they can also be heard countrywide like all the other language services of the NBC [original emphasis]' (APP, press release, May 2009).⁹ Such strategies reflect Namibia's high levels of ethnic polarisation, concentration and homogeneity, which provide inexpensive opportunities for elites to mobilise support and so to establish a political party.

Party Credibility

How do Namibians regard their established political parties? An early answer to this question was provided in 2000, when Keulder's (2000: 282) survey of one thousand adults selected at

⁹ Lozi and Rukavango are the principal languages in the Caprivi and Kavango regions respectively.

random across Namibia's thirteen regions found that 'all parties, except SWAPO, were more strongly disliked than strongly liked by voters', with 42.2 per cent and 43.1 per cent of respondents expressing dislike for the DTA and UDF respectively. More recently, as indicated in Table 2.13 below, Afrobarometer (2010) respondents have been asked about the degree to which opposition parties are 'trusted'.

Table 2.13: Trust in Opposition Parties, 2005-2008			
How much do you trust opposition political parties?	Response	2005	2008
	Not at all	30.6	28.6
	Just a little	31.3	30.2
	Somewhat	21.9	22.2
	A lot	12.4	16.1
	Don't know	3.5	2.9
	Total	99.7	100.0

Source: Afrobarometer (2010).

As these data indicate, an absolute majority of respondents—some 61.9 per cent in 2005 and 58.8 per cent in 2008—expressed little or no trust in opposition parties when questioned by Afrobarometer, whilst only a small minority (16.1 per cent in 2008) expressed 'a lot' of confidence in organisations seeking, in theory at least, to wrest power from the ruling party. There appear to be three main reasons for this lack of credibility. First, many opposition parties are considered to be mono-ethnic in composition; when asked about his decision to join the RDP rather than an established party, for example, former director of elections Philemon Kanime (int., 24 June 2009) told me that:

All these parties, CoD, DTA, RP, UDF or NUDO, some are tribal-orientated parties... who [say], "There is no need for me to go to other areas because I do not have interest in the other areas; I would rather just to go to the areas where... my people will listen to me on tribal basis"... I do not want to associate myself with this kind of a party. I have been spending all my years in the struggle fighting [for] this country, now I end up joining a tribal party? It would be a

shame on me, completely a shame—betraying my own philosophy which I have been fighting for all these years.

Another RDP national executive committee member (Interview I, male, Windhoek, 3 June 2009) picked up a list of parties and said, ‘You see, the [Namibia Democratic Party] is only for Caprivian people; the [Democratic Party of Namibia] is for Nama-speaking people; UDF is for the Damara people; SWANU is for the Herero; NUDO is for the Herero; MAG is for the whites; [and] the RP is also ethnic’. Given that many parties seek to mobilise support on the basis of ethnic identity, these suspicions are not entirely without foundation.

Second, some of Namibia’s opposition parties have yet to counter the opprobrium arising from their collaboration with apartheid South Africa. The DTA, for example, has failed to change its name, retained leaders with collaborationist origins, championed the cause of former South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF) combatants (Maletsky, *The Namibian*, 19 April 2007) and even campaigned on its ‘achievements’ in government before 1989 (Lodge 2000: 204). According to a former SWAPO member who defected to the CoD in 1999, ‘of the [older parties], except for SWANU, we thought the rest were part of the previous regime and therefore compromised; they were not part of the movement that fought for the country’s independence and we thought we did not want to be part of that’ (int., Tsudao Gurirab, 3 June 2009). When asked about their reasons for joining a new rather than existing party, ten informants asserted that the DTA had been discredited by its connections with apartheid South Africa.¹⁰

Third, several opposition parties have experienced prolonged internal feuds, waged in the glare of media publicity, which paralysed their decision-making structures, prevented the communication of coherent messages and thus alienated much of the electorate. As the only

¹⁰ These interviews were as follows: Gurirab, int., 3 June 2009; Interview D, CoD National Working Group member, Windhoek, 10 June 2009; Namises, int., 19 May 2009; Interview E, CoD National Working Group member, Windhoek, 2 June 2009; Interview I, RDP national executive committee member, Windhoek, 3 June 2009; Interview M3, male, RDP national executive committee member, Windhoek, 11 May 2009; Kanime, int., 24 June 2009; Interview L, RDP national executive committee member, Windhoek, 23 June 2009; Interview M, RDP regional secretary, Windhoek, 1 June 2009; Nyamu, int., 5 June 2009.

party not already discredited by ethnic exclusionism and/or collaborationism, at least until RDP's formation in 2007, CoD has perhaps suffered the most damage as a result of these conflicts, forfeiting its reputation as a 'rainbow party' (Interview T, female, journalist, Windhoek, 15 June 2009) amidst accusations of 'tribalism' and other forms of recrimination.

Thus, for any political entrepreneur confident of mobilising a personal following, there is little or no incentive to switch allegiance between Namibia's *existing* parties, which each appear to be in various stages of terminal decline. When asked about the decision to form rather than to join a party, for example, RDP president Hidipo Hamutenya (int., 11 May 2009), CoD president Ben Ulenga (int., 7 June 2009) and RDP secretary-general Jesaya Nyamu (int., 5 June 2009) replied as follows:

I did not see any party of credibility. I did not see that [there] was any party worth challenging SWAPO... And it was my view and it is my view now that there is none of the opposition parties that has any chance whatsoever of winning power in this country.

Which parties are you talking about? There was [sic] no other parties.

Having been in parliament, over a decade, I knew that all these small political parties, which were regional, ethnical [sic] and so on, had no chance in our lifetime to dent the position or the image of SWAPO, let alone replace SWAPO as the government of the day. So I had no illusions that to join them would add [anything] to their value... [Their] image is very bad. They cannot be reformed; they have to be... got rid of and new parties have to be formed if they [are] to make any progress.

As such statements imply, it is likely that the poor image and negligible electoral prospects of established opposition parties serve to encourage party formation.

How do institutional factors, rather than social phenomena, structure the opportunities underpinning elite behaviour? In chapter five, I argue that Namibian opposition parties are driven by a desire to secure the salaries, status and other perks associated with parliamentary representation. Assuming this conclusion to be correct, it is likely that an electoral system which maximises the opportunities for securing a seat in the National Assembly will encourage a proliferation of political parties. High levels of electoral system permissiveness, in other words, create incentives for party formation.

At independence, Namibia faced an immediate and grave threat to national security: as the principal beneficiary of colonialism, its white population exercised control over the police, military, bureaucracy and much of the economy; enjoyed a near-monopoly on investment capital, higher education and skills; exhibited a high degree of personal mobility and excellent contacts with global capitalism; and was deeply suspicious of the incoming government. If Namibia was to avoid conflict or a 'brain drain' of the type witnessed in Mozambique, this small but powerful minority would have to be conciliated with measures designed to represent, promote and protect its interests at the highest levels of government. Thus, SWAPO agreed to the use of a 'closed party list' electoral system, according to which candidates for parliamentary office are nominated by political parties rather than directly elected by a constituency. Such mechanisms are particularly useful for societies wishing to accommodate minority interests because candidate selection is not devolved to branch structures, as under some Westminster-style systems, but controlled by the party elite.

Indeed, Namibia's closed party list system has served not only to reproduce its cleavage structures within the parliamentary context, but to encourage political mobilisation of its minority communities. Three factors are responsible for this outcome. First, parliamentary seats are distributed according to the 'Hare formula', whereby the total number of votes cast is divided

by the number of seats available (seventy-two) to produce a ‘quota’ needed to win a single seat.¹¹ This system produces greater proportionality than almost any other method of distributing votes, including the Droop formula used in South Africa and D’Hondt formula used in Mozambique (Reynolds 1999a: 240). Second, whereas Mozambican parties have to achieve at least five per cent of the vote before obtaining parliamentary representation (Mozaffar and Scarritt 2003: 412), Namibia does not employ such a system; as Hopwood (2008: 33) notes, the ‘effective threshold for one seat in [parliament] is 1.39 per cent of the vote (or $1/72^{\text{nd}}$), which has meant that parties can gain representation with just a few thousand votes’. Finally, it is possible for parties to obtain a parliamentary seat without achieving even this paltry level of popular support because, under Namibia’s ‘largest remainder system’, votes unallocated by the Hare formula are allotted to the largest party without parliamentary representation. Thus, in 2009 SWANU won a seat in parliament on 0.62 per cent of the vote.

What is the evidence that electoral system design and rates of party formation are positively correlated in Namibia? According to Bogaards (2000: 168),

In Africa, plurality systems do not produce significant institutionalised opposition and [proportional representation] does not lead to a multiplication of parties and fragmentation of the opposition... When the electorate of a party is regionally concentrated, the kind of electoral system does not matter much. In Namibia, where the opposition vote is indeed highly localised, the parliamentary opposition parties would do equally well or better under a plurality system as under the current PR system.

Such arguments seem to be supported by evidence from Kenya, Malawi and Botswana, where plurality systems have not so far prevented party fragmentation or the circulation of elites. Yet closer inspection of recent election results would indicate that, in two respects, Bogaards’ characterisation of Namibian opposition support is insufficiently nuanced. First, although

¹¹ To take an example: the CoD won 59,464 of the 818,439 votes cast in Namibia’s 2004 National Assembly election. The quota to win a single NA seat was: $818439/72 = 11,367$. The total number of seats allocated to the CoD was therefore: $59464/11367 = 5$

opposition voters do tend to be found in certain areas of the country, the degree of concentration demonstrates considerable variation by party; the APP, for example, drew 74.5 per cent of its support from ten per cent of the country's constituencies in 2009, whilst the corresponding figure for RDP support was a mere 35.4 per cent. Second, even within their supposed 'strongholds' of eastern and north-western Namibia, no opposition party enjoys political or electoral hegemony at the voting district level. This territorial dispersion is illustrated in Table 2.14 below, where district-level data have been used to compare the actual distribution of parliamentary seats produced by Namibia's 2009 National Assembly election—which took place under a system of proportional representation—with the outcome likely to have been produced by a plurality mechanism.

Table 2.14: National Assembly election, 2009		
Party	Number of Seats	No. Voting Districts in which a Plurality Achieved
SWAPO	54	99
RDP	8	2
DTA	2	1
NUDO	2	2
UDF	2	3
APP	1	0
RP	1	0
SWANU	1	0
CoD	1	0
Others	0	0
Total	72	107

Source: Election Watch, 2009b.

This analysis, of course, employs no control for the effects of either tactical voting or boundary demarcation¹² and so should not be regarded as predicting with certainty the impact of electoral system design. It does however indicate that, contrary to Bogaards' assertion, opposition support

¹² Namibia's constituencies differ hugely in size and so it is likely that, in the event of a change to plurality voting, district boundaries would have to be substantially re-drawn.

in Namibia is characterised by a moderately high degree of territorial dispersion, with only four of the thirteen minor parties having secured a plurality at the local level in 2009; indeed, perhaps even more tellingly, SWAPO emerged as the largest party in ninety-nine of the 107 voting districts contested at that election. Opposition support might be concentrated within certain communities and particular regions of the country, therefore, but it is probably not sufficiently monolithic to neutralise the effects of electoral system design.

Triggering Variables

Thus, Namibia's ethnic polarisation, low levels of party credibility and use of a closed party list system in National Assembly elections has created a political environment conducive to the establishment and proliferation of political parties. Yet what are the circumstances responsible for triggering party formation? Many political leaders claim to have been driven by noble political ideals, including democratic consolidation (RDP, 2009) and poverty eradication (Shixwameni, int., 18 May 2009), but in most cases a closer examination of circumstances reveals a more conventional set of motivating factors.

Factional Competition

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the elite-driven nature of party formation in Namibia, six of the twelve groups established and registered at the ECN since independence are considered to be 'externalised factions', or splinter parties, formed as a result of conflict within existing organisations. When might such internal struggles cause a political entrepreneur to abandon his or her existing partisan loyalties in order to establish a party?

As it will be argued in chapter three, party factions—like their host organisations—are often highly personalised vehicles established and reproduced for the purpose of capturing power, office, status or resources rather than advancing a particular ideological agenda. Factional conflict tends therefore to involve a relatively brief but bitter struggle between rival candidates for office which, given the centralisation of power common to almost all Namibian parties, concludes with total victory for whichever slate captures the party presidency. Such outcomes leave a residue of discontented and marginalised party cadres whose options for career advancement, following Hirschmann (1970), fall into three categories.

First, ‘members [can] express their dissatisfaction directly to management... or through general protest addressed to anyone who cares to listen’ (Hirschmann 1970: 4), using party structures or media channels to disseminate both criticism of the leadership and demands for change. Given that party presidents often seek to marginalise, victimise or expel former rivals, however, this option (known as ‘voice’) is probably available to relatively few members of a defeated faction.

Second, disaffected cadres might remain ‘loyal’ to a party in the hope that, as passions fade, former opponents will be rehabilitated and defeated presidential aspirants given additional opportunities to seek office. After his removal from the Cabinet and SWAPO politburo in 2002, for example, Hage Geingob chose to accept employment in the United States rather than to resign from the party; he returned to Namibia three years later, reconciled with President Nujoma and, in 2007, secured election as vice-president of the party (Hopwood 2008: 138-139). Such tactics can only prove effective in re-launching a political career, however, when the incumbent leader is willing to put aside personal animosities in the interest of party unity. Hidipo Hamutenya’s hopes of pursuing a ‘wait-and-see’ strategy in the wake of his defeat in the SWAPO leadership contest were dashed, for example, by the unrelenting hostility and skilful manoeuvring of officials loyal to President Nujoma.

Finally, therefore, members of a defeated faction can choose to resign from the party (Hirschmann 1970: 4). Hirschmann does not fully explore the range of personal options associated with this 'exit' category, but a review of the evidence would suggest that three broad sub-categories can be described. First, a party member might choose to abandon politics in favour of retirement or alternative employment, as several vanquished factional leaders—including Moses Katjiuongua and Carola Englebrecht of the CoD and RP respectively—have done in recent years. Second, partisan allegiance can be transferred from the host party to an established alternative; in 2009, for example, a failed attempt to oust RP president Henk Mudge prompted Pieter Boltmann, Nico Smit, Daan Holtzhausen and a number of junior party officials to join the DTA (civil society activist, personal comm., 1 September 2009). Third, but most importantly, an individual can establish his or her own party.

In Namibia, where state funding is exclusively allocated to parties with parliamentary representation and where business interests are reluctant to align with opposition groups, party formation tends to involve a substantial commitment of personal resources and, therefore, to be eschewed by all but a tiny proportion of the political class. As APP founder Ignatius Shixwameni (int., 18 May 2009) and RDP co-founder Jeremiah Nambinga (int., 4 June 2009) implied respectively, party formation entails a considerable degree of risk which has to be carefully considered before financial and social capital is committed to the enterprise.

It was not an easy decision for me personally. I tried to argue this matter out and of course... we had to convince each other. I had even given them the implications of a new party, that [it] requires funds... In terms of career change, I guess there was no future anyway within the CoD already.

I served SWAPO in an executive capacity for thirty-one years and nine months before I left; I thought SWAPO would remain my political home for the rest of my life... Of course it was not easy to make a decision [on forming a party]; I was wondered [sic] what next to do, but then naturally... you always lobby others and try to air your views about certain issues. So in the process I discovered I was not

alone—there were many other people who were not happy, so we put our brains together and we asked whether it would not be appropriate to form a party.

Given these considerations, when might a player in factional politics choose to form a party rather than to transfer allegiance to an established alternative? A survey of the five splinter parties established since independence would suggest that the key variables are mobilisational capacity and personal resources: NUDO's Kuaima Riruako is paramount chief of the Ovaherero traditional community, the RP's Henk Mudge is a private sector entrepreneur and son to DTA founder Dirk Mudge and the APP's Ignatius Shixwameni has long enjoyed considerable support within his birth region of Kavango, whilst the CoD's Ben Ulenga and RDP's Hidipo Hamutenya both drew generous government salaries prior to their defection from the ruling party. By employing personal wealth to assist in their reproduction of ethnic support, such political entrepreneurs are able to overcome the mobilisational difficulties encountered by other actors seeking to enter the Namibian political arena. Splinter party formation is most likely, therefore, when a faction leader's personal income and electoral appeal are sufficiently great to facilitate the capture of parliamentary representation.

Demonstration Effects

As indicated by Table 2.8 above, six of Namibia's fourteen registered political parties have been established since 2005. Given that splinter party formation appears to be proceeding at a steady rate, however, with no more than three such groups emerging during each of the past four parliamentary sessions, what are the causes of this sudden increase in the number of registered parties? For Du Pisani and Lindeke (2009: 18), the answer lies in a 'long history of relocating to new parties', the 're-emergence of ethnic identities' and the 'perceived need for elites, ethnic groups, and political parties to negotiate a new relationship with SWAPO'. Yet as noted in the

introduction to my thesis, arguments grounded in long-term historical processes cannot adequately explain a sudden mushrooming of parties, whilst the extent to which ethnic identities have been re-activated and power relationships 're-negotiated' is questionable.

Thus, it is suggested that Namibia's accelerated rate of party formation should be attributed to the outcome of its third post-apartheid election in 2004. By securing parliamentary office within months of registration, NUDO and the RP demonstrated that even minor parties with limited funding are capable of exploiting Namibia's high levels of ethnic polarisation, low party credibility and permissive electoral system for the purpose of capturing state resources. These facilitating variables have not changed sufficiently since 2004 to alter the balance of risk and reward associated with party formation, but it is possible that the electoral progress made by NUDO and the RP (as well as by the NDMC, which won two seats in the 2004 regional council contest) initiated a learning process from which other political entrepreneurs continue to benefit.

Electoral Mobilisation

Thus, Namibia's ethnic polarisation, discredited opposition politics and electoral system design have interacted with its factional conflicts and various demonstration effects to produce a high rate of party formation. Yet the magnitude of electoral volatility within opposition politics is dependent not upon this particular variable, which serves to increase the potential for shifts in voting behaviour, but upon the mobilisational capacity of each new party. It is entirely conceivable, for example, that a polity with high rates of party formation should exhibit little or no electoral volatility, since minor parties often fail to secure even a nominal share of the national vote and so to make any lasting impression upon the party system. In Namibia, a new party's mobilisational capacity is determined by two key variables: liberation narrative and organisational origin.

Appropriating the Dominant Narrative

As noted above, a significant minority of Namibian voters—perhaps twelve per cent of the total—tends to eschew partisan loyalty, consistently favouring whichever group poses the most credible challenge to single-party dominance rather than remaining loyal to a single organisation. How do these floating voters determine whether a particular organisation is likely to provide effective opposition to the ruling party? This question cannot be answered definitively without survey work, although recent voting trends in the Windhoek West, Windhoek East, Swakopmund and Rehoboth Urban East constituencies—where racial minorities constitute an unusually large proportion of the population—provide a few clues in relation to the drivers of voting behaviour.

Table 2.15: Windhoek West			
Party	Vote share (%)		
	1999	2004	2009
CoD	47.2	20.7	1.3
DTA	8.5	4.7	3.4
MAG	4.4	3.2	2.9
NUDO		5.3	2.7
RDP			34.0
RP		6.7	2.8
SWAPO	37.3	55.9	49.5
UDF	1.2	2.4	1.5
Others	1.4	1.1	2.0

Table 2.16: Windhoek East			
Party	Vote share (%)		
	1999	2004	2009
CoD	39.5	19.5	1.1
DTA	7.0	4.7	3.2
MAG	3.4	4.6	3.8
NUDO		4.0	2.1
RDP			29.3
RP		7.1	2.8
SWAPO	49.1	56.7	55.2
UDF	0.5	2.4	1.2
Others	0.5	1.0	1.3

Table 2.17: Swakopmund			
Party	Votes (%)		
	1999	2004	2009
CoD	19.6	12.6	0.8
DTA	7.5	3.5	2.0
MAG	1.5	2.9	2.1
NUDO		3.7	2.7
RDP			17.9
RP		4.6	1.8
SWAPO	63.5	59.4	62.5
UDF	7.5	12.8	9.0
Others	0.4	0.5	1.2

Source: Electoral Commission of Namibia

Table 2.18: Rehoboth Urban East			
Party	Votes (%)		
	1999	2004	2009
CoD	26.9	20.8	1.3
DTA	24.3	15.8	12.1
RDP			24.6
SWAPO	44.3	59.2	53.7
UDF	2.3	0.8	3.0
Others	2.2	3.4	5.3

It should be noted that these data take no account of either internal migration or ‘tendered’ voting practices (whereby a citizen can cast his or her ballot anywhere in the country) and so, as an indicator of shifting partisan loyalties, have to be treated with caution. Nevertheless, the RDP’s emergence in each constituency as the principal party of opposition was clearly facilitated, not by a significant erosion of SWAPO’s voting base, but by a collapse in support for the CoD and other established parties. In Windhoek East, for example, the total losses sustained by established opposition parties and the RDP’s vote share in 2009 amounted to 28.1 per cent and 29.3 per cent respectively. Ten years earlier, this constituency—alongside Windhoek West, Swakopmund, Rehoboth Urban East and many other areas considered to be opposition ‘strongholds’—had been held by the DTA, whose grip on floating voters was broken by the CoD’s emergence as a credible challenge to single-party dominance. What did the CoD and RDP have in common at the time of their respective births?

Despite the advantages associated with incumbency and institutional complexity, SWAPO’s dominance of the Namibian body politic primarily rests upon a popular mandate,

obtained through regular, open, free and partially fair elections, rather than upon patronage or malpractice. Two decades after independence, the party's success in attracting mass support can still be largely attributed to its liberation narrative, through which SWAPO's 'patriotic' struggle against colonialism is contrasted with the treachery, collaborationism and racism of its opponents (Weidlich, *The Namibian*, 1 November 2007). To counter this delegitimation strategy, many opposition parties have tried to construct liberation credentials of their own. UDF president Justus //Garoëb (int., 18 June 2009), for example, told me that during the 1980s, 'we decided to join forces with SWAPO. When SWAPO was banned in Namibia, we were the people inside Namibia who would arrange meetings and so on for SWAPO cadres to take part in'. At a party rally held in July 2009, DTA secretary-general McHenry Venaani appropriated SWAPO's famous struggle-era phraseology, claiming that 'We are fighting to win as One Nation, One Namibia'. Such efforts have largely failed to re-write history, however, because a substantial proportion of voters remember Namibia's anti-colonial struggle and the collaborationist role played by its internal parties; indeed, to stand any chance of countering SWAPO's propaganda or of eroding its support base, a party must have been established by veterans of the liberation struggle. According to the RDP secretary-general (Nyamu, int., 5 June 2009) and the then editor of *The Namibia newspaper* (Lister, int., 10 July 2009) respectively,

The only way SWAPO can be brought down to size is if it splits... The main reason is that this liberation image is still very strong in Africa and it can be manipulated and anybody else who has not been part of that [liberation] process will be cast as a traitor or whatever. And the masses of the people will go for that kind of rhetoric at any time.

In the 1980s, when SWAPO was the liberation movement, I thought even then that for there to be an effective opposition party in independent Namibia, it would have to come from SWAPO.

The CoD, having emerged during the controversy over President Nujoma's intervention in the DRC and his third term in office, was the first SWAPO splinter party to be formed after independence. Many of its leaders had been middle-ranking members of SWAPO's internal wing, including party president Ben Ulenga (guerrilla fighter, 1974-1976; Robben Island prisoner, 1976-1985; Miners' Union of Namibia secretary, 1986-1991), vice-president Rosa Namises (SWAPO organiser, Katutura) and chief whip Ignatius Shixwameni (SWAPO Youth League secretary, 1987-1999), although secretary-general Tsudao Gurirab and future vice-president Nora Schimming-Chase were attached to SWAPO's exiled wing and SWANU's liberation faction respectively (Hopwood 2008: 186-285; Namises, int., 19 May 2009).¹³ This formidable profile appears to have persuaded a number of junior SWAPO activists, especially former members of the internal wing, that Ulenga's party stood a chance of appropriating the liberation narrative and, therefore, of splitting SWAPO's electoral coalition. As a former CoD regional chairperson (Interview E4, female, Windhoek, 2 November 2009) and two members of the CoD National Working Group (Interview B, male, Windhoek, 4 June 2009; Interview C, female, Windhoek, 9 June 2009) told me respectively,

[I joined CoD because it] was new and it was also formed by someone who came from SWAPO, someone with new ideas... We thought that with Ben [Ulenga], who had been in the struggle, been on Robben Island and all that, that we could bring some new things.

When I found that SWAPO was not answering my expectations, I waited for a change to take place. I saw that the CoD was formed by a man who was in SWAPO—a [People's Liberation Army of Namibia] fighter, for that matter—and I listened to him and was inspired by him.

It was just after I had resigned from SWAPO that the CoD was formed. So the ideolog[y] of the CoD is more or less the same as SWAPO on paper[...]; we are also social democrats, so it is more or less the same. So that is the reason why I joined the CoD, because I did not want to belong to any party which have [sic] this colonial stigma on it.

¹³ Disagreements over whether to join the South African-sponsored Multi-Party Conference government caused SWANU to split in 1983.

This 'euphoria' (President Nujoma's phrase) was not confined merely to disaffected members of the former nationalist movement (Hopwood 2008: 52); many floating voters also perceived an unparalleled opportunity to overcome SWAPO's monopolisation of the liberation narrative. Perhaps encouraged by predictions that the urban poor, industrial workers, students and Owambos would desert SWAPO in droves (Du Pisani and Lindeke 2009: 7; Hopwood 2005: 125; Lodge 2000: 195), a substantial number of voters in Windhoek West, Windhoek East, Swakopmund, Rehoboth Urban East and other DTA-held constituencies abandoned their traditional partisan loyalties in the hope of creating a credible alternative to the ruling party. As Ulenga (int., 7 June 2009) and a former DTA official (Smit, int., 19 November 2009) said to me respectively,

Why were whites voting for the CoD? Many whites would say they are voting for the opposition because they want there to be a strong multi-party vibrancy. Many others would say they are voting for the CoD because it looks like the strongest party against SWAPO and, I think, meaning that they would want to vote for anything that looks like it is strong and looks like it is against SWAPO.

The white people thought that the CoD, Ben Ulenga is the new messiah, he is the saviour now and he will now get all the Owambo votes away from SWAPO. So they then started to support the CoD.

When these hopes were thwarted by a successful defence of SWAPO's electoral coalition, however, Ulenga's party suffered an immediate and largely irreversible loss of credibility which prevented the consolidation of its support base and exacerbated the factional conflicts developing within its structures. As Tables 3.5-3.8 demonstrate, one-third of CoD voters defected to MAG, the RP and SWAPO in 2004, with a total collapse following some five years later.

The RDP, having emerged during the succession battles which accompanied President Nujoma's retirement from office, is the second SWAPO splinter party to be formed since

independence. Its liberation credentials are widely considered to be impeccable. Party president Hidipo Hamutenya, for example, was a prominent member of SWAPO's innermost councils for more than thirty years, having served as secretary for information and publicity from 1981 until 1991, as a member of the Constituent Assembly in 1989 and as a Cabinet minister during the first fourteen years of independence; he even wrote SWAPO's Political Programme of 1976 and the lyrics to *Land of the Brave*, Namibia's national anthem (Hamutenya, int., 11 May 2009; Hopwood 2008: 146). Many of his senior lieutenants also held prominent positions within SWAPO's former external wing and/or post-colonial government (Hopwood 2008: 106-285), including party secretary-general Jesaya Nyamu (chief representative to Angola, 1989-1991 and Cabinet minister, 1999-2005); secretary of organisation Kandy Nehova (chairman of the National Council, 1991-2004); secretary of information Jeremiah Nambinga (vice-chairman of SWAPO's Windhoek branch, 1977-1989 and deputy minister of prisons, 2000-2005); and secretary of transport Philemon Kanime (director of elections, 2003-2008). As Nyamu (int., 5 June 2009) noted,

It is very difficult for them [SWAPO] to call us traitors now—we are not. They can call us Judas Iscariots, betrayers—as the president has one time used this biblical phrase—but they have a difficult case to call us traitors, because the record is self-evident.

Given such powerful liberation credentials, the RDP rapidly attracted a new crop of disaffected SWAPO cadres interested in promoting fresh alternatives to the ruling party. For the party's Erongo regional secretary (Unnoovene, int., 27 October 2009), a regional executive member (Interview M, female, RDP regional secretary, Windhoek, 1 June 2009) and a National Executive Committee member (Interview L, male, Windhoek, 23 June 2009) respectively, Hamutenya's record as a liberation activist and Cabinet minister are crucial to the RDP's appeal:

I meet only Hamutenya when he become president of RDP. I never met him before, but his record, his contribution to the country before independence and after independence, I know it very well, that he is a true leader.

I joined the RDP because I was forced by my own feelings; I was waiting for a new political party. I was not ready [to join the CoD in 1999], I was not aware. I am an ex-[People's Liberation Army of Namibia] fighter; the DTA was here before independence and they were together with South Africa at that time. In life, there are leaders; I have known Hidipo Hamutenya's leadership for a long time. I was in PLAN and I hear Hidipo on the radio telling people to go to Angola.

Most of the opposition parties are tribal parties, with the exception of the CoD—but their leadership, they started infighting. We realised that their party had too much infighting. In any case, you cannot compare Ben Ulenga with Hidipo Hamutenya. Ben has not come from the inner part of [SWAPO]; those people were not heavyweights in terms of leadership to be accepted by the people.

In a repeat of Namibia's second post-apartheid election, when the CoD's emergence led to a collapse in DTA support, official results suggest that floating voters shared these hopes of a fresh challenge to SWAPO dominance and responded with a major realignment in favour of Hamutenya's party. Once again, however, a combination of partisan loyalty, incumbent advantage and intimidation prevented any significant erosion of SWAPO's support base, which remained firmly rooted amongst the urban poor, manual workers, students and the Oshiwambo-speaking communities of northern Namibia. It remains to be seen whether RDP is capable of transforming opportunistic support into lasting partisan loyalty, although lessons provided by the CoD experience hardly represent a basis for optimism. Indeed, despite their powerful liberation credentials, both splinter parties swiftly found themselves in the uncomfortable position of depending upon communities which benefited from, or even collaborated with, apartheid rule.

To conclude, in opposition politics a new party's mobilisational capacity is positively correlated with the strength of its liberation narrative. As the sole SWAPO splinter parties to be formed since independence, the CoD and RDP were uniquely placed in 1999 and 2009 respectively to appropriate the dominant political discourse and so to create expectations of an

imminent partisan de-alignment. Interview evidence and analysis of official data suggest that, in some urban constituencies, opposition voters sought to promote and accentuate this anticipated change by shifting their loyalties in favour of the new party. Such calculations offer a cogent explanation for the upward ‘spikes’ in electoral volatility highlighted by Table 2.6 and suggest that any future splinter party is likely to exert similar effects upon the opposition system.

Party Origins

Yet variation in the quality and credibility of liberation narratives, whilst integral to RDP and CoD hopes of emerging as the largest opposition party, is insufficient in itself to explain many of the electoral outcomes witnessed in Namibia over recent years. Why have new parties with weak liberation credentials, such as NUDO, the RP, DPN and NDP, captured varying levels of support? A review of election statistics, as reproduced in Table 2.19, would suggest that parties formed through the fragmentation or merger of existing organisations tend to enjoy more popular support than ‘outsider’ groups formed by individuals lacking connections with the established elite.

Table 2.19: Political Parties Registered with the ECN, 1990-2012					
Name	Splinter Party?	Outsider Party?	Registration Date	Vote Share at Debut NA Election (%)	No. NA Seats Taken at Debut Election
RDP	√		2007	11.2	8
CoD	√		1999	10.1	7
NUDO	√		2003	4.3	3
RP	√		2003	2.0	1
MAG	√		1991	0.8	1
DCN	√		1994	0.8	1
NDMC	√		2004	0.5	0
WRP		√	1990	0.2	0
DPN		√	2009	0.2	0
NDP		√	2009	0.2	0
CP		√	2009	0.1	0
UPM		√	2010	N/A	N/A

These trends can be perhaps explained by two factors. First, splinter parties tend to be formed by a political entrepreneur whose capacity to command personal or ethnic support, court media attention, deploy personal wealth and locate other sources of finance is both demonstrable and widely recognised. In agrarian societies dominated by communal land tenure and traditional forms of authority, such as the Kavango and Kunene regions of Namibia, splinter groups led by chiefs enjoy a particularly significant advantage in this regard, although ‘big men’ are by no means confined to ethnically exclusivist parties with predominantly rural support bases. According to *The Namibia newspaper* (Lister, 9 November 2007),

[P]olitics in Namibia seems to be governed by personality rather than policy... Generally Namibians support a party because of a cult or preference of some kind, mainly person oriented, rather than voting for what it stands for... The response to the registration of the RDP is typical. People are asking not what the new party will stand for, but who its leaders will be.

In such societies, a splinter party with relatively prominent leaders is likely to excite greater popular interest—and so to mobilise more electoral support—than a group established outside the existing elite.

Second, given its genesis within factional politics, a splinter party is likely to have relatively well-developed networks of organisers, volunteers and sympathisers capable of marshalling the resources necessary to wage an effective election campaign. The APP, for example, was able to hire the Rundu sports stadium for its inaugural event—a rally attended by 2,500 people—and to host 220 delegates at a three-day party congress held in May 2009, whilst NUDO's relatively strong performance in eastern Namibia can be in part attributed to the integration of local chiefs into its decision-making and mobilisational structures (Kangueehi, *New Era*, 17 March 2008; APP, press release, May 2009; Hopwood 2008: 61). By contrast, in 2009 the NDP—a Caprivian party founded and led by the 'outsider' Martin Lukato—attracted only nine people to a sports event in Katima Mulilo and 'did not hold election campaigns "because of lack of resources"' (Liseli, *Caprivi Vision*, 2009?; Maletsky, *The Namibian*, 7 January 2010).¹⁴ Thus, splinter groups tend to enjoy a considerably greater degree of mobilisational capacity than outsider parties, whose campaigning activities are continually hamstrung by an inability to attract funds, establish party offices, host rallies or recruit activists.

Conclusion

To conclude, it has been argued here that the high levels of electoral volatility associated with opposition politics in Namibia can be traced to three variables. First, electoral behaviour is shaped by an unusually resilient and relatively polarised cleavage structure forged during the

¹⁴ In October 2009, a few days before travelling from Windhoek to the Caprivi Region and one month before Namibia's fourth post-apartheid election, I received a telephone call from Martin Lukato. I had not met the NDP leader, but was nevertheless asked to lend the N\$340 (£28) needed for his coach fare to Katima Mulilo. Whilst I did not lend the money and failed in subsequent attempts to arrange an interview, this incident perhaps underlined the NDP's financial difficulties during the period preceding Namibia's election.

struggle for national liberation. Given its early mobilisation of students, intellectuals and contract workers, its penetration of the former Owamboland and its reputation as the only movement to have confronted apartheid South Africa, as well as its post-colonial achievements and skilled use of incumbent advantage, SWAPO has been able both to construct an electoral coalition spanning three-quarters of the voting population and to reproduce exceptionally high levels of partisan loyalty. By contrast, analysis of the available interview, survey and election data would suggest that areas with a high concentration of whites, Bastards and other 'collaborationist' minorities are relatively likely to favour whichever organisation represents the most credible challenge to single-party dominance. Opposition politics, in short, is characterised by a low level of partisan loyalty.

Second, Namibia has a high rate of party formation. This causal mechanism has received little attention in the literature on African democratisation, but is portrayed here as an elite-led, top-down process driven by two sets of variables. First, 'facilitating' variables associated with social and institutional phenomena, such as cleavage structure, party system institutionalisation and electoral system design, create opportunities for the mobilisation of electoral support and for the capture of parliamentary representation. Party formation is 'triggered', however, when these facilitating variables interact with short-term factors, such as factional conflict, to produce personal incentives for action. Thus, Namibia's high rate of party formation can be traced to the persistence of its ethnic cleavages, the weakness of its established parties, the chronic permissiveness of its electoral system and centrifugal forces within its political elite, as well as to the demonstration effects produced by recent election results. Indeed, given that voter realignment and party formation are closely correlated in Namibia, the continual proliferation of political parties is a prerequisite to electoral volatility.

Finally, Namibia has a high rate of *viable party* formation, with six of the twelve parties registered since independence having secured public office at the parliamentary level. It has been

argued here that a party's mobilisational capacity is determined by two variables. First, given that SWAPO's greatest electoral asset is its role in the anti-colonial struggle and that opposition voters appear to be primarily concerned with finding a credible challenge to single-party dominance, any newly-registered group with strong liberation credentials is likely to attract a significant degree of popular support. Second, however, the mobilisational capacity of a party without liberation credentials is determined by its organisational origin, since splinter groups tend to attract a greater degree of popular support than parties formed outside the existing elite. This dichotomy is explained by the absence of policy debate in Namibia, where splinter parties associated with 'big men' and underpinned by durable support networks enjoy a considerable advantage over rivals.

Thus, in Namibian opposition politics, electoral volatility is positively correlated with splinter party formation. According to the data reproduced in Table 2.19, only one-third of the political parties registered since 1990 were constructed by individuals unconnected to the existing elite, with the remaining two-thirds formed as a result of factional conflict within either SWAPO or the established opposition parties. This preponderance of breakaway parties represents the key to understanding chronic electoral volatility and is explained by two factors. First, owing to a number of variables more fully explored in chapter three, Namibian politics is characterised by a high level of centrifugal factionalism. Second, but perhaps most important, my adaptation of Hirschmann's model for understanding institutional decline suggests that, given the personal risks involved, political parties tend to be established by political entrepreneurs with a record of successful mobilisation rather than 'outsiders' lacking an objective basis for expectations of electoral success. Chronic electoral volatility, as witnessed in Namibia since independence, is therefore a function of elite circulation, as opportunistic politicians repeatedly embrace and abandon political parties according to their short-term interests.

3. Leadership Selection, Factional Mobilisation and Party Cohesion in Namibia

The most vital and botly contested factional disputes in any party are the struggles that take place over the choice of its candidates; for what is at stake in such a struggle... is nothing less than control over the core of what the party stands for and does.

Austin Ranney (1981 cited in Butler, 2005: 731)

In chapter two of this thesis, I argued that Namibia's acute opposition volatility could be traced to its high rate of splinter party formation, since all six of the new parties to have secured parliamentary representation since independence were established by members of the political class. This analysis was primarily concerned with exploring change against a party system variable and did not, therefore, seek to address an important ancillary question relating to intra-party factionalism: why do political parties *differ* in their propensity towards fragmentation? It is to this issue that I now turn.

Superficially at least, Namibia might not appear to offer an ideal environment in which to explore this question because almost all of its major parties have suffered a significant rupture since independence; when attention is focused upon one particular arena of factional competition, however—presidential succession—an intriguing puzzle does emerge. In 2007, SWAPO suffered its second major rupture since liberation, as former Hidipo Hamutenya—embittered by his failure to secure the party's nomination for state president some three years earlier—founded a breakaway party, the Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP), alongside former minister of mines and energy Jesaya Nyamu. Hamutenya's departure heralded a period of intense conflict in which RDP rallies and other events were disrupted by government supporters; on 8 November 2009, for example, rioting between SWAPO and RDP supporters at the

northern town of Outapi resulted in multiple injuries, three arrests and the confiscation by police of firearms, knives, machetes and other weapons. RDP hopes of an electoral breakthrough were not realised in 2009, when Namibia's north-central region once again voted overwhelmingly for the former liberation movement, but Hamutenya's party did manage to secure 11.3 per cent of national support and therefore to emerge as the largest opposition caucus in parliament; a year later, it captured forty-eight town council seats to become the second largest party of local government. Thus, SWAPO's disastrous succession battle of 2004 might not have injected significantly greater competition into the political system, but it did create a new official opposition party and raise a number of uncomfortable questions about the limits of national reconciliation, political tolerance and personal liberty in post-colonial Namibia.

Given this failure to destroy its former host, the RDP's rise to national prominence was achieved largely at the expense of Namibia's official opposition party, the Congress of Democrats (CoD), which had itself suffered a damaging split in 2008. This rupture was orchestrated by Ignatius Shixwameni, a former secretary-general of the party whose failure to secure its leadership in the previous year had prompted open rebellion against incumbent president Ben Ulenga; when court action and various other manoeuvres proved insufficient to force Ulenga's resignation, Shixwameni joined his brother and various CoD notables in establishing a breakaway group known as the All People's Party (APP). Weakened by this rupture, bankrupted by legal fees and discredited by months of public wrangling, the CoD suffered an electoral collapse in 2009, when its share of national support declined to a mere 0.7 per cent, whilst the APP emerged as the largest opposition party in Shixwameni's birth region of Kavango. Much of the CoD's electoral support in central and southern regions of the country, as demonstrated in chapter two of this thesis, appears to have shifted in favour of Hamutenya's breakaway party.

For both SWAPO and the CoD, therefore, presidential succession contests represented an agent of polarisation and fragmentation whose effects were to be felt, not only by their respective elites, but also by opposition voters interested in supporting whichever party posed the most effective challenge to the ruling party and by party activists caught up in the violence that tarnished Namibia's reputation as a beacon of African democracy. Yet succession contests do not necessarily lead to conflict, division and fragmentation. In 2005, the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA)—Namibia's third largest party after SWAPO and the CoD—conducted a leadership election in which incumbent president Katutire Kaura defeated McHenry Venaani, the party's twenty eight year-old secretary-general and parliamentarian. Remarkably, however, this contest and its result left the DTA completely unscathed: no splinter party was formed, no party member was expelled and no high-profile resignations occurred. The question to be explored in this chapter is, therefore: *why did leadership succession battles cause SWAPO and the CoD, but not the DTA, to fragment?*

This puzzle is explained by three factors. First, ethnic mobilisation—which SWAPO and CoD leadership candidates freely embraced, but DTA candidates eschewed—is positively correlated with splinter party formation because defeated actors tend to assume that particularism can be reproduced in the electoral arena. Second, SWAPO's succession battle of 2004 was followed by a purge of party members considered loyal to Hamutenya, whose material incentives for remaining within the ruling elite were correspondingly reduced. This campaign is attributed partly to SWAPO's political culture, with its cult of personality centred upon President Nujoma, but also to the short-term separation of party and state leadership engendered by Nujoma's partial retirement in 2004. Finally, I suggest that age-based mobilisation dominated DTA succession politics but was absent from SWAPO and CoD factional discourses, which tended to focus instead upon ethnic identity, patronage or leadership style. This variation is important not only because age-based discrimination rarely involves permanent exclusion from

office (at least when its victims are members of the younger generation), but also because age-based discourses lack political salience and are therefore conducive to post-election reconciliation.

The Arena of Factional Competition

Perhaps surprisingly, given its prevalence and destructive power, factionalism is largely absent from much of the literature on party systems, electoral politics and democratisation in Africa. Indeed, South Africa's governing Tripartite Alliance—comprising the African National Congress (ANC), Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and South African Communist Party (SACP)—is the only system to have attracted even a modicum of interest, with Lodge (2004), Myburgh (2006) and McKinley (1997) focusing upon the balance of power between these three alliance partners, whilst Gumede (2005), Seekings (2009) and Butler (2009) explore the presidential succession battle of 2005/08. Yet even these studies are focused upon a single—albeit extremely important—case and, therefore, little concerned with conceptualisation. The sole example of a comparative study is, to my knowledge, Mac Giollabhui's (2011) recent publication on the ANC of South Africa and SWAPO of Namibia, which acknowledges that party fragmentation is characterised by complex causation but also argues that two facets of the parliamentary candidate selection process contribute to high levels of party cohesion. First, when a successful candidacy is:

contingent on support from the membership... all candidates have an easily-understood, open and predictable route to access power within the political party. Successful candidates can rely on the legitimacy of a democratic mandate; unsuccessful candidates have a realistic prospect to return to power through mobilisation of support among the party grass-roots. Losing candidates are more likely to accept defeat if they have a stable expectation of winning office in the future (Mac Giollabhui 2011: 5-6).

Second, an “exclusive/centralized” selection system can produce a balanced party list’ and, therefore, minimise indiscipline because ‘a small cartel of leaders at the national level can behave less myopically and coordinate their activities more effectively than a larger, more dispersed group at the provincial and constituency levels’ (Mac Giollabhuì 2011: 7). To fulfil this expectation, however, the small cabal of party leaders responsible for selecting candidates ‘must approximate the grand coalition (of consociational fame)... [and] behave in an inclusive manner’ (Mac Giollabhuì 2011: 7). Mac Giollabhuì (2011: 15-17) concludes that South Africa’s Tripartite Alliance has survived in part because ANC candidate selection processes are relatively inclusive, thereby permitting COSATU and SACP members to enter parliament, whilst Namibia’s ruling party is dominated by the power and charisma of its founding leader, Sam Nujoma, whose determination to marginalise a ‘Kwanyama faction’ in 2004 led to the RDP’s formation some three years later.

This emphasis upon parliamentary candidate selection raises, however, two issues. First, RDP founder Hidipo Hamutenya was indeed ranked at fifty-seventh position on SWAPO’s closed party list and so excluded from office in 2004, when the ruling party captured fifty-five seats in parliament, but within a year his return to the legislature had been facilitated by the resignation of Youth League secretary and deputy minister Paulus Kapia (see chapter four). At the time of SWAPO’s rupture in 2007, therefore, Hamutenya was not a prospective legislator embittered by his exclusion from its party list, but a backbench parliamentarian with two years of tenure remaining. If parliamentary candidate selection represents the most important driver of party fragmentation, why did Hamutenya defect from the ruling party on the eve of its 2007 leadership election rather than during his year in the political wilderness? This problem is underlined when, in his unpublished doctoral thesis, Mac Giollabhuì extends the analysis to Namibia’s former official opposition party, the CoD, which suffered a schism in 2007 and a rupture in the following year. Whilst conceding frankly to ‘not hav[ing] much direct evidence

that the exclusive nature of the [parliamentary candidate] selection process destabilised the party’, Mac Giollabhuì (2009: 183) suggests that ‘much of the discord between party members was related to the lack of clear incentives for party elites to foster a popular support base’. Yet Ignatius Shixwameni, a backbench parliamentarian and spokesman for the CoD’s dissident faction until his creation of a breakaway party in 2008, managed to attract 47.5 per cent of the vote at a leadership election held in the previous year and was, therefore, neither excluded from the legislature nor devoid of factional support at the time of his defection. Indeed, open conflict between the CoD’s factions was ignited not by its parliamentary candidate selection exercise in 2004, but by Ben Ulenga’s re-election as party leader in 2007, which provoked a walk-out involving up to 150 members of the dissident faction.

Second, Mac Giollabhuì’s view that SWAPO and CoD fragmentation can be explained primarily by issues relating to parliamentary candidate selection was not shared by most of my informants, who tended to regard leadership selection as the most important causal factor. RDP founder and former SWAPO minister Jesaya Nyamu (int., 5 June 2009), for example, told me that,

I noticed that increasingly, after [his] second term, Sam [Nujoma] was no longer the person I used to know. He was less open and he was obviously plotting and planning to get rid of his colleagues... The reason was that he wanted a third term, which we gave him reluctantly... After the third term, [I knew that he] wanted... a fourth, fifth, a sixth term, but... the majority of us were saying, “No way”. So the main cause [of SWAPO’s factional struggle] was the succession.

When asked about SWAPO’s rupture in 2007, a respected civil society activist (Interview W, male, Windhoek, 24 June 2009) told me that, ‘It was mostly about personalities and ambitions; I think it became an inevitability when Hidipo Hamutenya’s ambitions to lead SWAPO were stopped by Sam Nujoma’. A second independent commentator (Interview X, male, researcher, Windhoek, 9 June 2009) asserted that, ‘The RDP’s formation was clearly linked to Hidipo

Hamutenya not becoming president... It was [also] linked not only to his losing the leadership of SWAPO, but also the realisation in the aftermath that he would never become SWAPO leader... The RDP's formation was, therefore, highly personalised'. Such comments suggest that, for participants and independent observers alike, SWAPO's internal struggles of 2004-07 originated not in its parliamentary candidate selection processes, but in the issue of its presidential succession.

Indeed, this emphasis upon presidential rather than parliamentary candidate selection was replicated by politicians, reporters and civil society activists asked about the causes of CoD factionalism. According to an independent journalist (Interview U, male, Windhoek, 16 June 2009), the party's internal strife was caused primarily by:

Leadership ambitions. The CoD started without clear objectives: their main thing was that they were opposed to the war in the [Democratic Republic of Congo]... They went with Ulenga's leadership because he was the one who came out of SWAPO and founded the party, but after a while the people in the leadership started to see his lack of leadership skills.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, a member of the dissident group (Interview E, female, former CoD National Working Group member, Windhoek, 2 June 2009) concurred with this assessment, telling me that: 'One of the main reasons for CoD's formation was Nujoma's third term; leadership should change, no-one should be president for life. Mr. Ulenga felt that he should be president for life and we rejected that'. Yet even Tsudao Gurirab, the party's pro-Ulenga chairperson, accepted that presidential succession—rather than parliamentary candidate selection—represented the principal axis of competition. When asked about the causes of CoD factionalism during this period, he told me that a 'leadership *putsch*' had been mounted by party notables seeking to install Shixwameni or vice-president Nora Schimming-Chase in Ulenga's place (Tsudao Gurirab, int., 3 June 2009). As in SWAPO's case, therefore, informants tended to regard factional conflict as driven not by exclusion from parliament, but by leadership ambition.

The Cases

SWAPO, 2004-2007

In 2004, Namibia's long-serving leader, Sam Nujoma, formally signalled his intention to retire from state office and agreed, albeit with some reluctance (Lister, int., 10 July 2009), to convene an extraordinary congress for the purpose of electing his successor as SWAPO presidential candidate. This unprecedented attempt to deepen SWAPO's internal democracy had been initiated by its Politburo, which selected three senior party officials for consideration at congress: Hifikepunye Pohamba, the minister of lands and a close ally of the outgoing president; Hidipo Hamutenya, foreign minister and former information secretary responsible for SWAPO's celebrated political programme of 1976; and Nahas Angula, the education minister credited with forging a national schooling system from the eleven homeland structures inherited at independence. From the outset, however, SWAPO insiders and external commentators alike recognised that, 'There were [in effect] two camps: Pohamba, which was not Pohamba's camp but Nujoma's camp; and Hidipo's camp' (Interview U, male, journalist, Windhoek, 16 June 2009).

This alignment of forces was dramatically illustrated four days before the opening of SWAPO's extraordinary congress, when Hamutenya and his deputy were sacked by President Nujoma for allegedly 'sowing the seeds of disunity' in the Omaheke Region (Sherbourne 2004: 4). Refusing to withdraw from the race, however, Hamutenya contested the nomination on 30 May 2004 and was defeated by Pohamba after two rounds of voting (see Table 3.1 below).

Table 3.1: Results of SWAPO Extraordinary Congress, 2004		
Candidate	Round 1	Round 2
Nahas Angula	137	-
Hidipo Hamutenya	166	167
Hifikepunye Pohamba	213	341
Spoilt/Discarded	0	5
Total	516	513

Source: Sherbourne 2004: 2.

Any hopes that such a convincing result might herald the end of SWAPO's internal wrangling were to be short-lived, however, as Hamutenya marshalled his supporters in anticipation of a party leadership election scheduled for 2007 and the Nujoma loyalists launched a concerted campaign to drive their opponents from the party. At an electoral college held in October 2004, the selection and ranking of parliamentary candidates became 'mired in controversy after the names of SWAPO figures believed to be [Hamutenya] supporters... featured on an apparent blacklist aimed at influencing delegates not to vote for them' (Hopwood 2008: 35); Nujoma naturally condemned these tactics as divisive and 'reactionary' (Interview W, 24 June 2009), but many of his opponents subsequently failed to secure a seat in the National Assembly. This 'victory' was followed by trade minister Jesaya Nyamu's expulsion from the party in 2005—which deprived Hamutenya of a long-standing, loyal and articulate ally—and by the defeat of a pro-Hamutenya grouping seeking to capture SWAPO's *de facto* labour wing, the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW), in 2006 (Jauch 2007: 57-61). Finally, as SWAPO's ordinary congress approached in November 2007, Hamutenya joined with Nyamu in forming the Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP), a splinter party dominated by former members of his faction.

Congress of Democrats, 2004-2009

CoD factionalism first came to public attention in 2004, when secretary-general Ignatius Shixwameni contested Ben Ulenga's re-election as party president on the grounds that his opponent had become 'isolated from the rest of the leadership... [and] involved in what some of his comrades saw as unilateral steps to merge the party with the DTA and [the United Democratic Front]' (Amupadhi, *The Namibian*, 2 August 2004). This challenge was easily defeated by Ulenga, who took 72.7 per cent of the vote, but its emphasis upon his alleged incompetence and other shortcomings betrayed the extent to which personal relationships at the leadership level had broken down. Thus, when Namibia's 2004 election failed to produce an anticipated breakthrough for the party, which instead lost two seats in parliament, criticism of Ulenga became so widespread that CoD structures disintegrated, electoral mobilisation ceased beyond Windhoek and youth league secretary Natji Tjirera openly called upon the leadership to resign (Tsudao Gurirab, int., 3 June 2009; Maletsky, *The Namibian*, 28 February 2007). Finally, in May 2007, an extraordinary congress was convened at Keetmanshoop for the purpose of securing majority support for the party's senior office-bearers and, therefore, facilitating a reintegration of its fractured elite. As illustrated in Table 3.2 below, Ulenga managed to retain his position by defeating both Shixwameni and party vice-president Nora Schimming-Chase in two rounds of voting.

Table 3.2: Elections to the CoD Party Presidency, Keetmanshoop, 4-6 May 2007		
Candidate	Round 1	Round 2
Ben Ulenga	114	155
Ignatius Shixwameni	87	141
Nora Schimming-Chase	49	N/A
Spoilt ballots	57	1
Total	307	297

Source: Weidlich, *The Namibian*, 7 May 2007.

Far from promoting unity, however, this outcome prompted Shixwameni, Schimming-Chase and approximately 160 of their supporters to stage a walk-out from the congress proceedings, to demand a re-run and to establish a 'National Interim Committee' charged with fighting Ulenga's faction for control of the party. After several weeks of public squabbling, both sides consented to an independent investigation of the Keetmanshoop congress chaired by local lawyer Clement Daniels on the understanding that Ulenga 'would step down should any irregularities be found' (Weidlich, *The Namibian*, 13 August 2007). When 'conclusive proof of serious irregularities... sufficient to nullify the elections' was found by this audit panel (Daniels, Hancox, Ndeikwila and Swartz, 2007, para. 46), however, Ulenga reneged on his commitment and instead attempted to expel Schimming-Chase, former secretary-general Reinhard 'Kala' Gertze and Elma Dienda from parliament (Kanguechi, *New Era*, 13 August 2007). The rebels' National Interim Committee responded by formally (though ineffectually) expelling its opponents from the party, waging a lengthy struggle to secure the CoD's state funding allocation and, most effectively, by suing Ulenga on the grounds that his rejection of the Daniels report represented a breach of contract. In July 2008, Namibia's High Court annulled the Keetmanshoop congress, reinstated those 'rebel' parliamentarians expelled by Ulenga's faction and ordered a fresh election to be held within five months of the judgement date (Kanguechi, *New Era*, 18 July 2009). Given that Shixwameni and a considerable number of his supporters had already resigned from the party, however, Ulenga was able to defeat his sole remaining rival for presidential office, Nora Schimming-Chase, by the comparatively wide margin of 137 votes to seventy-three and subsequently to secure almost every other senior party office for members of his faction (Staff Reporter, *New Era*, 11 November 2008). The CoD's internal struggle had been finally resolved in Ulenga's favour and most of his leading opponents, including Schimming-Chase, subsequently resigned from or were purged by the party.

Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, 2005-2012

The DTA's first post-independence succession crisis arose in 1998, when party president Mishake Muyongo was ousted by its Central Committee for conspiring to bring about the secession of his birthplace, the Caprivi Region, from Namibia. Since the party's presidency had traditionally been held by a black African (with the chairmanship occupied by whites) and its influential Herero paramount chief, Kuaima Riruako, had lost his parliamentary seat some three years earlier, Muyongo's place was assumed by his deputy, Katuutire Kaura, whose election to the highest office attracted no rival candidates. Despite summarily removing an incumbent president and anointing a successor without competitive elections, however, the DTA managed not to alienate those party members disappointed by Kaura's elevation and, thus, to avoid any significant outbreak of internal conflict.¹⁵

Since taking office in 1998, Kaura has had to contend with a succession of disasters, including the party's electoral collapse in 1999, its fragmentation in 2003 and its loss of official opposition status in 2004. These events prompted a leadership challenge in 2005, when the party's twenty-eight year-old secretary-general McHenry Venaani contested Kaura's re-election as president. At a Central Committee meeting attended by 150 legislators, councillors, officials and representatives of the party's affiliate organisations, Kaura secured re-election by the relatively narrow margin of ninety-one votes to sixty-nine (Kangueehi, *New Era*, 14 March 2005), with Venaani's humiliation magnified by a concomitant failure to retain the office of secretary-general. Despite these setbacks, however, the DTA's young pretender declined to join some of his supporters in a walk-out from the meeting venue, distanced himself from grassroots pressure for Kaura's resignation and made no attempt to form a breakaway party (Weidlich, *The Namibian*, 5 March 2008). This loyalty was to bear fruit three years later, when he comprehensively defeated

¹⁵ It might be argued here that the DTA's cohesion can be traced to the lack of electoral contestation. However, an absence of open competition for the succession does not necessarily mitigate against factional mobilisation; in 1996, for example, Ghana's ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) ruptured because President Jerry Rawlings insisted on promoting his chosen successor, John Atta Mills, without holding an election. See: Nugent 2004: 420.

Alois Gende to regain the position of secretary-general and then secured fourth place—behind only party president Katuutire Kaura, vice-president Philemon Moongo and chairman Johan de Waal—on the party's 2009 parliamentary list. Whilst Venaani nevertheless found himself excluded from parliament after the DTA's disastrous electoral performance in 2009, which reduced its legislative caucus from four to two seats, his ambitions to lead the party remain very much alive. In a newspaper interview (Ndjebela, *New Era*) dated October 2011, he was asked about contesting the DTA's presidency again and replied, 'It's very clear that I am currently a leading figure in taking over the party. I therefore do not rule out that possibility'.

Modelling Party Cohesion

Why, then, did succession contests cause SWAPO and the CoD to split, but leave the DTA unscathed? According to Key (1949 cited in Beller and Belloni, 1978: 435), dominant-parties represent a wide range of social interests and are likely, therefore, to experience high levels of factional conflict: the 'more dominant a party, the greater the tendency towards extreme multifactionalism; and the less the dominance... the less the factionalism and the more likely that factionalism will be *bifactionalism* [original emphasis]'. This argument cannot, however, explain variation in the degree of party cohesion because acute factionalisation does not necessarily imply a propensity towards fragmentation. Köllner and Basedau (2005: 19) suggest, conversely, that dominant-parties tend to exhibit a high level of cohesion because breakaway factions 'lose their access to power resources', but cannot explain why SWAPO should prove so much less adept than the DTA at managing leadership selection crises.

An alternative explanation for variation in the degree of party cohesion relates, therefore, to issues of personality: perhaps the DTA's Katuutire Kaura and McHenry Venaani were accommodating figures predisposed towards moderation, compromise and conciliation, whilst

SWAPO and CoD candidates were by nature adversarial, unforgiving and egotistical? Given that SWAPO's relationship with its RDP breakaway has been characterised by mutual recrimination and that CoD leadership candidates have repeatedly accused each other of such serious offences as bribery, electoral fraud and theft of state funds, this argument appears to find some support in the empirical evidence. Yet why did Ignatius Shixwameni accept defeat to Ben Ulenga in 2004 and not in 2007? Such an important shift in approach over a relatively short period of time suggests that calculation, rather than character, played the dominant role in shaping factional outcomes.

Indeed, my contact with leadership candidates, faction members, civil society activists and journalists in Namibia, as well as my review of archive sources, suggest that SWAPO and the CoD failed to manage succession battles effectively because their leadership candidates chose to employ a particular set of narratives for mobilising factional support. These discourses tend to exacerbate the centrifugal forces already unleashed by intra-party elections and are, therefore, positively correlated with a party's propensity for splinter party formation, as I will seek to demonstrate in the remaining sections of this chapter.

Factional Mobilisation

Scholarly analysis of factional competition in the advanced Western democracies, India and elsewhere has suggested that intra-party mobilisation is associated with three narratives: ideology, patronage and ethnic particularism. According to Cyr (1978: 288), for example, British party factions of the 1970s were each 'committed to an ideology' and dedicated to achieving 'victories for the policy positions which proceed from [this] ideology'. For Zuckerman (1979: 119) and Pridham (1995: 21), intra-party factionalism was sustained in post-war Italy by the clientelistic distribution of public sector employment opportunities, business contracts and regional

development initiatives, whilst Brass (1965: 235) demonstrates that, in Congress-era India, the ‘strength and cohesiveness of a faction depend[ed] very heavily upon the ability of the leader to distributed material benefits to his followers’. Mac Giollabhui (2011: 11), as we shall see below, suggests that SWAPO factionalism is ‘based on ethnopolitical groups’. In the following discussion, I assess the extent to which each of these strategies has been used to mobilise factional support in Namibia; outline an additional narrative hitherto neglected by the literature; and conceptualise the relationship(s), if any, between the various mobilisational discourses and splinter party formation.

Ideology and Policy

Intra-party factionalism is sometimes associated with differences in ideological or policy orientation, with like-minded individuals banding together to influence public opinion, shape party priorities or secure high office. In Britain, for example, the Conservative Party’s right-wing faction has often championed such causes as euroscepticism, deregulation and defence, whilst the Labour Party’s left-wing advocated—until its eclipse during the 1980s and 1990s—a programme involving nationalisation, increased redistribution and unilateral nuclear disarmament. In South Africa, COSATU and the SACP have both been associated with left-wing criticism of government policy. How relevant are these analyses to the study of factionalism in Namibia?

Almost all of the politicians, journalists and civil society activists interviewed for my research agreed that differences over ideology or policy played little or no role in mobilising factional support during the three leadership succession battles analysed here. According to SWAPO stalwart and presidential adviser Tuliameni Kalomoh (int., 15 July 2009), for example, ‘the history of the RDP... is essentially [about] personality clashes... What [the] motives were, I

was not here, but there was no difference in policy'. CoD spokesperson and Ulenga ally Natji Tjirera (int., 8 July 2009) recalled that, 'Shixwameni here and there tried to articulate how different he would lead, but there was [sic] no fundamental ideological differences between whoever wanted to lead'. A thorough review of the interview and archive material produced no evidence that DTA succession politics was characterised by ideological mobilisation either. How can this absence of ideological controversy be explained?

Despite its relatively large mining sector, high trade union density and rampant poverty, Namibia has not yet produced a labour movement dedicated to the pursuit of any particular ideological platform; the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW), its largest confederation, tends to vacillate even on issues directly relevant to the workforce, whilst the Trades Union Congress of Namibia (TUCNA) has eschewed party politics altogether. This pragmatism can be traced to NUNW's emergence in 1971, not as a manifestation of grassroots alienation from settler capitalism, but as the *de facto* labour wing of Namibia's national liberation movement. Indeed, SWAPO—whose lack of ideological moorings is discussed in chapter one of this thesis—kept a close rein on union activism through the struggle against South African occupation, lest organised labour seek to appropriate its hard-won diplomatic status as the 'sole, legitimate and authentic representative of the Namibian people' (Dobell 1998: 35). At independence, this subordination was deepened by the government's co-optation of several leading figures within the union movement, including Miners' Union of Namibia (MUN) president Ben Ulenga, which deprived the NUNW of its most able spokespeople and created an incentive for conformity amongst unionists seeking to appropriate public office. In 2006, therefore, government ministers openly interfered in an NUNW congress at which pro-Nujoma and pro-Hamutenya factions were struggling for supremacy, whilst four years later President Pohamba's opposition to the notion of a Basic Income Grant caused the union confederation to withdraw from a civil society coalition advocating its implementation (Kisting, *The Namibian*, 5

May 2010). Namibia's trade union movement, in other words, has never been permitted the organisational or intellectual space necessary to become a credible representative of worker interests, let alone to develop an ideological critique of government policy.

Identity Politics

For Mac Giollabhuì (2011: 11), '[f]actions within SWAPO are based on the country's ethnopolitical groups... Although there are a number of other important ethnopolitical groups in the country, the key factions within SWAPO revolve around the principal "tribal" division within the Owambo ethnic group: between the Kwanyama-speaking residents of Ohangwena and the Ndonga-speaking residents of Oshana, Oshikoto and Omusati'. This characterisation somewhat over-simplifies the complex networks created by SWAPO's succession struggle, since the 'Kwanyama faction' actually attracted a level of support far in excess of Kwanyama numbers,¹⁶ whilst the 'Ndonga faction' was led by an Ongandjera (Nujoma) and a Kwanyama (Pohamba)—neither of whom could reasonably be regarded as a 'stooge' of Ndonga interests. Nevertheless, Mac Giollabhuì's assumption that identity represented a significant mobilisational resource was shared by many of the politicians, journalists and civil society actors interviewed for this thesis, who tended to regard SWAPO and CoD factions as defined at least partly by ethnic particularism. My purpose, therefore, is to build upon Mac Giollabhuì's analysis by examining the mechanics of ethnic mobilisation and by assessing the extent to which such strategies contribute to splinter party formation.

What is the evidence that SWAPO's Nujoma/Pohamba and Hamutenya factions mobilised support around ethnic identity? Given that explicit appeals to ethnic chauvinism have been to some extent delegitimised by the dominant, one-nation philosophy associated with Namibia's liberation movement, hate speech tended to be much less widespread than an

¹⁶ Whereas Hamutenya's faction secured one-third of the vote at SWAPO's 2004 congress, the Kwanyama comprise only 12 per cent of the national population.

assertion that factional opponents represented a discrete ethnic group or were otherwise engaged in ‘tribalism’. In 2004, for example, an anonymous document circulated ahead of SWAPO’s extraordinary congress and quoted in a national newspaper accused Hamutenya of mobilising support on the basis that:

Nujoma should be the first and last president from a minority tribe, that Nujoma has purposefully underdeveloped the Ohangwena Region, sidelined or marginalised its leaders, and publicly shouted at and humiliated prominent politicians and traditional leaders from Ohangwena... Those running Hamutenya’s campaign are said to be accusing Nujoma of selling part of Ohangwena to the Ndonga Traditional Authority, siding with the Ukwangali authority of the Kavango Region in their grazing dispute with Ohangwena farmers and promoting “Ndonga puppet ministers” (Staff Reporter, *New Era*, 10 May—13 May 2004).

This document was accompanied by speculation that Hamutenya, as an alleged Kwanyama irredentist, planned to bring all of his ethnic kinsmen into Namibia’s body politic by negotiating a northward shift in the border with Angola. Given that Namibia’s former foreign minister had been a leading nationalist figure for more than forty years, had played a prominent role in crafting the country’s constitution and had a well-deserved reputation for pragmatism, these rumours were probably intended to discredit him as a dangerous ethno-nationalist rather than to forewarn congress delegates of a genuine threat to national security. Congress delegates wishing to avoid the spectre of Kwanyama ‘tribalism’, it was implied, had no choice but to support Pohamba.

Hamutenya might not have wanted to create a ‘Greater Ohangwena’ by renegotiating Namibia’s border with Angola, but did his supporters seek to mobilise Kwanyama ethnicity in other, perhaps less provocative ways? According to many of the journalists and other civil society actors interviewed for my research, Hamutenya’s faction did indeed fan the flames of Kwanyama discontent by suggesting that an ‘Omusati Clique’ had taken control of the ruling

party and used its power to marginalise people hailing from the Ohangwena Region. Thus an independent analyst (Interview W, 24 June 2009) told me that:

There are some Kwanyama nationalists who are always conscious that they are the most populous group within the Owambo community and feel that this should be reflected within SWAPO... At the end of the day, it's a question about identity: do people see themselves as Kwanyamas or as Namibians? The educated ones would say that they're Namibians, but their actions reveal many of them to be tribalists. Hamutenya has capitalised on the fear that Kwanyamas were being marginalised.

When asked about the characteristic or characteristics that Hamutenya's supporters had in common, a journalist (Interview T, female, Windhoek, 15 June 2009) replied simply, 'Tribal politics. Most of the former [SWAPO] fighters come from the Kwanyamas and there was a feeling in the party that it was [their] time to rule'. Hamutenya might not have led an exclusionary faction driven by traitorous hopes of cross-border Kwanyama unity, therefore, but ethnic discourses did represent an important component of his mobilisational armoury.

Identity politics was also a prominent feature of the CoD's succession battle, as dissident leaders Nora Schimming-Chase, Kala Gertze and Ignatius Shixwameni repeatedly accused party president Ben Ulenga of neglecting minority groups and of relying upon Owambo support to secure his re-election. According to Schimming-Chase (int., 4 November 2009),

[T]he idea came up that the party is really being carried by the people of the South... That is where we got the most votes... So the people in the South who had supported the party for all that while started feeling... none of them ever get into parliament... The whole argument that arose at that point was to say that, "We cannot continue carrying the North and losing the support that we have everywhere else".

Given that three of the CoD's five parliamentarians hailed from central and southern Namibia, with a fourth member drawn from the minority Kavango group, this allegation of northern

domination was so demonstrably false that its authors could reasonably be suspected of acting in bad faith. By accusing Ulenga of ethnic discrimination in favour of his Owambo kinsmen, however, Schimming-Chase and her associates were seeking to activate one of Namibia's most pervasive, most persistent and most explosive social cleavages: the fear and resentment of Owambo domination. At a press conference given in May 2007, following his defeat at the Keetmanshoop congress, Shixwameni alleged that:

The Kavango delegation were told that if they as Kavangos, with the support of Kwangaras [a derogatory term for non-Owambo blacks], Coloureds and Basters, thought they would ever lead the CoD or Namibia, they were proven wrong (2007 cited in Kanguuchi, *New Era*, 9 May 2007).

Ulenga and his associates responded to this criticism with an allegation that the dissident faction had mobilised support around Coloured, Kavango and Herero identity, that its goals involved excluding other groups from the leadership and that its vision would result in the party's destruction as a standard-bearer of non-ethnic, non-racial nationalism. According to Ulenga (int., 7 June 2009), Tsudao Gurirab (int., 3 June 2009) and a member of the National Working Group (Interview E2, male, Windhoek, 14 July 2009) respectively,

Some people would whisper... that... "It is not good politics to have Ben as president because he is Oshiwambo-speaking. It does not contrast properly with the SWAPO candidate... Put up somebody like Shixwameni, who is Kavango".

We have picked up few votes until now in the North, in Owambo; most of our votes are from... central and southern areas. What this [dissident group] was saying was that we need a leadership to reflect where the votes come from.

Schimming-Chase's group were [sic] saying that the CoD should be a party for minorities because the Owambos are always dominating and Ben Ulenga is an Owambo. Kala Gertze... always said that the CoD should be dominated by the minority groups, not the Owambos.

To what extent did ethnic identity and factional support patterns coincide at the Keetmanshoop congress? In Table 3.3 below, I have calculated the proportion of each regional delegation involved in the walk-out against Ulenga's re-election and assumed this figure to be correlated with support for the dissident faction.¹⁷

Table 3.3: Delegates to Walk Out in Protest at Ben Ulenga's Election, 2007			
Delegation	Number of Invited Delegates	Number of Delegates to Walk Out	Proportion of Delegation to Walk Out (%)
Regions:			
Caprivi	18	8	44.4
Erongo	23	5	21.7
Hardap	23	17	73.9
Karas	25	15	60.0
Kavango	20	26	130.0*
Khomas	50	27	54.0
Kunene South	11	1	9.1
Kunene North	10	0	0.0
Ohangwena	10	0	0.0
Omaheke	11	9	81.2
Omusati	10	0	0.0
Oshana	13	0	0.0
Oshikoto South	14	21	150.0*
Oshikoto North	10	1	10.0
Otjozondjupa	21	8	38.1
Other:			
Parliamentarians	5	3	60.0
Local councillors	33	18	54.5
Young Democrats, Women Democrats	43	6	14.0
Total	350	165	47.1

* An anomaly which suggests that this region was over-represented at the congress—clear evidence of the chaos and incompetence described by Shixwameni (int., 18 May 2009).

Source: Own calculations, from Congress of Democrats, 2009; Daniels, Hancox, Ndeikwila and Swartz, 2007.

¹⁷ It would appear reasonable to assume that persons participating in the protest against Ulenga's election had supported his opponents during the ballot.

It should be noted that these data were obtained from the Ulunga faction and are disputed by its opponents, who claim that a majority of delegates walked out in protest at Ulunga's re-election as party president in 2007. Nevertheless, two conclusions can be drawn from the figures presented. First, Ulunga enjoyed considerable support amongst the delegations representing Oshana, Omusati, Ohangwena and Oshikoto North, with only one delegate from these four Owambo-dominated districts joining Shixwameni and Schimming-Chase in their departure from the congress hall. Second, more than half of the delegates to participate in this protest hailed from four of the party's fifteen districts: Khomas, where Schimming-Chase attracted Coloured support; Hardap and Karas, where Rehoboth Basters and Nama comprise a majority of the population; and Kavango, where Shixwameni was born. Indeed, almost every councillor to walk out of the congress venue represented a local authority seat in central or southern Namibia, with the only exceptions being one office-holder from Rundu in the Kavango Region, one from Tsumeb in Oshikoto South and one from Opuwo in the Kunene Region. Although Shixwameni and Schimming-Chase deny mobilising support on the basis of ethnic minority identity, the events at Keetmanshoop appear to suggest otherwise.

Given its history as an alliance of 'tribal parties' and propensity towards ethnic fragmentation, the DTA might also have been expected to experience ethnic mobilisation during McHenry Venaani's campaign for the party leadership in 2005. Yet neither Venaani nor Kaura appears to have taken this particular path, with no evidence of ethnic competition emerging either from my interview material or the archive sources. Why was identity used to mobilise factional support within SWAPO and the CoD, but not within the DTA? To answer this question, it will be necessary to identify the major ethno-political groups present within each party congress and to determine whether each presidential contender was capable of activating these particular sources of factional support.

SWAPO's extraordinary congress of 2004, where Pohamba, Hamutenya and Angula contested the party's presidential nomination, was attended by representatives of every region and members of every major ethnic group in the country. This inclusionism arguably represented an impressive display of its national coverage, cultural diversity and commitment to African nationalism, but also posed the challenge of ensuring that Namibia's many ethnic rivalries did not infect and thus discredit the presidential selection process. SWAPO's politburo managed to neutralise any threat of anti-Owambo mobilisation by constructing an all-Owambo candidate field, but failed to recognise that such a manoeuvre would also encourage the activation of Owambo sub-group identities, including Kwanyama and Ndonga, which had long been politicised by contrasting memories of the liberation struggle and competing claims upon the post-colonial state. Its succession battle was characterised by ethnic mobilisation, therefore, because both of the leading protagonists were able to raise the spectre—albeit from different viewpoints—of Kwanyama ethno-nationalism.

As a 'rainbow party' proud of its claim to national reach and cross-ethnic appeal, the CoD attempted at its Keetmanshoop congress to emulate SWAPO's success in constructing an electorate characterised by the maximum possible degree of ethnic, racial and cultural diversity. Yet the circumstances under which SWAPO and the CoD came to hold their respective congresses could hardly have been more different: Nujoma and his associates had initiated an orderly, stage-managed process for transferring power to a credible successor, whilst Ulenga faced a palace coup instigated by members of his own leadership team. From the outset, therefore, CoD structures were so ravaged by internecine conflict that little or no control could be exercised over issues of candidate selection; anyone with the requisite number of signatures and confidence in their mobilisational capacity was able to stand for office. When the party's Owambo president (Ulenga) was challenged by its Coloured chief whip (Schimming-Chase) and

Kavango former secretary-general (Shixwameni), the activation of Namibia's anti-Owambo discourse became almost inevitable.

The DTA's leadership battle of 2005 represented a CoD-style palace coup rather than a regulated, SWAPO-style succession exercise, since party president Katuutire Kaura evidently had no plans to retire and probably regarded McHenry Venaani's challenge as unwelcome. Nevertheless, three factors appear to have militated against ethnic mobilisation. First, despite having enjoyed some national appeal at its formation in 1977, the DTA's political fortunes had waned to such an extent by 2005 that whites and Herero represented its only significant bases of support; in 2009, the top ten places on its parliamentary list were occupied by two Herero, three whites, one Coloured, one Rehoboth Baster, one Owambo and two individuals whose ethnicity could not be determined (Election Watch, 2009).¹⁸ Given this paucity of Owambo, neither Kaura nor Venaani was likely to derive a significant political pay-off by activating Namibia's minorities discourse. Second, the DTA managed to avoid a destructive conflict between its two major ethnic groups because whites held the chairmanship and recognised that, to retain political relevance, their party could not also have a white president. Finally, whilst Kaura and Venaani both belong to the Herero ethnic community, none of the four Herero clans involved with DTA politics—the Maherero, Kambazembi, Otjikaoko and Zeraua—have identities suitable for factional mobilisation. This lack of politicisation can perhaps be attributed to three factors: first, the spatial dispersion of Namibia's Herero population, which represents an obstacle to effective mobilisation; second, the diminutive size of each Herero clan, which limits the pay-offs available to any politician seeking public resources; and third, the DTA's perpetual marginalisation, which ensures that—when intra-Herero disputes do arise—aggrieved chiefs tend to join the ruling party rather than to fight their 'corner' within opposition politics.¹⁹ The DTA's succession battle

¹⁸ Identified from surname and author's own knowledge (Election Watch, 2009).

¹⁹ From the late 1970s, for example, the Vita and Kaoko Royal Houses of the Kunene Region were both aligned with the DTA. When a land dispute between them intensified during the late-1990s, however, the Vita Royal House shifted its allegiance to SWAPO. See: Friedman 2011: 213.

involved little or no ethnic mobilisation, therefore, because its leadership candidates were unable to demonstrate a credible link with any readily-exploited ethno-political identity.

* * * * *

Why might a propensity towards ethnic mobilisation, as demonstrated by SWAPO and CoD factionalism, be positively correlated with splinter party formation? Two factors are worthy of consideration. First, when a community is repeatedly vilified by the victorious faction, its members can become alienated from the party leadership and thus sympathetic to the notion of establishing a breakaway party. According to NamRights director Phil ya Nangoloh (int., 17 July 2009),

There has been a perception that [Kwanyama] are being marginalised... That is also a perception for many other various ethnic groups in this country, but [Kwanyama] claim to have legitimacy because... they were founders of SWAPO[...]; the liberation struggle was basically fought on their turf [...]; they [inhabit]... one of the least developed areas; and they are marginalised in terms of political power. That clearly [gave rise] to perception that, “Listen, if we cannot have our [rights] within SWAPO, so we have to get out” and that is how we got eventually to RDP.

A junior RDP activist (Interview M2, male, RDP constituency organiser, Windhoek, 9 July 2009)

hailing from the Ohangwena Region corroborated this account, telling me that:

If you look at the SWAPO party structure, there is only one Kwanyama in the Politburo. The people from Omusati, however, there are seven of them in the Politburo. If you look at the Central Committee of SWAPO, I think there are six or seven Kwanyamas but you have twenty from Omusati.

According to SWAPO prime minister and former leadership candidate Nahas Angula,

[T]he establishment of the RDP was fed by this type of perception among some Oshikwanyama-speaking people that they were not welcome in Swapo... Such a perception might be real or imaginary. As a belief, however, such a perception is

capable of triggering political actions with far-reaching consequences (Angula, *New Era*, 15 February 2008).

Indeed, when factional support is successfully mobilised around ethnic identity, political entrepreneurs and their followers are quite likely to conclude—rightly or wrongly—that this strategy can be reproduced in the electoral arena. Thus an RDP national executive committee member (Interview M3, male, Windhoek, 11 May 2009) told me that in 2009 his party's top campaign priority would be the Ohangwena Region, where Kwanyama represent an overwhelming majority of the population. These efforts failed to produce an electoral breakthrough in that region, where SWAPO retained 92 per cent of the vote in 2009, but nevertheless indicate that Hamutenya and his associates considered Kwanyama identity to represent their most potent mobilisational resource. Moreover, APP leader Ignatius Shixwameni has openly appealed to ethnic sentiment in his birth region by holding an inaugural rally and congress at Rundu, by appointing three Kavango to his national executive committee and by demanding that Rukavango (as well as siLozi) language services be introduced on to state radio. These tactics were to prove considerably more effective than Hamutenya's campaign in the Ohangwena Region, since Shixwameni mobilised enough electoral support—some 11.5 per cent of votes cast in the Kavango Region—to secure one seat in parliament in 2009 and two local authority seats in the following year. Ethnic narratives tend, therefore, to exacerbate the centrifugal tendencies unleashed by intra-party succession battles because, unlike ideological discourses, they can easily be translated into strategies of electoral mobilisation with the potential to create a viable breakaway party.

Second, when a party's electoral appeal rests upon an inclusionary approach and its voters exhibit a low level of partisan allegiance, as in the CoD's case, public bickering between ethnic notables can ruin its image as a non-ethnic alternative to the 'tribal parties' and thus trigger a collapse in electoral support. As a journalist (int., 15 June 2009) told me, 'At the start,

the CoD was a rainbow party. They really tried to be different—they had a shadow budget, gave access to the media, *etcetera*. Unfortunately, that is all long gone’. According to a member of the CoD’s dissident faction (Interview C, female, National Working Group member, Windhoek, 9 June 2009), ‘most of the brown [i.e., Coloured] people have decided not to vote for the CoD because they were called names’. Even senior Ulenka loyalists expected the party to suffer a significant electoral reverse in 2009, with Tsudao Gurirab (int., 3 June 2009) telling me that:

We will do very poorly in... the coming elections; it is not what has happened, it is what has happened subsequently in the media... It was quite nasty, to be honest with you... We have five [parliamentary] seats at the moment [and] my most optimistic calculation... is that... we will retain two seats.

For defeated presidential aspirants, such as Shixwameni, such perceptions of impending electoral collapse alter the balance of risk and reward associated with establishing a breakaway party. When a party is strong at the polls or when a defeated candidate and his erstwhile opponent are able to reconcile, as McHenry Venaani and Katuutire Kaura did in the DTA, splinter party formation represents a relatively unattractive option because the probability of humiliation and financial ruin are judged to be greater than the prospects of personal advancement. If the host party is stumbling towards an electoral collapse, however, defeated leadership candidates can be sorely tempted—especially when their record suggests a capacity to attract support on the basis of ethnic identity—to ‘jump ship’. By destroying a party’s inclusionism, therefore, factional mobilisation on the basis of ethnic identity can lead indirectly to splinter party formation.

Coercion

Patronage, as many authors have shown (van de Walle 2003: 313; Williams 1987: 639), is an immensely powerful tool for elite accommodation, conciliation and integration. In post-war Italy

and Congress-era India, as we have seen, party bosses often sought to exchange public sector jobs, contracts and development initiatives in return for factional support. In the United States, presidents have long used their considerable powers of patronage to attract endorsements, reward supporters and co-opt rivals; Barack Obama, for example, appointed former opponent Hillary Clinton to lead the State Department after his rise to power in 2009. In Africa, state resources have often been used to construct governing coalitions, buy off opponents and reward supporters, with kleptocratic despots such as Joseph Mobutu of Zaire and Omar Bongo of Gabon proving particularly adept at securing personal support in return for government office (Nugent 2004: 390-395). As van de Walle (2003: 313) has noted, African clientelism thus represents ‘a mechanism for [the] accommodation and integration of a fairly narrow political elite rather than... a form of mass party patronage. Most of the material gains from clientelism are limited to this elite’. When patronage is used to reconcile or to co-opt defeated leadership contenders, as in the American case, a high level of party cohesion can be expected.

In Namibia, however, political power has often been used, not only to distribute patronage in return for factional support, but also to coerce party members into backing an incumbent leader or his chosen successor, as well as to marginalise and exclude defeated leadership contenders. President Nujoma, for example, ruthlessly exploited his powers of patronage—which included the right to appoint or dismiss any government minister, deputy minister or ambassador—to promote Pohamba and marginalise Hamutenya during SWAPO’s 2004 leadership election campaign. Thus a journalist (Interview V, male, Windhoek, 23 June 2009) and a prominent Hamutenya supporter (Jeremiah Nambinga, int., 4 June 2009) told me respectively that,

[Nujoma] was president for fifteen years and leader of the party for thirty or forty years. He has done a lot of favours and can easily garner support for someone. We have a saying here: “When Sam Nujoma endorses somebody, he is as good as elected”.

Sam Nujoma is regarded as the mastermind in terms of employment because whether it is in the private sector, particularly in the parastatals, he is controlling them... So most of the people will dance to his tune for the sake of bread and butter.

When Hamutenya was dismissed from the government a mere four days before SWAPO's 2004 congress, this ruthless determination to exploit state power for party political purposes was demonstrated under the full glare of media publicity. By signalling so clearly that his working relationship with Hamutenya had broken down, SWAPO's incumbent leader—who intended to remain as party president for a further three years—offered congress delegates a choice between endorsing his chosen successor or plunging the party into even greater internecine conflict (Interview V, 23 June 2009). Perhaps unsurprisingly, Pohamba won the election by a wide margin.

Nujoma's partial withdrawal from public life in 2004, however, had the unintended effect of providing a lifeline to Hamutenya, whose personal ambition now rested upon securing the party leadership at a congress due three years later. Determined to thwart this gambit, the Nujoma/Pohamba faction once again abused state resources for the purpose of marginalising rivals, punishing waverers and threatening or cajoling undecided delegates. When asked whether SWAPO's 2004 congress had been followed by a 'witch-hunt', as Hamutenya has claimed (Staff Reporter, *The Namibian*, 8 November 2007), journalist Gwen Lister (int., 10 July 2009) told me that, 'There has certainly been an attempt at a fairly big purge, especially in the government and parastatals, and this has been encouraged by the Youth League. People... were sidelined and they have lost their employment'. According to an article published by her newspaper, *The Namibian*, in 2007, 'many of those who supported [Hamutenya's] campaign have since been victimised and lost their jobs in Government and parastatals' (Maletsky, *The Namibian*, 16 November 2007). A prominent Hamutenya supporter (Interview M3, 11 May 2009) told me that he had, 'employed

sixty-one people in an electrical business, but the government [put pressure on my customers] and I had to close it'. Most Nujoma loyalists would deny that such a purge has taken place (Interview R, male, journalist, Windhoek, 10 July 2009), although even Pohamba felt obliged to appeal publicly for an end to 'intimidation, threats of job losses and other dirty tricks' (Maletsky, *The Namibian*, 4 June 2004). This demand was ignored and in November 2007, three weeks before Pohamba was elected SWAPO leader, a disillusioned and isolated Hamutenya led his supporters in forming a breakaway party; coercion had helped to secure the prize for Nujoma's chosen successor, but at the price of permanent schism.

Compulsion also represented a prominent feature of CoD succession politics, with both sides using every weapon at their disposal to marginalise, isolate and undermine party members deemed sympathetic to the opposing faction. When youth league secretary Natji Tjirera, who supported Shixwameni's campaign for the party presidency in 2004, publicly called upon the leadership to resign,

[T]he late secretary-general [Kala Gertze] initiated a process of young people... to remove me from my position of Young Democrats. Of course, this gathering... could never have been legitimate... because it was not properly convened. He went ahead and they removed me. When this report came to the National Working Committee, [they] rejected it... Ulenga stood up for me and the legitimate leadership that was then there (Tjirera, int., 8 July 2009).

By the time Kala Gertze, a key member of Nora Schimming-Chase's faction, had organised a second attempt to oust the Young Democrats leader, Tjirera was fully committed to Ulenga's cause. As *The Namibia newspaper* (Maletsky, 28 February 2007) noted,

A National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting... decided to suspend Natji Tjirare [sic] pending the outcome of an investigation by a disciplinary committee... Tjirare [sic] *is seen as an ally of Ulenga* and if he is ousted, it is expected to afford others an opportunity to use the youth platform during the campaign leading up to the party's extraordinary congress later this year [emphasis added].

Tjirera not only survived this second attempt to unseat him, but strongly supported Ulenga at the Keetmanshoop congress and later emerged as the party's principal spokesperson, taking third place on its parliamentary list in 2009. It is perhaps reasonable to assume that Ulenga was irked by Tjirera's initial demand for his resignation, but that he also recognised in Gertze's heavy-handed response an opportunity to co-opt the party's most prominent youth advocate.

Indeed, the CoD's Schimming-Chase faction was not alone in attempting to coerce its opponents into submission. After rejecting the Daniels report on alleged fraud at the Keetmanshoop congress, which identified a small number of irregularities and recommended that fresh elections be held, Ulenga's 'National Executive Committee' expelled Schimming-Chase, Shixwameni, Gertze, Dienda, Windhoek municipal councillor Herbert Schultz and official Pauline Dempers from the party. This action was justified on the grounds that a group of 'malcontents' (Tsudao Gurirab, int., 3 June 2009) had tried to 'dismember' (Kanguechi, *New Era*, 13 August 2007) the party, but—as with the dissidents' subsequent suspension of Ulenga, Gurirab, Namises, Tjirera and three junior officials—its purpose was undoubtedly to establish a monopoly over all-important state funding and to intimidate activists at lower levels of the organisation. Four months later Shixwameni resigned from the party, claiming that he could not 'indefinitely wait for the outcome of the court case while people at the grassroots are demanding for direction' (Kanguechi, *New Era*, 17 December 2007); Ulenga's rejection of the Daniels report and expulsion of opponents had demonstrated, it would seem, that he would never willingly relinquish office.

Why did coercion represent such a prominent aspect of CoD succession politics? On the one hand, many leading members of the party—including Ulenga, Gurirab, Gertze, Shixwameni, Namises, Schultz and Dempers—had once belonged to Namibia's liberation movement and were, therefore, exposed to its culture of autocracy, intolerance and repression. Whilst several of these figures actually fell victim to SWAPO's internal security apparatus during the 1980s, when

Gertze and Dempers were amongst those liberation activists detained and tortured on suspicion of espionage, such experiences did not necessarily create a steadfast commitment to the theory or practice of internal party democracy. Gertze, as noted above, tried in 2005 to depose an elected leader of the party's youth wing, whilst a leading member of Ulenga's own faction (Interview D, female, CoD National Working Group member, Windhoek, 10 June 2009) told me that, 'Ben had his own weaknesses as president and I do not condone that... There was a huge lack of consultation. We [had] a secretary-general [Gertze] and a president who would not sit together and plan; each would do their own thing'. On the other hand, ethnic mobilisation and personality clashes had created such a poisonous climate within party structures that the CoD's faction leaders evidently felt justified in taking the most extreme legal measures, including litigation and dismissal, against their opponents. Coercion, in other words, should be regarded as a product in part of the alienation and rancour created by ethnic particularism, which can in turn be traced to the party's lack of control over candidate selection.

The DTA's succession battle in 2005, by contrast, was characterised by little or no recourse to compulsion. Two factors seem to explain this pattern. First, despite its complicity in government repression during the apartheid era, when SWAPO rallies were often disrupted by hired thugs, the DTA has never used coercion or violence to suppress dissent within its own ranks; factionalism, as noted in chapter one of this thesis, is even regarded by its leadership as an electoral asset rather than a liability. Second, DTA succession politics was characterised by relatively little polarisation because party president Katuutire Kaura and leadership challenger McHenry Venaani, both members of the Herero community, could not mobilise support around ethnic identity. The DTA's leadership election did not, in other words, create a climate of bitterness and acrimony conducive to the adoption of extreme measures against party members considered sympathetic to the defeated candidate.

* * * * *

In Namibia, therefore, state resources are often used for the purpose, not of healing the wounds inflicted by factional competition, but of marginalising, isolating and excluding defeated leadership candidates. Such tactics tended to exacerbate rather than to mitigate the centrifugal forces unleashed by presidential succession crises because prominent members of a dissident faction, once purged, are freed from the behavioural constraints associated with clientelism and have, therefore, relatively little to lose either by criticising the leadership or seceding from the party. As a civil society activist (Interview W, 24 June 2009) told me when asked about the RDP's formation:

If Nujoma had reached out after the 2004 congress it might have been avoided, but he went out of his way to isolate the people who supported Hamutenya... There were definitely some dirty tricks going on, to marginalise the Hamutenya supporters, and it was after that many of them felt that they had to form a party.

Why did SWAPO and CoD factions seek to marginalise, isolate and exclude their opponents when their DTA counterparts did not? Three factors are worthy of consideration. First, by mobilising support around ethnic identity, SWAPO and CoD leadership candidates created a climate of such polarisation and rancour that extreme measures, including disciplinary action, could be taken against opponents of the victorious faction; DTA succession politics, by contrast, involved relatively little acrimony. Second, given that SWAPO's political culture evolved during the liberation struggle, when political actors were generally regarded as either 'patriots' or 'enemies' and when paranoia about South African espionage was rife, its leadership has developed a deeply-engrained antagonism towards dissent. Indeed, SWAPO history is littered with cases of internal repression, from the Shipanga 'Rebellion' of 1976 to the spy drama of 1980-89, when hundreds of party members were detained, tortured and murdered on suspicion of spying for South Africa. When judged against this background, it is perhaps hardly surprising that Hamutenya and his associates should be regarded as 'Judas Iscariots' (to use President

Pohamba's phrase) and that extreme measures, including dismissal from patronage jobs, should be taken against them (Kanguechi, *New Era*, 25 February 2008). As Henning Melber (personal comm., 20 December 2011) and a South African academic (personal comm., 19 December 2011) remarked respectively,

The tendency to marginalise is somewhat related to the "struggle mentality"... During the anti-colonial resistance, [...] people were obsessed with spies and counter revolutionaries. This created a confrontational mindset and the worst "enemies" were the dissidents from within the own rank and file... If someone dares to challenge... authority and power from within, these are the ultimate traitors and ought to be treated accordingly.

It relates to the fact that Namibia... went through [an] armed liberation struggle... During those struggles people adopted very polarised positions... so no tradition of dealing with opponents developed: you were either with us, or you were out.

Perhaps surprisingly, given that Kala Gertze and Pauline Dempers were amongst the most prominent victims of SWAPO's infamous 'spy drama',²⁰ the CoD appears to have replicated certain aspects of this authoritarian political culture after its formation in 1999; the DTA, by contrast, has no tradition of suppressing intra-party factionalism. Finally, it is possible that SWAPO's willingness to apply coercion can be traced in part to the procedural framework within which its succession struggle was conducted. The reader will recall that, in 2004, Nujoma chose to retire as state president but not as SWAPO leader, with Pohamba forced to wait a further three years before bringing both of these power centres under his control. Given that Namibia's founding president had dramatically and unambiguously identified his preferred successor by sacking a rival candidate just four days before the 2004 congress commenced, this manoeuvre was probably intended to sow fears that a Hamutenya victory would lead to organisational paralysis and, thus, to ensure Pohamba's election. Its effect, however, was to create a two-stage succession process in which SWAPO's nomination for state president and its

²⁰ See chapter one.

party leadership fell vacant at different junctures; Nujoma and Pohamba won the first round in 2004, but this achievement would have been compromised by a Hamutenya victory at the second stage in 2007. Given that co-optation would probably have involved enhancing Hamutenya's capacity to mobilise patronage resources and thus reinvigorating his campaign for the party leadership, Nujoma and his associates had little choice but to pursue a policy—which in any case complemented their authoritarian reflexes—of exclusion, isolation and marginalisation. SWAPO's experience therefore suggests that two-stage succession processes, though useful to an incumbent leader seeking to manipulate the outcome, carry a much greater risk of fragmentation than one-stage processes involving a simultaneous transfer of party and state office.

Age-based Identity

Given that DTA succession battles do not seem to have involved any significant recourse to ethnic, ideological or clientelistic discourses, how did Katuutire Kaura and McHenry Venaani mobilise support? In 2011, Venaani was asked during an extended newspaper interview whether his candidacy reflected wider demands for a 'change of guard' within the party's senior leadership. He responded thus:

Yes... Our thinking then was that the party should take a new direction and that was also the approach that I took to Parliament. If you look at the older generation of DTA parliamentarians, they were not really forceful... I believe that the current leaders have played their role and there's nothing wrong to call for a change of guard to allow more energetic leaders to take over the party (2011 cited in Ndjebela, *New Era*, 11 October 2011).

Such remarks suggest that Venaani, who joined the DTA's Central Committee at the age of eighteen and contested its leadership only ten years later, had tried to mobilise support around a

contention that the then sixty-four year old Kaura lacked sufficient ambition and vigour to reverse the DTA's seemingly inexorable slide towards extinction. For delegates still struggling to internalise the party's electoral collapse in 1999, its break with NUDO, the Republican Party (RP) and Namibia Democratic Movement for Change (NDMC) in 2003/04 and its loss of official opposition status in 2005, Venaani's platform probably represented an attractive combination of dynamism, hope and change with the potential to rescue the party from oblivion. Yet ironically, Kaura—who went into exile some thirteen years before Venaani's birth and acceded to the DTA vice-presidency in 1989—also chose to build his campaign around questions of age: delegates were reminded that Venaani would be thirty-two years old in 2009 and, therefore, too young to contest Namibia's presidential election (Kanguechi, *New Era*, 14 March 2005).²¹ This argument probably proved decisive because, although few DTA politicians could have expected SWAPO to lose the 2009 election, any opposition party without a presidential candidate is generally considered to lack ambition and, therefore, to stand little chance of securing parliamentary office.²²

To what extent were age-based issues used to mobilise factional support in our other two cases? According to National Assembly Speaker and former prime minister Theo-Ben Gurirab (int., 25 November 2009), SWAPO's Hidipo Hamutenya and Nahas Angula both enjoyed some support amongst the party's young generation:

Hamutenya... had a certain pool, particularly among certain types of young people, maybe quote-unquote “people on the left”. Now our prime minister [Angula] has been an educator... and he therefore had certain resonance with younger people—to the left. Basically, people respected him, liked him, identified with him. He was a grown-up youth!

²¹ To contest Namibia's presidential election, a candidate must be at least thirty-five years old.

²² On the centrality of parliamentary elections, see chapter five.

These alleged support patterns were, however, neither mentioned by any other informant nor implied by the composition of Hamutenya's breakaway party, which boasts a decidedly middle-aged executive, whilst not one of my interviewees identified age-based mobilisation as even a peripheral feature of CoD factionalism. It would appear reasonable to assume, therefore, that age-based issues were scarcely activated by SWAPO or CoD presidential contenders during the succession battles of 2004-09.

How can this variation between the DTA and its counterparts be explained? Two factors appear to be worth consideration. First, the opportunities for age-based mobilisation were much greater in the DTA than in either of the other cases: Katuutire Kaura is some thirty-six years older than McHenry Venaani, whilst CoD president Ben Ulenga is fourteen years older than Ignatius Shixwameni and twelve years younger than Nora Schimming-Chase; SWAPO's Hifikepunye Pohamba is only four years older than Hidipo Hamutenya and eight years older than Nahas Angula. This disparity meant that Venaani, alone amongst the presidential contenders analysed here, was in a strong position to portray his candidacy as offering a shift towards youthful dynamism. Second, age-based identity represents a relatively weak mobilisational resource because its political salience is low; social conflicts tend in Namibia to revolve, not around generational turnover, but around ethnicity and development issues. Whereas DTA leadership contenders Katuutire Kaura and McHenry Venaani had little choice but to activate age-based issues because neither man could hope to deploy ethnic, ideological, clientelistic or delegitimising narratives, each of their SWAPO and CoD counterparts had access to much more powerful mobilisational resources and, therefore, no need to focus attention upon questions of age. DTA succession politics, in other words, revolved around issues of generational change in part because the party's candidates could not mobilise support around any other discourse.

* * * * *

Given that age-based narratives appear to distinguish the DTA's succession battle from its SWAPO and CoD counterparts, how might this particular mobilisation strategy be correlated with variation in the degree of party cohesion? Two factors are worthy of consideration. First, marginalisation on grounds of age is rarely permanent; in many cases, young politicians have merely to wait until the 'old guard' has retired before taking up the reins of power. Ethnic or racial discrimination, by contrast, can threaten perpetual exclusion from office and thus offer a clear incentive for splinter party formation. Second, when factional support has been mobilised around a highly contentious issue, such as Kwanyama ethno-nationalism, alleged Owambo domination or patronage distribution, post-election reconciliation between opposing candidates is often impossible because civil servants have been dismissed, parliamentarians ousted, personal abuse traded, passions inflamed and political platforms radicalised. Many senior RDP figures, for example, expressed deep hostility towards both SWAPO in general and Sam Nujoma in particular when interviewed by me in 2009, even though some five years had passed since Pohamba's election as presidential candidate. Responding to a question about his withdrawal from the ruling party in 2007, Hamutenya (int., 11 May 2009) told me that:

I [saw] a developing trend towards authoritarianism, autocracy, which was being exhibited by Sam Nujoma... One of the things he started to do was to harass and intimidate all of colleagues with whom we worked in many years in the struggle and he was surrounding himself with some youngsters, people of no character, people of no experience, people of no intellectual credibility of any type.

According to RDP secretary for information Jeremiah Nambinga (int., 4 June 2009),

We... realised that there was no way you could change SWAPO from within because... [Nujoma] will successfully blackmail you and after blackmailing you, character assassinating you, then he will dismiss you. So there is no way SWAPO can be changed from within, certainly not while Mr. Sam Nujoma is alive.

Similar expressions of hostility and contempt were made by informants involved in the CoD's succession battle, including these broadsides from a leading dissident (Interview C, 9 June 2009) and the pro-Ulenga chairperson Tsudao Gurirab (int., 3 June 2009) respectively:

[Ulenga] is the biggest tribal[ist]... If you are not saying “yes” to everything he is saying, then you are an enemy. He does not want people with whom he can work, he want to be a dictator and I am sorry, this is a political party.

Shixwameni was always associated with forward-looking, progressive [politics]... He sits now in his area, where he comes from, essentially at the head of an ethnic party: totally inexplicable... I do not care much about Schimming-Chase—she has that proud record of being a wrecker of all the parties she has been in.

Such vitriol is entirely absent from the DTA succession discourse recorded in my interview material and in newspaper archives, both of which reveal a seemingly genuine desire to avoid recrimination and, therefore, to effect a reconciliation between the rival candidates. Indeed, Kaura even used age-based narratives to pursue this goal of rapprochement, paternalistically promising that Venaani would be ‘mentored’ until the DTA leadership became vacant in 2014. A contemporary newspaper article noted that,

Kaura said when he was motivating his re-election to the Central Committee on Saturday that he had told the young man and his father, Mike Venaani, that he was prepared to keep him under his wings and to groom him for 2014, when he would qualify to stand for Namibia's presidency. “It's is not in my nature to destroy people. I took him as a child,” Kaura said (Maletsky, *The Namibian*, 14 March 2005).²³

Age-based mobilisation is, therefore, negatively correlated with party fragmentation partly because its use rarely threatens permanent exclusion from office and partly because its limited political salience is conducive to the reconciliation of opposing candidates.

²³ McHenry Venaani's father, Mike, had been DTA secretary-general during the early 1990s.

Conclusion

This chapter has tried to conceptualise party cohesion by determining the reasons for which leadership succession contests caused SWAPO and the CoD to split, but left the DTA unscathed. My subject matter is important because SWAPO's rupture provoked political violence and led to the emergence of a new official opposition party, whilst the CoD's internal conflicts paralysed its organisational structures and thus precipitated an electoral collapse. In answering the research question, I make four key arguments.

First, my interview and archival work has suggested that variation in the level of cohesion is positively correlated, in Namibia at least, with the type(s) of mobilisational strategy employed by each of the factions seeking to secure high office. Particular narratives, in other words, carry an inherent risk of accelerating the centrifugal forces unleashed by leadership succession battles, whilst other discourses serve to promote reconciliation between opposing candidates and, thus, to mitigate against the prospects of splinter party formation. By identifying the mobilisational resources activated by Namibia's leadership contenders, examining the reasons for which these narratives were employed and exploring the effect of such choices upon party cohesion, I sought to conceptualise the variation observed across our three cases.

Second, ethnic mobilisation was prevalent during the SWAPO and CoD factional struggles of 2004-07 and 2004-09 respectively, but largely absent from the DTA succession contest of 2005. This variation is explained by several factors: SWAPO's creation of an all-Owambo candidate field, which encouraged activation of intra-group cleavages; the CoD's organisational paralysis, which led to the reproduction of Namibia's Owambo/minorities cleavage; and the DTA's all-Herero candidate field, which mitigated against the activation of both anti-Owambo discourses sub-group rivalries. Ethnic mobilisation is linked to an increased risk of splinter party formation in two respects. On the one hand, marginalised communities are likely to become alienated from the party leadership and, therefore, sympathetic to the notion of

splinter party formation. On the other hand, when a party's appeal rests upon its claim to appropriate black nationalism, ethnic mud-slinging can cause such damage to its electoral prospects that a faction leader with reasonable prospects of mobilising popular support, such as Ignatius Shixwameni, perceives little personal advantage to remaining on board the 'sinking ship'. Such findings suggest that, in Namibia, ethnic or clan-based mobilisation, marginalisation and exclusion are positively correlated with splinter party formation.

Third, coercion was widely employed by SWAPO and CoD leadership candidates but largely absent from the DTA's succession battle, which concluded with a widely-publicised *rapprochement* between party president Katuutire Kaura and challenger McHenry Venaani. This disparity is traced to three sources. First, SWAPO and CoD leadership contenders created such a polarised environment—by virtue of their recourse to ethnic mobilisation—that extreme measures could be taken against opposing factions; the DTA's succession battle, by contrast, revolved around age-based mobilisation and thus produced relatively little acrimony. Second, SWAPO is 'endlessly interested in the outward appearance of unity and solidarity' (Soiri 2002: 205), notoriously intolerant of criticism and widely noted for its tendency to equate dissent with treachery; the CoD appears to have replicated this authoritarian culture since its formation in 1999, whilst the DTA has no tradition of internal repression. Third, President Nujoma's unwillingness to retire fully in 2004 created a two-stage selection process in which party and state offices were contested separately; Hamutenya could not be rehabilitated after losing SWAPO's presidential nomination without enhancing his prospects of securing the party leadership three years later. Two-stage succession exercises, therefore, typically represent a considerable threat to party cohesion.

The final argument made in this chapter is that age-based mobilisation represented a prominent feature of DTA succession politics but was largely eschewed by SWAPO and CoD leadership contenders, whose factional groupings were held together by appeals to ethnic identity

and material self-interest. This variation is traced in part to the substantial age-gap between DTA rivals Katuutire Kaura and McHenry Venaani, which created an opportunity for the latter to present himself as a dynamic alternative to the ‘old guard’, but also to the inability of either candidate to activate more potent sources of political loyalty. Indeed, it is precisely the limited salience of age-based identities which enabled DTA structures to emerge from the succession battle unscathed, since passions were scarcely ignited, platforms did not become significantly polarised and any perceptions that Venaani had been marginalised were tempered by the knowledge that Kaura and his associates would, eventually, retire. Succession contests tend, in other words, to promote fragmentation when ethnic identity is activated or state patronage is withdrawn from defeated candidates, but are less likely to cause structural damage when other forms of identity—such as age—are mobilised.

4. Liberator or Looter? SWAPO Motivation since Independence

SWAPO is an organisation that is capable of reading which way history is breaking and thus always alive to the need to adapt its policy and programme to suit new conditions; and guided by this battle-tested tradition of far-sightedness and realism, SWAPO is well-placed to blaze new trails in leading Namibia and its people to a bright future.

SWAPO Political Programme, 1991²⁴

African political parties have acquired a bad reputation. According to Manning (2005: 718-719), for instance, ‘The whole thrust of the comparative literature on parties is that parties are there to rein in divisive, expansive, even explosive, social forces unleashed by socio-economic modernisation processes. In many African states it is just the opposite—elites use parties to mobilise, aggregate and disaggregate various kinds of social forces. They do not represent social cleavages so much as manage and manipulate them’. In his (otherwise optimistic) study of African democratisation, Staffan Lindberg (2006: 150) calculated that ‘even in the free and fair elections, losing parties endorsed the results immediately in only forty per cent of the cases... Efforts to discredit a legitimate and democratic process are a form of undemocratic behaviour, and in this light, many opposition groups in Africa do not come across as genuinely prodemocratic’. For van de Walle and Butler (1999: 26-27), ‘the nature of clientelistic politics militates against institutionalisation of parties. Weak parties will continue to prevail, and this is a cause for pessimism in even the most competitive systems in the region. It undermines the process of democratic consolidation in which parties play such a critical role’. The frailty, corruption, clientelism, predation and violence associated with African political parties is, therefore, seen to be hampering progress towards the entrenchment of electoral competition and institutionalisation of democratic norms.

²⁴ As quoted in Dobell 1998: 131.

Yet despite such pronouncements, there have been relatively few attempts to answer a seemingly obvious question: what do African political parties wish to achieve? According to Randall and Svåsand (2002: 42-43), van de Walle (2003: 315) and Prempeh (2010: 26) respectively,

Rather than being developed as organisations, parties appear as useful vehicles for ambitious politicians.

The main ambition of parties is either to gain control of the state or to gain leverage over those who have it.

Because the president remains the patron *par excellence* in Africa, the desire to capture—or, for small parties, to form a coalition with—the presidency is the motive force behind the formation and behaviour of many of Africa's parties.

Such assertions, however, make no concession to the question of party system type. In a two-party or pluralistic party system, for example, most or all of the major parties can reasonably hope, over the long term, either to capture power or to secure, by process of negotiation and co-optation, inclusion within a post-election coalition government. In a dominant-party system, by contrast, the ruling elite alone has any prospect—or, indeed, any expectation—of securing power; its rivals, as Duverger (1954, cited in Arian and Barnes, 1974: 594) suggests, fully recognise their inferiority and the impossibility of capturing political power in all but the distant future. Thus, a dominant party and its opponents pursue quite different objectives and have to be analysed separately.

Recognising this dichotomy, my chapter is concerned with answering the following question: what is SWAPO's motivation? It is split into four parts. In the first section, I ask whether any political party can be considered to pursue a single agenda and, upon concluding in the affirmative, use both published documents and informal sources to identify SWAPO's nexus

of power. On the basis of this evidence it is suggested that an elite of fewer than thirty cadres, led by the president, has been permitted thus far to define the party's vision, interests and goals. In the second section, I describe and critically appraise three competing interpretations of SWAPO's post-colonial record. After dismissing suggestions that its leadership is principally interested in avoiding prosecution for liberation-era atrocities or in empowering under-privileged communities, I advance a class analysis which highlights the emergence of a post-colonial elite sustained by the partisan or nepotistic distribution of government jobs, contracts and other public resources. For this middle stratum of SWAPO politicians, senior civil servants, security chiefs and black empowerment entrepreneurs, personal affluence is derived from privileged access to power and can be guaranteed only by the repeated reproduction of SWAPO rule.²⁵ In other words, the dominant party's motivation is to safeguard elite privilege by retaining power indefinitely.

Given that Namibia has a democratic political system with regular, free and largely fair elections, such a conclusion raises the question of public morale: why do voters tolerate SWAPO's strategy of elite accumulation? In the third section of this chapter, I argue that several factors explain the party's success in retaining its support base. First, state control over certain television, radio and print media, as well as over public holiday and street name designation, is continually used to reinforce SWAPO's liberation narrative. Second, public resources are distributed to traditional authorities in the hope of reinforcing SWAPO's support within its critically important northern heartlands. Third, the continued use of pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric—though seemingly anachronistic—is designed to emphasise SWAPO's alleged credentials as a leftist, pro-poor movement dedicated to popular empowerment. Finally, but most importantly, high levels of public spending on health, education, welfare and other services are intended to benefit SWAPO's disadvantaged supporters whilst expanding its patronage network and defusing demands for wholesale redistribution.

²⁵ A similar phenomenon is identified by Szeftel in his study of Zambia under single-party rule. See: Szeftel, 1982.

The final section of this chapter seeks to identify SWAPO's long-term vision by asking the question: what are its electoral objectives? I argue that, given its dominance of the Namibian body politic, SWAPO is seeking to create a *de facto* one-party state in which the presidency, all parliamentary seats, all regional council seats and all local authority seats are controlled by the ruling party. Yet it would be wrong to conclude that Namibia is following the same path towards single-partyism and personal rule which blighted post-colonial politics in Kenya, Zambia and Tanzania; indeed, SWAPO has *chosen* not to use its parliamentary super-majority or executive power for the purpose of imposing authoritarian rule. This seemingly paradoxical vision of 'democracy without opposition representation' is explained partly by a sincere commitment (at least in some quarters) to the concept of political liberty and partly by the legitimising power of free elections, but also by an expectation that any shift towards autocratic governance would deter foreign investment, trigger economic turbulence and, therefore, disrupt of the patronage networks deemed vital to elite accumulation.

Decision-making Structures and Long-term Goals

Can a political party be deemed to have a single agenda? According to Köllner and Basedau (2005: 6),

A central insight of the literature on party organisation is that parties are not homogenous organisations which are sure of their goals and which follow some sort of unitary will. Rather, parties consist of coalitions of political actors who pursue their individual interests and goals.

In their pioneering collection on intra-party factionalism, Beller and Belloni (1978: 422-430) argue that such coalitions are best categorised according to structural type: *cliques* or *tendencies* 'are either almost totally disorganized or else... exhibit a very ephemeral organization', whilst *personal*

and *client-group factions* are 'based on the person of their leader' and *institutionalised factions* 'develop considerable routinization of rules and procedures, with scheduled meetings, preplanned agendas, formal votes and... often with designated meeting places or faction headquarters'. Each of these faction types can be detected within Namibia's ruling party, which boasts an institutionalised youth league, women's league and elders' council, as well as the affiliated National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW); a band of 'Nujoma loyalists' driven by personal attachment to SWAPO's founding president; and ill-defined cliques centred upon SWAPO deputy president Hage Geingob, secretary of information Jerry Ekandjo and secretary-general Pendukeni Iivula-Ithana, whose ambitions to succeed President Pohamba have increasingly shaped intra-party politics over the past two years. For Köllner and Basedau, therefore, SWAPO's motivation can be most effectively explored by identifying the clique or faction exercising greatest control over its decision-making process.

This approach, however, raises two problems. First, SWAPO's institutionalised factions have not yet mobilised enough support to shape party policy; its youth wing is a vocal but inconsistent and largely ineffective advocate of economic radicalism, whilst its elders' council and women's league are virtually moribund. Second, SWAPO's informal factions tend to coalesce around ephemeral personal networks or presidential candidacies rather than issues of policy, whilst exhibiting a low level of self-cognition and, therefore, enjoying only a very limited life-span. This volatility does not, however, imply that Namibia's ruling party is a rudderless vessel devoid of strategic direction; indeed, its policy orientation—encompassing representative democracy, Pan-African solidarity, welfare provision, the mixed economy and an elitist form of black economic empowerment—has remained remarkably constant over the two decades since national independence, as has its determination to create a *de facto* one-party state. Such consistency indicates that, whatever personnel changes and factional differences might arise from time to time, SWAPO's decision-making structures are characterised by a substantial degree of

consensus around the need to sustain personal freedom, preserve capitalism, broaden access to wealth and, above all, retain power. Any investigation into SWAPO's post-colonial motivation must, therefore, begin with an attempt to locate its nexus of power rather than to identify its dominant faction. Which structures exercise the greatest influence over party decision-making structures and whose interests do they represent?

According to its constitution, SWAPO's highest decision-making body is the party congress, which meets once in every five years with a mandate to set policy, review progress against agreed goals, elect the four most senior office-holders (president, vice-president, secretary-general and deputy secretary-general) and, if necessary, amend the party constitution (SWAPO Party 1991, Article V). Membership is conferred on the basis of institutional affiliation, with ten delegates elected by each of the regional executive committees, three by each district executive, twenty by the SWAPO Party Women's Council (SPWC), fifteen by the SWAPO Party Youth League (SPYL), fifteen by the SWAPO Party Elders' Council (SPEC) and fifteen by National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW), in addition to the eighty-three Central Committee members guaranteed a place under SWAPO's constitution (SWAPO Party 1991, Article V). This large and relatively diverse body has met four times in ordinary session since 1991, with extraordinary congresses held in 1998 and 2004 for the purpose of approving Nujoma's third term and of electing his successor respectively. The next meeting is scheduled for 2012.

SWAPO's 'highest organ of authority between... congresses' is its Central Committee (CC), which consists of the president, vice-president, secretary-general and deputy secretary-general; sixty-six officials elected by congress; six presidential appointees; the SPYL, SPWC and SPEC secretaries; and thirteen regional co-ordinators (SWAPO Party 1991, Article VI). It is expected to meet at least once per year in order to 'consider... the policy and practice of the SWAPO Party, adjust its political view, respond timely [sic] to new problems and determine

concrete political... solutions to such problems', as well as to review committee work, to elect national party officers and to expel, where necessary, any affiliate organisation found guilty of 'serious misconduct or violation of the Constitution' (SWAPO Party 1991, Article VI). More importantly, the Central Committee is also responsible for approving SWAPO's annual budget, for determining the end of its financial year and for ensuring a professional external audit of its accounts.

The third and final executive organ to be described in SWAPO's constitution is a Political Bureau, or Politburo, which consists of twenty-one officials elected by the Central Committee (see Table 4.1). Its responsibilities include 'policy formulation in the period between Central Committee', 'putting into practice all decisions, resolutions and directives of the Congress and the Central Committee', appointing a party secretariat, supervising party expenditure, resolving disputes at the regional executive level and appointing the directors of all companies owned by the party (SWAPO Party 1991, Article VII).

Despite being constitutionally subordinate to both Central Committee and Congress, the Politburo is in practice SWAPO's most powerful decision-making body. Four factors have contributed to this pre-eminence. First, it meets frequently (at least once per month) and is therefore in a position to undertake the day-to-day management of party affairs, to provide timely initiatives and to present nominally superior organs with the choice between accepting a *fait accompli* and undoing established policy. Second, as a small and elite group composed of long-standing party comrades, the Politburo is less unwieldy than other party organs and so better able to reach decisions by consensus. Third, as shown in Table 4.1 below, almost all Politburo members hold a ministerial or deputy ministerial portfolio and are, therefore, important public figures with a considerable degree of power and patronage at their disposal.

Table 4.1: SWAPO Politburo Members, 2008

Name	Party Position	Other Position
Hifikeunye Pohamba	President	State President
Hage Geingob	Vice-President	Minister of Trade and Industry
Pendukeni Iivula-Ithana	Secretary-General	Minister of Justice
Nangolo Mbumba	Deputy Secretary-General	Minister of Education
Nahas Angula		Prime Minister
Jerry Ekandjo	Secretary for Information	RLGH*
Saara Kuugongelwa-Amathila	Secretary for Economic Affairs	Minister of Finance
Abraham Iyambo	Dep. Secretary for Economics	Minister of Fisheries
Marco Hausiku	Secretary for Foreign Affairs	Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ben Amathila		Chief Whip (retired 2007)
Theo-Ben Gurirab		Speaker of National Assembly
Helmut Angula	Secretary for Transport	Minister of Works and Transport
Albert Kawana	Secretary for Legal Affairs	Minister of Presidential Affairs
Richard Kamwi	Secretary for Health	Minister of Health
Immanuel Ngatjizeko	Secretary for Finance	Minister of Labour
Libertine Amathila		Deputy Prime Minister
Petrus Ilonga		Deputy Minister of Labour
Alpheus !Naruseb		Minister of Lands and Resettlement
Erkki Nghimtina	Secretary for Defence	Minister of Mines and Energy
Utoni Nujoma		Deputy Minister of Justice
Asser Kapere		Chair of the National Council

*Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development

Source: Hopwood 2008: 107-285; Maletsky, *The Namibian*, 29 January 2009; SWAPO Party, 2012.

Finally, but perhaps most importantly, SWAPO's constitution states that, 'with the exception of the [P]resident, Vice-President, Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-[G]eneral, the Political [B]ureau shall by two-thirds majority of its members have authority to expel any member of the Party... for serious misconduct or violation of the [party] Constitution' (SWAPO Party 1991, Article VII). This prerogative is used sparingly but periodically, with officials deemed to be either embarrassing or subversive—such as Minister of Mines and Energy Jesaya Nyamu, SPYL secretary Paulus Kapia, Hardap Regional Governor Katrina Hanse-Hirmarwa and prospective

regional councillor Ben Katamila—suspended or ousted by the Politburo since 2005 (Kangueehi, *New Era*, 12 December 2005; Maletsky, *The Namibian*, 13 October 2005 and 22 January 2010; Mongudhi and Cloete, *The Namibian*, 23 July 2007).

How much power is wielded by SWAPO's leader? To date, the presidential prerogative has been derived from three sources. First, SWAPO's constitution describes its figurehead as 'Chief [E]xecutive Officer of the Party' and 'Chairperson of the Central Committee, the Political Bureau and the Congress', but is otherwise sufficiently vague on questions of functionality to permit a degree of flexibility (SWAPO Party 1991, Article IX). Second, as both SWAPO leader and state president, an incumbent is able to use the enormous prestige and resources associated with his public office for the purpose of exerting influence within the party. In 2004, for example, Nujoma helped to secure the presidential succession for a favoured candidate, Hifikepunye Pohamba, by removing party rival Hidipo Hamutenya from his Cabinet position four days before the crucial ballot (Anon., *Die Republikein*, 3 July 2007). Finally, but perhaps most importantly, presidential authority is derived from personal support within the party. As a liberation icon and a politician of considerable charisma, ruthlessness and cunning (Interview K, male, RDP national executive committee member, Windhoek, 26 May 2009; Interview V, male, journalist, Windhoek, 23 June 2009; Weiland 1996: 202), Sam Nujoma has been uniquely able to impose his will upon party structures and to marginalise people considered hostile to his vision. Pohamba, by contrast, is a rather unassuming figure whose election owed much to Nujoma's endorsement and to his own reputation as a continuity candidate rather than to personal support within the party. Yet as the appointment of a senior cadre previously sacked by Nujoma and his defeat of an alleged party conspiracy has demonstrated (Maletsky, *The Namibian*, 10 March 2009), even Pohamba is neither *primus inter pares* nor a puppet under the control of his predecessor. Indeed, presidential control over Cabinet, diplomatic and other appointments is still an effective source of influence over SWAPO's legislative and executive priorities.

Thus, SWAPO appears to have constructed an elitist, hierarchical and autocratic decision-making framework in which fewer than thirty individuals, led by the president, exercise effective control over policy formulation, priority setting, resource distribution and party discipline. Personnel turnover rates within this group, moreover, are extremely low. As an article in *Insight* magazine (Staff Reporter, 2007) observed,

SWAPO is still largely dependent on its liberation struggle grandees for leadership... While the 'Tanganyika club' that founded and fashioned SWAPO into an international force in the 1960s is now passing on, [...] the generation that succeeded them in exile is still dominant in the party. The combined age of the current cabinet is over 1,500 years with the average age being 58.

This combination of centralisation, homogeneity and continuity has allowed SWAPO's Politburo to impose its own long-term vision, interests, aspirations and goals upon the party, which has become over time a vehicle for the pursuit of elite interests. Factional competition, in other words, has failed to produce any significant policy variation because Politburo members share a basic interest in retaining power.

Immunity, Empowerment or Enrichment?

What has SWAPO's Politburo sought to achieve over the past two decades? Three interpretations emerge from the interview data, legislative records and secondary literature gathered during the course of my research project: avoidance of prosecution for past atrocities; empowerment; and the defence of class privilege. Each of these arguments is examined here in turn.

Avoidance of Prosecution

When asked for his view on SWAPO's motivation, NamRights executive director Phil ya Nangoloh (int., 17 July 2009) asserted that:

There is fear if they leave power they might become victims, they might be locked up for wrongs they have done... It may not be the whole SWAPO as such; it would not be fair to attach this to all SWAPO Party members, but certain people who are in the leadership, clearly there is fear that if they somehow relinquish power, they might end up being imprisoned.

There are, however, four problems with this explanation. First, given that Ya Nangoloh was the only informant to articulate it, his arguments cannot be corroborated by means of the 'triangulation' test outlined in my introduction chapter. Second, if President Nujoma was fearful of arrest and detention, why did he retire from state office in 2005 and from party office two years later? As Frederick Chiluba of Zambia and Bakili Muluzi of Malawi have discovered to their cost, even a chosen successor cannot necessarily be trusted to protect his erstwhile mentor from prosecution. Third, it is unclear as to why Nujoma and his associates would fear arrest because, except for a NamRights submission to the International Criminal Court in 2007 (Maletsky, *The Namibian*, 3 August 2007), pressure for their arraignment has been entirely absent from both domestic and international politics. Finally, as a former detainee and opposition party activist,²⁶ Phil ya Nangoloh is not an independent observer of SWAPO politics; indeed, his organisation sometimes appears to be more interested in attacking the ruling party than in constructing a human rights agenda. Its suggestion that Namibia's governing elite is principally concerned with judicial immunity should be viewed against a series of rather far-fetched public statements relating to alleged SWAPO impropriety, including an accusation that political opponents were targeted for assassination in 2003 (Hopwood 2008: 283) and an assertion that

²⁶ He was information and publicity secretary of SWAPO-Democrats, the splinter group established by Andreas Shipanga and other former detainees in 1978. See: Hopwood 2008: 282-283

Nujoma enjoyed Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) ‘connections’ during the liberation struggle (Ya Nangoloh, 2010). Given this potential bias, as well as the analytical issues outlined here, it would appear highly unlikely that Ya Nangoloh’s remarks offer a meaningful perspective on SWAPO’s motivation.

Empowerment

For many SWAPO members, as well as some civil society activists, Namibia’s ruling party is principally driven by a determination to empower the impoverished, vulnerable and exploited sections of its population. According to SPYL secretary Elijah Ngurare (int., 19 July 2009), a SWAPO regional co-ordinator (Interview O, male, Windhoek, 19 November 2009) and a journalist (Interview U, male, Windhoek, 16 June 2009) respectively,

We will continue to advocate the real empowerment of our people... Any tender, any contract of government that is going out must meaningfully and practically be seen to empower... the poor.

SWAPO was formed by the toiling masses of Namibia and we are there for the downtrodden people of the past... SWAPO is more concerned with developing the lower class so that it becomes the medium class and then developing the medium class to the upper class, so that we become one, we become a classless society.

Those who are currently leading—the President, Prime Minister and some key ministers, such as Finance, Health, Education—these are the people who are thinking about changing the lives of others... For the core group in the leadership, they are thinking about the people, thinking about change.

During the decades preceding independence, SWAPO’s concern with popular empowerment was most clearly manifested in its commitment to socialism. In 1985, for example, the movement promised to restructure Namibia’s agricultural sector by encouraging the formation

of co-operatives, extending communal land ownership and establishing ‘fully fledged state farms based on the [Soviet] model of large-scale socialist farming enterprises, in which the means of production and the resultant output would be owned by the state’ (Kaapama 2007: 31). Such measures, as Kaapama (2007: 33) notes, were designed to effect a ‘total transformation of the undesirable historical, structural, ideological and political parameters that had, over the years, led to the perpetuation of conditions of socioeconomic underdevelopment’ within Namibia’s black community.

As noted in chapter one, however, these leftist policies were abandoned at independence in favour of Western-style capitalism, mixed property ownership and supply-side economics. When asked about this dramatic shift in policy orientation, SWAPO vice-president Hage Geingob (int., 16 July 2009), deputy secretary-general Nangolo Mbumba (int., 25 November 2009) and former prime minister Theo-Ben Gurirab (int., 25 November 2009) said respectively:

Of course, SWAPO has had to change since independence. I used to call the Americans ‘imperialists’ and all of that stuff, but when you are in power you have to be a bit more careful about what you say! [...] We are treading a thin line because we do not want to rock the boat.

We have to be moderate, because we are in power now. We cannot say wrong things that scare people, we cannot say things that will scare investors, we cannot say things that will irritate our neighbours, we cannot be undiplomatic... In a way, when you have a responsibility, you have to behave responsibly.

Well, it is a tight rope... We needed to be aggressive enough, but not rock the boat at the same time... [A]ll economies are basically run on the basis of pragmatism, centre, and that is what we have been doing... You do not want to shout at people—instead of buying from us, they might go and buy from somebody else. So we have learned to play ball.

Given these perceived constraints, SWAPO empowerment rhetoric has tended since decolonisation to promote the concept of ‘economic independence’ within established social,

financial and political structures. As Hopwood noted (*Insight*, 2009), ‘what exactly was meant [by this term] was never clear’, although interview material would suggest an emphasis upon national self-sufficiency and development rather than isolationism. When questioned on the subject by *New African* magazine in 2003, Nujoma argued that:

We... as African governments, must unite and embark upon a crash programme of what I call the second phase of the struggle, a struggle of economic independence. By this, I mean, we must... ensure that Africa's natural resources are not stolen or bought cheaply as they have been over the years to benefit non-African peoples... All our resources should be processed here into finished products (Ankomah, *New African*, 17 November 2003).

This perspective appears to have been shared by many of the SWAPO cadres interviewed for this thesis, including Politburo members Nangolo Mbumba (int., 15 November 2009) and Theobald Gurirab (int., 25 November 2009):

There is no way that you can talk about economic independence *per se*... But any community has to have at least some of the products they produce themselves... We are in a hurry to train our people, to consolidate the security of our own country by having at least an economic base on which to continue developing as a country.

What we basically mean is that, blessed as we are with an abundance of natural resources, that we would... industrialise and with that, by far greater investment in education and health care and housing infrastructure expansion, create opportunities for people to do things for themselves.

What is the evidence that Namibia’s SWAPO-led government has pursued this policy of ‘empowerment through development’? According to a recent World Bank (2009: 5) study, Namibia has ‘put great emphasis on increasing access to education and training and is currently one of the biggest spenders on this sector in Africa (about nine per cent of GDP in 2002/03)... Gross secondary school enrolment has increased substantially, from 45 per cent in 1991 to 57 per cent in 2006. And at 5.8 per cent in 2006, gross tertiary enrolment is higher than the Sub-

Saharan African average of 5.2 per cent'. In the transport sector, government largesse has permitted the construction of a 'Golden Highway' linking Rundu and Katima Mulilo, a Trans-Kalahari trunk road and a railway extension from Tsumeb to Ondangwa, as well as numerous small-scale projects and the effective maintenance of existing infrastructure. Yet it is health and welfare provision that appears to have undergone the greatest improvement since independence. According to the World Bank (2009: 2-3),

Namibia is second only to South Africa on the continent in per capita expenditures on health. Countrywide immunisation campaigns, coupled with parallel strengthening of the overall public health infrastructure, yielded a significant reduction in the infant mortality rate between 1990 and 2006... Access to clean water has been dramatically increased. Namibia is also one of the very few countries in Sub-Saharan Africa that maintains a social safety net for the elderly, the disabled, orphans and vulnerable children, and war veterans. It also has a Social Security Act that provides for maternity leave, sick leave and medical benefits.

The social impact of these policies is effectively captured by Matthias Schmidt (2009: 3), who uses a 'cost of basic needs' definition to calculate that:

The number of people living in poverty in Namibia decreased from 58% of individuals in 1993/94 to 38% of individuals in 2003/04... Among the urban population, poverty decreased from 31% to 17%, while in rural areas the poverty share dropped from 69% to just below 50%.

Despite these enviable achievements, however, SWAPO's claim to have pursued a policy of 'empowerment through development' raises a number of difficult issues. First, despite its concern for the 'toiling masses', SWAPO has failed to enact or to implement a number of measures designed to empower disadvantaged sections of the population. President Pohamba, for example, recently ridiculed demands for a universal Basic Income Grant on the grounds that 'dishing out money for free' would encourage people 'not to do anything' (Kisting, *The Namibian*, 5 May 2010). Government housing policy has largely failed to alleviate the problems of

overcrowding, squalor and homelessness because under-resourced local authorities, rather than the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development (MRLGH), have been given legal responsibility for land acquisition, urban planning and dwelling construction (UNESCO, 2010). The land reform programme, despite its potential to emancipate large swathes of the rural population in central and southern Namibia, has been pursued with such caution that only ninety commercial farms—fewer than two per cent of the total available—were purchased for redistribution during the first decade of independence (Kaapama 2007: 39). More tellingly perhaps, given its rhetorical commitment to popular emancipation, SWAPO's achievement in reducing levels of absolute poverty has not been accompanied by any meaningful commitment to broad-based social equity; indeed, as Schmidt (2009: 4) noted, 'Namibia has one of highest degrees of income inequality in the world... Based on consumption data from the [Namibia Household Income and Expenditure Survey], the Gini coefficient for Namibia is estimated at 0.61 for 1993/94, and decreased slightly to 0.60 in 2003/04. In fact, the sample size of the surveys does not allow us to say with confidence that it has decreased at all'.

Third, as illustrated in Table 4.2, a substantial proportion of government expenditure is lavished upon public institutions with little or no role to play in development policy. For example, approximately one-eighth of the finance ministry's N\$4bn (US\$494m) budget is consumed by state-owned industries, with loss-making national carrier Air Namibia receiving subsidies of some N\$170m (US\$21.0m) during the 2010/2011 financial year. Defence spending has increased by 16.0 per cent since 2009/2010 and, though not particularly high by international standards,²⁷ appears disproportionate when judged against both the negligible risk of armed conflict and the monies allocated to some other areas of public policy, such as health. Furthermore, according to a newspaper report (Duddy, *The Namibian*, 6 April 2010), some N\$827m (US\$102.2m) is to be spent on the construction of a State House in Windhoek, a chain of thirteen presidential residences across the country and an office for former President Nujoma

²⁷ In 2010/2011, defence spending is expected to be 4.8 per cent of gross domestic product.

during the five years to 2013. By contrast, Namibia's Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (MLRR)—the government body charged with acquiring and redistributing commercial farmland—is allocated just 0.7 per cent of public expenditure, or N\$190m (US\$23.5m), during the 2010/2011 financial year.

Table 4.2: Namibian Government Budget, 2010-2011			
Ministry	Allocation (US\$m)	Proportion of Spending (%)	Spending Priority
Education	800.5	22.5	1
Finance	490.4	13.8	2
Defence	372.7	10.5	3
Health and Social Services	320.5	9.0	4
Police	233.7	6.6	5
Agriculture, Water and Forestry	187.7	5.3	6
Labour and Social Welfare	140.9	4.0	7
Regional and Local Government and Housing	118.5	3.3	8
Veterans' Affairs	33.9	1.0	20
Lands and Resettlement	23.5	0.7	22
Others	843.1	23.6	N/A
Total	3,565.4	100.0	N/A

Source: Ministry of Finance, 2011.

Despite its considerable success in reducing poverty, in broadening access to primary education, in extending welfare provision and in facilitating infrastructural investment, SWAPO's post-colonial record cannot therefore be entirely or even primarily explained by its alleged concern with development policy. What, then, is the party's motivation?

Empowerment of SWAPO Elites?

Class Formation in Independent Namibia

According to Tapscott (1993: 32), SWAPO underwent a complex process of segmentation and class formation during the liberation struggle.

It is evident that the struggle began to create its own elite, both in exile and, to a lesser extent, amongst those who remained in Namibia... Of the 40,000-50,000 Namibians who went into exile, a relatively small proportion (fifteen per cent at most) underwent comprehensive post-secondary training... Access to training, thus, would seem to have been a key determinant in the social differentiation of exiles, not least in the employment opportunities which it has afforded in the post-independence era, but also in the life-styles to which it accustomed many repatriated exiles.

As these exiles returned to Namibia in 1990, SWAPO faced the daunting but urgent challenge of converting electoral office into power without either violating its international obligations or provoking an adverse response from the white-dominated state bureaucracy, security forces and formal sector economy. According to Tapscott (1993: 34), a sunset clause designed to protect white bureaucrats:

presented the SWAPO government with something of a dilemma: whether to implement a differential system of benefits for existing and incoming civil servants (many of whom were SWAPO members) or whether to equalise all employment packages. For both practical and political reasons the decision was taken to maintain the existing system of benefits... Namibia is now reputed to have one of the highest civil service salary structures in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Indeed, as colonial-era officials retired, emigrated or transferred to the private sector, Africanisation of the bureaucratic, security and parastatal institutions provided unparalleled opportunities for SWAPO's educated elite to secure senior and relatively lucrative jobs within the public service. Whilst initially regarded as an unavoidable—and unofficial—response to the skills

shortages inherited from colonialism, this policy of ‘jobs for comrades’ was eventually to become formalised and institutionalised. In 2007, Christof Maletsky (*The Namibian*, 18 October 2007) recalled that:

Five years ago the [SWAPO] Youth League, under former leader Paulus Kapia, went on a campaign for the deployment of people loyal to the ruling party in key Government and parastatal positions... The recommendation was formally accepted by the party and a timetable was presented to influence Government to put loyalists in strategic Government positions. Since then, many SWAPO cadres have taken up top positions in Government and parastatals.

As Namibia’s permanent secretaries, police generals, army officers and parastatal directors were appointed on the basis of political partisanship rather than professional merit, so the distinction between ruling party, government and state began to break down; according to the scholar-activist Henning Melber (2003: 18), ‘a slogan in the days of the liberation struggle claimed that SWAPO is the people, but the adjusted slogan for today might be that SWAPO is the government and the government is the state’. Thus, in 1997 Namibia’s public service was expanded for the sole purpose of accommodating some nine thousand SWAPO war veterans angered by poverty and joblessness (Simon 2000: 113), whilst protesting ‘struggle children’ were conciliated twelve years later with a promise of business start-up grants, educational bursaries and preferential recruitment by the police, military and bureaucracy (Staff Reporter, *Southern Times*, 5 July 2010; Mongudhi, *The Namibian*, 13 November 2009).²⁸

Government attempts to address the legacy of racial exclusionism within Namibia’s private sector, which boasted very few black entrepreneurs at independence, have tended to reinforce this process of class formation, with Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) opportunities and public contracts often channelled towards politicians, civil servants, businesspeople and other prominent individuals known to enjoy a close association with the

²⁸ The ‘struggle children’ are individuals born in exile during Namibia’s liberation struggle.

ruling party. Five examples are used here to illustrate this culture of cronyism and self-aggrandisement.

First, as Kaapama (2007: 40) suggests, the principal beneficiary of land reform to date has not been the rural peasantry, as claimed in SWAPO's election rhetoric, but a small group of senior politicians, administrators and family members with good connections to the ruling elite:

In the Omaheke [Region], poor farm workers and their families faced with threats of eviction were brushed aside, while [the Ministry of Lands] opted to allocate land to high ranking civil servants and political office bearers... In the 2001... national settlement policy, farm workers and other landless peasants were moved down a few notches on the priority list of targeted beneficiaries in the sense that the new criteria included all Namibian citizens who were socially, economically or educationally disadvantaged by past discriminatory laws and practices, irrespective of their present socioeconomic status.

Second, an official investigation into the accumulation of bad debts totalling some N\$660m (US\$81.6m) at the Government Institutions Pension Fund (GIPF) has found that, during the five years to 2005, a policy of lending capital to unlisted black empowerment enterprises chiefly benefited an 'old boys' club' (Mongudhi, *The Namibian*, 14 October 2010) of well-connected politicians, bureaucrats, trade unionists and businesspeople, including some members of GIPF's own board. Subsequent newspaper reports alleged that these recipients included Peter Nevonga, general secretary of the SWAPO-aligned Namibia Public Workers Union; Steve Katjuanja, permanent secretary at the Ministry of Justice; Nangula Mbako, permanent secretary at the Office of the Prime Minister; Joseph Iita, permanent secretary at the Ministry of Mines and Energy; and Immanuel Ngatjizeko, Minister of Labour and Social Welfare (Mongudhi, *The Namibian*, 30 July 2010; Grobler, *Informanté*, 28 October 2010; Ndjebela and Heita, *New Era*, 29 July 2010). Indeed, despite having been warned of potential irregularities as early as 2007, SWAPO's ruling elite took no action until a public outcry—prompted in part by media coverage—forced the suspension of GIPF lending in October 2010.

Third, in October 2009 press reports (*Informanté*, 12 November 2009; Sasman, *New Era*, 19 October 2009) revealed that a clutch of educational bursaries funded by China had been distributed, not to children from disadvantaged backgrounds as intended, but to members of the SWAPO-dominated political, bureaucratic and security elite. These beneficiaries included a relative of the Justice Minister and SWAPO Secretary-General, Pendukeni Iivula-Ithana; of Home Affairs and Immigration Minister, Rosalia Nghidinwa; of Defence Minister, Charles Namoloh; of Mines and Energy Minister, Erkki Nghimtina; of former First Lady, Kovambo Nujoma; of Deputy Minister of Justice, Utoni Nujoma; of Inspector-General of Police, Sebastian Ndeitunga; and of President Pohamba himself, whose daughter secured a scholarship to study in Beijing. Although responsibility for having compiled this list of beneficiaries is disputed by Namibia and the Chinese Embassy in Windhoek, an official at the former's Ministry of Education has reportedly admitted that a second group of scholarship recipients—none of whom are connected to the elite—was selected by his department (Mongudhi, *The Namibian*, 27 October 2009).

Fourth, Deputy Minister of Works and SPYL secretary Paulus Kapia was forced to resign from parliament in 2005 after 'it emerged that he had used his influence to pressure the Social Security Commission (SSC) to place N\$30 million' (US\$4,400), with an asset management company of which he was director (Hopwood 2008: 174). According to Hopwood (2008: 174), 'the money subsequently disappeared and the SSC, which manages welfare payments for the government, instituted a High Court inquiry in a bid to trace the funds'. Kapia was arrested, forced to appear at the judicial hearing and suspended from the ruling party but, despite not having been exonerated, later reconciled with the elite and given a safe position on its 2009 National Assembly list.

Finally, in 2005 a government contract to import one-half of the country's total petroleum requirement was awarded to Namibia Liquid Fuel (NLF), a black empowerment

consortium jointly owned by the South African petrochemicals group Sasol and, according to its lawyers, a collection of ‘community based organisations’ from Namibia (Menges, *The Namibian*, 5 May 2004; *Namibia Economist*, 12 December 2007). Subsequent enquiries revealed, however, that this Namibian component was in fact led by Ndeutala Angolo, the Permanent Secretary at State House; Andries Hungamo, later a Permanent Secretary at the National Planning Commission; Ranga Haikali, former secretary-general of the SWAPO-aligned National Union of Namibian Workers; and Sacky Shanghala, deputy commissioner of magistrates and special adviser to the Minister of Justice (Weidlich, *The Namibian*, 27 May 2010). Perhaps unsurprisingly, given that NLF is estimated to have been paid N\$800m (US\$116m) over the three years of its contract term, Shanghala was later reported as telling a business meeting that ‘politics and economics are bedfellows and cannot be separated from each other’ (Weidlich, *The Namibian*, 27 May 2010).

Indeed, during the two decades since independence, SWAPO has been transformed from an exiled and aid-dependent liberation movement into one of Namibia’s largest industrial conglomerates. The party’s investment arm, Kalahari Holdings, is the sole or majority shareholder of numerous businesses, including public transport provider Namib Contract Haulage; asset management company Kudu Investment; letting agency Klondike Investment; publisher NamPrint; television broadcaster MultiChoice Namibia; private security contractor Namibia Protection Services; independent radio station Energy; internet service provider AfricaOnline; medical aid provider NamHealth; and the Ndilimane cultural troupe (Maletsky, *The Namibian*, 10 February 2010). These businesses, alongside investment portfolios owned by the SPYL and NUNW, not only win public contracts and lend support to the ruling party at critical points in the electoral cycle,²⁹ but also offer a pool of directorships and other salaried opportunities ripe for exploitation by the SWAPO elite. Thus, SPYL secretary Elijah Ngurare and Environment Ministry permanent secretary Kalumbi Shangula both sit upon the boards of

²⁹ At a SWAPO election rally held in Katutura on 22 November 2009, for example, I noticed a speaker system emblazoned with the words ‘Donated by Kalahari Holdings’.

Kalahari Holdings and MultiChoice Namibia, whilst deputy minister of trade Bernhardt Esau is a director of the NUNW-owned company Labour Investment Holdings and a board member at three businesses controlled by the Mineworkers' Union of Namibia (Hopwood 2008: 133).

Such developments have prompted a number of analysts to portray Namibia's governing elite as principally interested in wealth accumulation through fraud, embezzlement and predation. According to Melber (*The Namibian*, 10 July 2009) and Beukes (*The Namibian*, 30 October 2009) respectively, for example,

The euphemism of 'Namibianisation' has since [i]ndependence along with Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and Affirmative Action (AA) served as a smokescreen to cover up the kleptocratic enterprises of a post-colonial parasitic elite. This usurps the political offices and dishes out access to the country's wealth in public hands to a few comrades in business claiming to be entitled to such benefits as a Previously Disadvantaged Group.

A column by Nic Borain... made me think about what I would reply if, say twenty years from now, my child would ask me what I did against the rampant fraud and corruption, misuse of power [and] abuse of position... At the rate our resources are being plundered right now we will probably then be sitting in a refugee camp somewhere! [Yet] do we... demand answers on the blatant corruption [of President Pohamba's] kleptocratic administration?

Such arguments are not, however, consistent with the empirical evidence. According to the US-based advocacy group Transparency International (2012: 3), for example, Namibia was the sixth cleanest African country in 2011, with only Botswana, Cape Verde, Mauritius, Rwanda and the Seychelles achieving a superior position in its latest Corruption Perceptions Index. Afrobarometer (2010) data collected in 2008/09, meanwhile, suggest that only seven per cent of Namibians had used bribery to obtain official documentation over the previous year, compared with nine per cent of South Africans, twenty-two per cent of Mozambicans, twenty-three per cent of Zimbabweans and twenty-eight per cent of Kenyans. Thus, contrary to claims made by Melber (*The Namibian*, 10 July 2009) and some opposition politicians, Namibia is not a

‘kleptocracy’ characterised by fraud, theft and criminality at every level of the public service; indeed, petty corruption currently represents only a marginal threat to the integrity of its state institutions and even the practice of channelling state resources to well-connected individuals, whilst perhaps unethical, does not usually involve outright illegality. This concern with formally legitimate avenues to self-enrichment, rather than mafia-style accumulation, can be perhaps traced to the personal integrity of Namibia’s first two presidents, to the strength of its prosecuting authorities and to the impotence of its opposition parties, which removes an incentive to corrupt the security institutions or other sectors deemed vital to regime survival.

A Tool for Elite Accumulation?

Thus, since independence Namibia has witnessed a (predominantly) legal process of class formation in which public sector jobs, contracts and other resources are distributed on the basis of SWAPO affiliation rather than professional merit. For Tapscott (1993: 31), the country’s middle stratum is now defined by income level and aspiration rather than racial identity, with members of the black *nouveau riche* deriving income from established economic structures and thus, by implication, sharing white hostility towards redistribution. Indeed, any visit to Windhoek’s more affluent suburbs—such as Olympia, Ludwigsdorf, Pioneerspark and Windhoek East—will reveal people of all races living side by side, driving luxury cars, sending their children to private school and even socialising in European-style pubs, restaurants or bars.

Nevertheless, Namibia’s affluent classes should not necessarily be regarded as racially integrated or even as exhibiting a clear sense of collective identity. Given its pre-eminent position within agriculture, tourism, banking and other industries commonly associated with formal sector entrepreneurship, the country’s ‘old’ middle stratum—comprising whites and the collaborationist blacks empowered by apartheid—has attained a relatively high degree of

autonomy from the state and tended, as noted in chapter one, to be associated with opposition politics. Namibia's 'new' middle-class, by contrast, is dominated by senior politicians and civil servants, high-ranking members of the security forces, parastatal directors, black empowerment entrepreneurs and other well-connected individuals, including family members, whose wealth and status are derived from the distribution of public sector jobs, government contracts and other state resources on the basis of partisan allegiance rather than professional merit. According to Du Pisani and Lindeke (2009: 15) and a journalist (Interview T, female, Windhoek, 15 June 2009) respectively,

Not only is the government the country's largest employer, but it is also the largest purchaser of goods and provider of services [...] which provides it with multiple opportunities to reward loyal supporters and withhold opportunities from others in the time honoured tradition of incumbency.

[SWAPO politicians] are heavily indebted—the ministers put their children into private schools, they want cars and four by fours, and then they have extended families in the north—they have a lot of people to look after... They are all heavily indebted; they all want to have a ministerial salary and the fringe benefits.

Thus, for SWAPO's decision-making elite, as well as political appointees to the public service and some black empowerment beneficiaries, personal affluence and social privilege are inextricably bound to the continued reproduction of SWAPO rule. According to two well-informed civil society interviewees, this concern with retaining power has come to supersede every other priority:

I think there exist a number of reasons for [SWAPO's] existence. The first is to rule Namibia... That's why they find it hard to accept the concept of losing power. In Western countries, most political parties accept electoral defeat because they see it as part of the game of swings and roundabouts; but many people in SWAPO feel that defeat would be disastrous (Interview W, male, civil society activist, Windhoek, 24 June 2009).

I cannot say that SWAPO has the interests of the country at heart, that it wants to empower people; I cannot. It is about resources. Ministers borrow money from rich businessmen... Some of them, when they get sacked, they refuse to give back their government car. They have their priorities upside down. That is why they want to cling on to power (Interview V, 23 June 2009).

In comments reported by the local press, former President Nujoma (cited in Weidlich, *The Namibian*, 30 July 2007), Politburo member Jerry Ekandjo (cited in Kanguuchi, *New Era*, 10 July 2008) and regional councillor Joseph Mupetami (cited in Staff Reporter, *Die Republikein*, 28 October 2009) appear to have confirmed this preoccupation with retaining power.

We call upon all the Namibian people to unite and rally behind the SWAPO Party so that the SWAPO Party will always win the future elections in order to improve the standards of living of all Namibians, irrespective of colour, race or ethnic origin.

Those people forming the [Democratic Party of Namibia] are not SWAPO members. We are not concerned because SWAPO will rule forever.

Because of its participation in the liberation struggle of this country, as the then liberation movement, SWAPO is the only political party that deserves to govern this country.

Given these expectations, as well as its apparent lack of interest in educational outcomes, its concern with non-developmental spending and its failure to pursue radical poverty reduction measures, SWAPO's motivation appears to be the defence of established modes of (elite) accumulation via continual reproduction of electoral dominance. Yet as Joseph Mupetami's comments suggest, this preoccupation with governing 'forever' is reinforced by a sense of entitlement rooted in the party's liberation narrative. For leaders and followers alike, SWAPO has the *right* to govern Namibia in perpetuity by virtue of its unrivalled, though exaggerated,

claim to have freed the country from colonial rule. According to an SPYL informant (Interview P, female, SPYL regional secretary, Windhoek, 29 October 2009),

I used to say, “SWAPO built Namibia” and I thought that SWAPO is the owner of our country. As I grew up, I just loved SWAPO. These people fought for Namibia, they fought with a purpose. That purpose was for us to live free.

Melber (*The Namibian*, 10 July 2009) suggests that these sentiments are best analysed through contextualisation.

Both SWAPO and the [African National Congress of South Africa]... were considered as the decisive liberators of the people from the yoke of colonialism and apartheid. The accomplishment of this historic mission was also perceived as a kind of “end of history”. Once having achieved legitimate formal political power on the basis of the results of relatively free and fair general elections... these parties view[ed] themselves as entitled to continued political rule.

Indeed, this pattern is also evident in Zimbabwe, where President Mugabe claims to have ‘abolished history’ (Ranger 2004: 219) and where his party is commonly portrayed, in government-owned newspapers at least, as the ‘alpha and omega of Zimbabwe’s past, present and future’ (Tendi 2008: 379). SWAPO is, therefore, not alone amongst southern Africa’s former liberation movements in regarding electoral dominance as an entitlement rather than a privilege.

Reproducing Single-Party Dominance

Given that Namibia has a liberal constitution and a relatively open political system, why does its electorate continue to tolerate SWAPO’s strategy of elite accumulation? Why do so many voters, as well as some civil society activists and journalists (Interview W, male, Windhoek, 24 June 2009; Interview U, male, Windhoek, 16 June 2009), still regard the party as essentially pro-poor

when its record on popular empowerment is demonstrably threadbare? This conundrum is explained by four aspects of SWAPO's electoral strategy.

First, voters are continually reminded of SWAPO's role in liberating the country from colonialism. Thus, state television, radio and printed media routinely provide entirely uncritical coverage of SWAPO rallies or verbatim accounts of ministerial speeches, whilst opposition activity is either ignored, cursorily summarised at the end of a news bulletin or accorded prominence only when some embarrassment, such as poor attendance, has forced a cancellation.³⁰ Throughout Namibia, street names and public buildings provide a visible reminder of SWAPO's 'heroic' history: numerous towns and cities have a main thoroughfare dedicated to former President Nujoma, whilst Windhoek's largest sports stadium is named after former prime minister Hage Geingob and Swakopmund's central business district is dissected by Libertina Amathila Street, Anton Lubowski Street and Theo-Ben Gurirab Street. Amongst the fourteen public holidays created since 1990 are Independence Day, when SWAPO's 'victory' over colonialism is celebrated; Human Rights Day, when the Windhoek Massacre of 1959 is commemorated; Heroes' Day, when the launch of SWAPO's armed campaign is remembered; and Cassinga Day, when 600 men, women and children slaughtered by South African forces at a SWAPO base in Angola are honoured (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, vol.2: 46). In 2002, a 'Heroes Acre' national monument—constructed, remarkably, by North Korean labour—was inaugurated some six miles outside Windhoek, with a 112-feet high obelisk visible from the nearby N2 highway and a martial statue closely resembling former President Nujoma. A year later, the government replaced Katutura's over-populated Hakahana regional council constituency (a name meaning 'Hurry up' in Otjiherero) with districts named after Tobias Hainyeko and Moses Garoëb, SWAPO's first military commander and liberation-era administrative secretary respectively. Most recently, Namibia's central bank has withdrawn the

³⁰ On 20 June 2009, for example, I attended an RDP rally in Rundu. This event was entirely ignored by the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation's news bulletin two days later, which chose to discuss a SWAPO Youth League rally in the Caprivi Region instead.

N\$5 and N\$10 notes dedicated to Nama Chief Hendrik Witbooi—whose forces resisted German colonisation at the end of the nineteenth century—in favour of a design emblazoned with images of President Nujoma. Such practices are designed to bolster SWAPO's claim upon Namibian nationalism and, thus, to strengthen its image as the only option available to a patriotic citizen.

Second, this exploitation of SWAPO's incumbent advantage is periodically extended to include the selective distribution of public resources for partisan electoral gain. Two weeks before Namibia's 2009 election, for example, the *Windhoek Observer* (Staff Reporter, 14 November 2009—20 November 2009) reported that undergraduates had 'received a windfall... after the ministry [of Education] doubled' loan entitlements; one anonymous student apparently remarked that, 'You know it is election time and these guys are trying to buy votes. Some of us are born-frees [i.e., voters born since liberation], so they need to do something for us to vote for them'. A week later, Lands Minister Jerry Ekandjo oversaw delivery of a luxury vehicle to each of the country's forty-eight recognised traditional leaders and announced that all fuel and maintenance costs, as well as a chauffeuring contribution of N\$12,000 (US\$1,483) per annum, would be covered by the state (Sankwasa, *Informanté*, 19 November 2009). Public resources, in other words, were used to bolster SWAPO support not only amongst university students, whose political sophistication and youthful radicalism have created problems for many an African government, but also amongst local chiefs with considerable sway over peasant populations in the countryside.

Third, in their speeches and press statements, SWAPO leaders continue to use the pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric associated with Namibia's struggle for national liberation. Thus, party members are routinely addressed as 'comrade', rallies are punctuated with cries of 'viva' and President Nujoma has been officially designated 'Leader of the Namibian Revolution', whilst political opponents are castigated as 'sell-outs', 'collaborators' and 'reactionaries' (Hengari, *The*

Namibian, 14 December 2007). In December 2008, a joint communiqué issued by Pohamba, Nujoma and President Zuma of South Africa announced that during their talks,

It was noted that there is a recurring reactionary debate around the need to reduce the dominance of former liberation movements on the African continent. In this regard the emergence of counter revolutionary forces to reverse the social, political and economical gains that have been made under the leadership of our liberation movements was discussed (cited in Melber, *The Namibian*, 13 January 2009).

Four months earlier, SWAPO secretary-general Pendukeni Iivula-Ithana had anticipated these sentiments by stating at a press conference that:

SWAPO and Government are under deliberate onslaught from retrogressive reactionary and negative forces that aim to undermine our genuine political victory against apartheid colonialism... Certain known media operators foment division in order to reverse the gains of the Namibian revolution through political smear campaigns with a clear purpose of misleading the Namibian people and dividing the SWAPO leadership (cited in Weidlich, *The Namibian*, 5 August 2008).

At a SWAPO rally in September 2009, former President Nujoma broadened this description of an ‘imperialist’ conspiracy to include opposition parties, whites and the Western powers:

It is because of the Western powers and those colonialists that oppositions are formed in our countries in the African continent and elsewhere in the world... The whites must be careful, if they play with us we will thoroughly deal with them (cited in Kambo, *New Era*, 21 September 2009).

SWAPO’s deputy secretary-general and then Minister of Education, Nangolo Mbumba, told me (int., 25 November 2009) that such statements, as well as the use of ‘comrade’, ‘viva’ and other pseudo-revolutionary terms at party rallies, have little or no political significance.

The word “comrade” does not denote special revolutionary quality any more. It basically means people who have been involved in the fight against colonialism and apartheid... In certain communities... people... like you to say certain things that make them to laugh, that make them to remember and to make the rally not so bland, not so uninteresting, and we do say certain things about certain people, but it is within limits and [Nujoma] has a way also of balancing what he say[s].

Such arguments might contain a grain of truth, given that election rallies are often regarded as an opportunity for revelry or even drunkenness,³¹ but it would seem equally plausible to suggest that SWAPO’s insistence upon the use of anti-imperialist rhetoric is also rooted in strategic calculation. By promoting itself as the architect of a Namibian ‘revolution’ against imperialism, by continuing to use Soviet-style jargon and by portraying opponents as a ‘puppet’ of Western neo-colonialism, SWAPO has reinforced its image as a radical, leftist and pro-poor movement dedicated to the empowerment of Namibia’s ‘previously disadvantaged’ population. As Patrick Bond (2004: 127-140) has argued in relation to the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa, this combination of militant rhetoric and conservative economic policy can be characterised as a strategy of ‘talk left, walk right’.

Finally, the government has allocated a considerable proportion of public spending to education, health, social services and welfare. This expenditure, as noted above, is presented by SWAPO ministers as evidence of their determination to empower under-privileged communities, but in her study of Zimbabwe’s political economy during the 1980s and 1990s, Carolyn Jenkins (1997: 586-593) offers an alternative explanation with obvious relevance to the Namibian case.

To guarantee control of the state, it was necessary to secure rural votes. For this reason, there has been considerable identity between the expression of government rural policy and the views of communal (mostly subsistence) farmers... Government initiatives included some resettlement, although less than planned; the extension of agricultural services, health, education, and pricing policies for communal farmers; and the provision of food aid during droughts...

³¹ All party rallies seem to be preceded by dancing and singing, many involve official entertainment and some, including a Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP) rally attended by the author in Katutura on 20 November 2009, attract a degree of drunkenness.

Spending on social services was easier than embarking on a restructuring of the pattern of ownership in the economy [added emphasis].

In 1980s Zimbabwe, as well as in contemporary Namibia, a radical redistribution of wealth might have been popular with the peasantry, unemployed and other key sections of the electorate, but its potential to provoke a collapse in investor confidence and, therefore, to destroy the basis of elite privilege proved sufficient for alternative mobilisational tactics to be pursued. By maintaining high levels of public expenditure on education, health and welfare over a prolonged period of time, both ruling parties delivered tangible benefits to their under-privileged supporters, expanded the patronage system used to reward loyal cadres and preserved the modes of accumulation deemed critical to elite privilege. Whilst Zimbabwe abandoned this model in 1990, following the adoption of a World-Bank inspired Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), Namibia's political economy is still dominated by it.

Electoral Objectives

Given that SWAPO's motivation is to defend established modes of accumulation by reproducing its hold on power, what are the party's medium- to long-term electoral objectives? According to Pempel (1990: 340),

[T]he maintenance of dominance requires an intellectually fuzzy but nonetheless important combination of flexibility and rigidity... This combination is essentially a matter of skill, judgement and leadership, and it revolves around continually resolving the tension between the dominant party's ability to retain its core of support for long periods of time but gradually to move beyond that core (which almost inevitably shrinks with time) so as to garner new blocs of support.

Although SWAPO has yet to suffer any significant erosion of its electoral coalition, a considerable effort is being made to court opposition voters and so to drive minor parties even further towards the margins of political life. These goals are evident in two developments.

First, SWAPO is seeking to capture an electoral majority in Kunene, where Namibia's only opposition-led regional council has been sustained by a DTA/UDF coalition since 2004. This campaign began with Kunene's designation in 2007 as a 'special focus region' (Weidlich, *The Namibian*, 3 December 2007) and was later to involve visits by Sam Nujoma, Pendukeni Iivula-Ithana, Nangolo Mbumba and a host of other high-profile national figures, as well as the intense lobbying of traditional leaders, parading of new recruits at press conferences and (dubious) suggestion that Kunene's opposition-led regional council had deliberately 'sabotaged' government development policy (Heita, *New Era*, 23 November 2009). At the regional and local authority elections held in 2010, SWAPO's share of the vote in Kunene increased from 35.5 per cent to 41.3 per cent, although a combined UDF/DTA tally of 46.8 per cent proved sufficient to prevent a change of government.

Second, demands for SWAPO to achieve one hundred per cent of the vote are occasionally made by senior party figures including, as the following newspaper report indicates, former president Sam Nujoma:

Let the opposition get zero seats. SWAPO has lived by its promise, first by defeating the colonisers and then economic emancipation of all Namibians (cited in Ndjebela, *New Era*, 26 November 2009).

These sentiments are echoed by people working at more junior levels of the party, including an SPYL organiser (Interview P, 29 October 2009) and a journalist (Interview R, male, Windhoek, 10 July 2009) who told me respectively that:

There is no reason why we cannot get one hundred per cent of the vote if we work hard.

That is the objective; of course, in a democracy it might not happen, but you cannot go to the voters and say, “Give me eighty-five per cent of the vote and give the rest to the opposition”. You campaign for one hundred per cent.

Indeed, SWAPO Women’s Council (SPWC) leader Petrina Haingura is even reported to have told a meeting of her Central Committee that, ‘We will work as a team to achieve a 110 per cent victory for SWAPO in November [2009]. We are not scared—we will fight anybody!’ (Weidlich, *The Namibian*, 1 June 2009) Such remarks, though regarded by some critics as an instance of either hyperbole or stupidity (Geingob, int., 16 July 2009; Interview T, 15 June 2009), suggest that SWAPO’s campaigning effort in the Kunene Region is driven by a desire to achieve political hegemony rather than any fear of losing support in the traditional heartlands of northern and north-eastern Namibia. By winning not only the presidency but also every parliamentary, regional authority and local council seat, SWAPO hopes to secure total control of Namibia’s public space and, thereby, to entrench its political dominance indefinitely.

Why has Namibia’s ruling party chosen to pursue electoral hegemony rather than to construct, as Riker’s (1962: 48) seminal study of political behaviour would suggest, a ‘minimum winning coalition’? This puzzle is undoubtedly explained by its sense of entitlement, its tendency to equate patriotism with support for the nationalist movement and its concomitant intolerance of dissent, all of which serve to reinforce a perception that SWAPO power should be projected into every region of the country. Yet there is little evidence to suggest that, even over the long term, SWAPO wishes to extinguish civil liberties or to establish a *de jure* one-party state. Despite multiple human rights violations before independence, the historical commitment to ‘scientific socialism’, four successive presidential election victories, a super-majority in parliament and the ongoing politicisation of public service institutions, Namibia’s ruling party has made no attempt so far to terminate the democratic experiment or even to roll back the constitutional settlement

reached in 1990. Its leadership has *chosen* not to restrict political competition, to harass the independent media, to rig elections or to ban opposition activity, even though such measures might have found support both within and outside the party (Keulder and Wiese 2005: ix). This commitment to the ideal and content of liberal democracy, though driven in some cases by a desire to encourage foreign investment and to prevent economic turbulence rather than by a sense of moral justice, is indisputable. SWAPO's long-term electoral objective would appear to be the achievement of a *de facto* one-party state in which opposition politics is irrelevant rather than prohibited.

Conclusion

This chapter has used a combination of interview material, journalistic analysis, government data and secondary literature to advance two arguments regarding Namibia's ruling party. First, despite its success in reducing poverty, in widening access to primary education and in extending welfare provision, SWAPO's unwillingness to adopt a number of potentially effective empowerment measures and its high level of defence spending suggest that development is regarded as a secondary objective rather than a core reason for the party's existence. Second, SWAPO's politicisation of state institutions and nepotistic distribution of resources have produced an elite—comprising politicians, senior civil servants, parastatal directors, security chiefs and black empowerment entrepreneurs—which accumulates wealth primarily or exclusively by exploiting its privileged access to power. The party's motivation is, therefore, to protect its patronage networks by ensuring the continual reproduction of single-party dominance.

Given that SWAPO was once regarded as a revolutionary movement devoted to scientific socialism, equality and economic transformation, this outcome has surprised and appalled many scholar-activists formerly involved in the liberation struggle (Melber, 2003; Leys

and Saul, 1995). I offer no such judgement, given that ‘crony’ or ‘robber baron’ capitalism is not necessarily incompatible with national development,³² but seek merely to explain SWAPO’s class politics by reference to four principal factors. First, despite the rhetorical commitment to leftist politics, SWAPO has never practised egalitarianism within its own ranks; almost from the movement’s inception in 1960, decision-making was dominated by a small, closed but increasingly educated elite clustered around Nujoma, whose charisma and ruthlessness proved sufficient to crush any attempt at grassroots participation. Second, the ‘elite pact’ (Dobell, 1998 cited in Melber 2007: 63) negotiated by SWAPO and its adversaries before independence forced Namibia’s incoming government to operate within established modes of accumulation, to abandon plans for the wholesale redistribution of agricultural land and to accept a bloated pay structure within the public service. Third, an acute skills shortage bequeathed by Namibia’s colonial-era education system, as well as SWAPO’s uniquely dominant position within the liberation movement and its policy of educating selected cadres to university level, meant that in many cases the Africanisation of top public service structures could only be achieved by wholesale employment of SWAPO cadres. Finally, a sense of entitlement stemming from SWAPO’s liberation narrative stimulated demands for senior public servants to be appointed on the basis of partisan affiliation, rather than professional merit. Since 2002, when SWAPO policy was changed to reflect such arguments, the politicisation of Namibia’s public service and erosion of its distinction between party, government and state have gathered pace, with various civil servants appointed to party positions and state resources channelled towards a small cabal of well-connected individuals. As Leys and Saul (1995: 201) noted, ‘surrounded by the trappings of power, with its chauffeurs, large houses, “power lunches” and embassy parties, and drawn into the circle of class privilege’, SWAPO’s decision-making elite is not ‘likely to rock the boat... by preaching popular empowerment or facilitating bottom-up democratisation’.

³² As the examples provided by nineteenth-century America and contemporary Russia perhaps demonstrate.

Yet despite a number of high-profile scandals, Namibia is not a kleptocracy characterised by rampant corruption, theft and bribery; indeed, its elite has chosen thus far to pursue legally-sanctioned avenues for wealth accumulation rather than the outright criminality associated with regimes in Kenya, Nigeria and the former Zaire. This concern with legality can be perhaps traced to three sources. First, Namibia's small but vigorous civil society is practised in exposing cases of official corruption, which its largely independent police, prosecuting and judicial authorities generally prove willing to investigate. Second, whatever their faults, Presidents Nujoma and Pohamba appear to be men of considerable personal probity whose modest lifestyles and apparent lack of interest in self-aggrandisement set the tone of public life during Namibia's first two decades of independence. Finally, SWAPO's seemingly unassailable dominance of the political system has probably also removed any temptation to corrupt the institutions deemed vital to its grip on power, such as the police, intelligence service and armed forces.

Given its interest in elite accumulation and its sense of entitlement stemming from the liberation struggle, SWAPO's long-term electoral objective is to create a *de facto* one-party state in which the presidency, as well as all parliamentary seats, all regional authority seats and all local council seats are controlled by the ruling party. This vision is consistent with SWAPO's ambivalence on multi-party democracy, its belief that liberation marked the 'end of history' and, most importantly, its conviction that authoritarianism would disturb existing patterns of accumulation in the economy. If a serious and long-term opposition challenge were to emerge, however, Namibia's fledgling democracy might come under increased pressure from a SWAPO elite determined to maintain its grip on power.

5. It's My Party: Despotism, Accumulation and Motivation in Opposition Politics

We are not going to participate in the presidential election, because I think one must be realistic: we do not have a chance, we will waste money and I do not need to be ridiculous, to put [out] a photo and I say, "I am the President-in-Waiting".

Monitor Action Group (MAG) parliamentarian, Jurie Viljoen

In Namibia, as in other dominant-party systems, the marginalisation and exclusion of opposition parties is recognised by all shades of political opinion. At a rally held in Katutura on 22 November 2009, for example, President Hifikepunye Pohamba boasted that SWAPO was 'assured of a resounding victory' in the Presidential and National Assembly elections due later that month [emphasis added].³³ United Democratic Front (UDF) president Justus //Garoëb told a crowd gathered in Swakopmund one week earlier that his colleagues, though hopeful of securing an electoral majority in the Erongo Region, 'do not want to exalt ourselves by saying we can take over the government. We want to take over power step by step'.³⁴ According to Republican Party (RP) national organiser Clara Gowases (int., 22 June 2009), 'it is difficult for me to say that we will take over the government. We want to be the opposition party that puts SWAPO on its toes, to [make them] really care about the people'. Such sentiments suggest a widespread recognition that SWAPO's formidable electoral coalition is—and will remain—invulnerable to external pressure.

Given this grudging acceptance of their semi-permanent marginalisation, what do opposition parties wish to achieve? H. Kwasi Prempeh (2010: 26), whose work is broadly

³³ SWAPO Party rally attended by the author on 22 November 2009.

³⁴ UDF rally attended by the author on 14 November 2009. Nama/Damara passages translated into English by a member of the UDF national executive committee.

representative of the comparative literature and was quoted in the previous chapter, argues that control over state resources represents the only real prize in African politics:

Because the president remains the patron *par excellence* in Africa, the desire to capture—or, for small parties, to form a coalition with—the presidency is the motive force behind the formation and behaviour of many of Africa's parties.

For a party with little or no prospect of capturing power outright, in other words, the principal purpose of political contestation is to secure entry into a post-election coalition government and, thereafter, to channel state wealth, employment opportunities, contracts and other resources into its own patronage network. This logic, however, presents a difficulty: what do parties with no prospect either of winning a presidential election or of securing co-optation seek to achieve? In Namibia, as we shall see below, SWAPO's ongoing electoral dominance and its unwillingness to share power have ensured that all opposition parties—from the smallest to the largest—fall into this category. The question I seek to answer here is, therefore:

What do Namibia's opposition parties seek to achieve and what drives these choices?

Given that any study of this type must proceed from an understanding of the intra-party decision-making practices associated with opposition politics, my first section begins with an investigation of the processes by which party interests are defined, priorities determined and policy responses shaped. I conclude that almost all opposition parties are dominated by their respective presidents, whose despotic power can be attributed, first, to the persistence of 'big man' politics (which can itself be traced to the absence of ideological controversy and prevalence of ethnic mobilisation) and, second, the misuse, ineffectiveness or absence of formal intra-party decision-making structures. To answer the research question, therefore, it is necessary to describe the interests, aspirations and priorities pursued by opposition party presidents.

In the second section, I critically assess opposition leaders' claim to be primarily concerned with representing 'excluded' ethnic minority communities, promoting constitutional norms and defending civil liberties against the encroachments and abuses of Namibia's ruling party. Three flaws in this argument are exposed. First, notwithstanding failed negotiations over a proposed electoral pact in 2010, there have been no serious attempts since independence to construct a 'grand coalition' capable of challenging SWAPO's alleged misuse of power. Second, despite the rhetorical commitment to democracy and human rights, several opposition leaders have been accused of complicity in various acts of political violence committed during the apartheid era and are, therefore, vulnerable to allegations of hypocrisy. Finally, opposition parties are little interested in the pursuit of philosophical goals and tend to champion certain issues, such as the alleged marginalisation of ethnic minority communities, for opportunistic rather than ideological or idealistic reasons.

In the third section, I argue that opposition parties tend in Namibia to prioritise the drive for parliamentary office and that four variables are responsible for producing this outcome. First and most important, the single-constituency closed party list system used in parliamentary elections is more permissive than the multi-constituency closed party list, plurality and majoritarian systems employed at local, regional and presidential levels respectively. This institutional factor would not, however, cause opposition parties to prioritise the drive for parliamentary without an interaction with two further variables. On the one hand, given that SWAPO has established a stranglehold on presidential power, the best-paid elected office *available* to opposition parties in Namibia is that at parliamentary level. On the other hand, opposition parties are entirely reliant for their political survival upon a public subsidy paid exclusively to organisations represented within the National Assembly. This combination of institutional context and financial incentive structure is sufficient to shape political behaviour in the Namibian context, although parties' inclinations are further cemented by a secondary factor:

parliamentary representation offers the best platform from which to communicate with the electorate. Thus Namibia's institutional framework, public sector pay scheme, party financing arrangements and media activity create a powerful incentive for opposition parties to seek office at the parliamentary level.

Co-optation?

In Africa, as Prempeh (2010 p.26) has argued, political parties typically seek to appropriate state resources either by capturing presidential power or by securing ministerial office through co-optation. This conception of the state 'as the ultimate prize puts an enormous premium on competition for the presidency, control of which is most important for patronage and rent seeking. Relative to the executive branch, party competition in the legislative branch is a sideshow' (van de Walle 2003: 315). For many opposition parties, indeed, the purpose of contesting a parliamentary election is not to take power, but to secure ministerial office by persuading the ruling elite of its right to inclusion within a coalition government. As van de Walle (2003: 315) has argued,

The struggle for legislative seats is of course a struggle for majority status, but it is also a struggle for the attention of the executive. This is particularly true for small parties, often of ethnic minorities, which know that they cannot aspire to majority status. For them, legislative elections are a way to be identified as a distinct community that needs to be accommodated.

Superficially at least, the Namibian case presents some evidence to support this contention. National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO) leader Kuaima Riruako and Namibia Democratic Party (NDP) president Martin Lukato Lukato, for example, have both demanded the formation of a 'national unity government' with opposition representation at Cabinet level (Hopwood 2008: 61; Maletsky, *The Namibian*, 7 January 2010). Indeed, when asked to justify this

position, NUDO parliamentarian Asser Mbai (int., 23 June 2009) argued explicitly in favour of co-optation:

If we think that this person from NUDO is very much capable, he has got the qualities, he has got the ability to become a minister of agriculture, why do you not give him the chance? [...] For all ministers to be coming from only one region, it will really cause some conflicts and suspicions and that is why we are calling for a more inclusive government... It can still be a government run by SWAPO as the majority party, but that is also including quality leaders from other political parties.

Nevertheless, an examination of Namibia's post-colonial history suggests that these hopes are very unlikely to be fulfilled; indeed, no opposition leader has been co-opted since 1990, when United Democratic Front (UDF) parliamentarian Reggie Diergaardt and Namibia National Front (NNF) president Vekuii Rukoro were appointed to Sam Nujoma's first administration (Hopwood 2008: 64,126). This reluctance to accommodate opponents can be traced to three sources. First, SWAPO occupies fifty-four of the seventy-two elected seats in parliament and has no need, therefore, to share power within a coalition government. Second, Namibia's history of violent conflict and the prevalence of SWAPO splinter groups within opposition politics have produced a considerable degree of polarisation at the parliamentary level, where mutual respect, trust and friendship seem only rarely to cross party lines. In 2004, for example, President Nujoma accused the (married) Congress of Democrats (CoD) leader of being a 'homosexual' (Shivute, *The Namibian*, 26 May 2004), whilst Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) vice-president Philemon Moongo used a 2007 National Assembly debate on national reconciliation to make the highly provocative assertion that, during its liberation struggle, SWAPO killed 'more Namibians than (apartheid) South Africa' (Weidlich, *The Namibian*, 1 November 2007). Finally, given its commitment to non-racialism and its recognition of the dangers posed by exclusionism, SWAPO has been careful to construct a parliamentary caucus reflecting Namibia's considerable ethnic diversity, with Owambo, Damara, Herero, Nama, Caprivian, Coloured, Kavango,

Afrikaner and San candidates all featuring in its 2009 National Assembly list.³⁵ This policy of inclusion has allowed the government to reject demands for co-optation emanating from parties claiming to represent Namibia's 'marginalised' or 'oppressed' ethnic minority communities.

Given that Namibia's opposition parties stand no chance of securing either presidential or ministerial office, what are they seeking to achieve? I address this question here, first, by locating the centre of power within each party and, second, by assessing the advantages and drawbacks associated with contesting office at each tier of government. My findings challenge the prevailing assumption that presidential elections represent the principal arena of party competition and suggest that parliamentary office, with its permissive electoral system, relatively generous remuneration scheme, party funding mechanism and free publicity, is commonly regarded as the most valuable prize in opposition politics.

Decision-Making in Namibia's Opposition Parties

How centralised are the decision-making practices associated with Namibia's opposition parties? In exploring this question with informants, I tried to discourage the articulation of rehearsed responses by asking, not for a subjective assessment of their party's commitment to internal democracy, but for details of 'the process by which your 2009 election manifesto will be written'. NUDO president Kuaima Riruako (int., 6 May 2009), Republican Party (RP) national organiser Clara Gowases (int., 22 June 2009) and a former member of the CoD's National Working Group (Interview E, female, Windhoek, 2 June 2009) replied respectively,

I am a kind of person who can enjoy my conversations with... other parties. I can use all the experts we have here, in this country—they belong to SWAPO, they can belong to DTA, they can belong to anything; I will bring them here... and ask

³⁵ Ethnicity identified from the surname of each candidate, cross-referenced against birthplace data. See: Hopwood 2008: 106-285; Election Watch, 2011.

them some questions and... out of their discussions, *I can come up with something achievable and acceptable to all* [emphasis added].

The President and the Secretary-General are working on the manifesto. We are planning on holding a Congress at the end of August and the manifesto will be handed out to [the delegates].

The Central Committee would meet and discuss in general what are the issues they feel the party should concentrate on. Then it hands over to the National Working Group, i.e., the executive, which hands over to various experts on different areas of policy. In the final analysis, however, it is three or four people in the leadership who decide what is in it.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, this super-centralisation of power is not confined merely to issues of manifesto preparation. When UDF parliamentarian Eric Biwa resigned in 2003, for example, the party's executive committee—chaired by its president, Justus //Garoëb—allocated his vacant seat to Gustaphine Tjombe rather than to Archie Namaseb, even though Namaseb had enjoyed seniority in its 1999 National Assembly list (Maletsky, *The Namibian*, 27 March 2008). RP president Henry 'Henk' Mudge expelled his secretary-general in 2004 for refusing 'unconditionally and in the interest of the party [to] support, trust and protect' him (Hopwood 2008: 132), secured retrospective permission from the executive committee for this usurpation of its power and allegedly appointed an acting secretary-general without reference to the party's constitution (anon., 2009). Despite losing nine-tenths of his party's support base since taking office, DTA president Katuutire Kaura survived a leadership election in 2005 and later dismissed any suggestion of retirement 'so long as SWAPO employ[s] only certain groups in the army, give[s] scholarships on the basis of ethnicity [and] continues to mess up with the land issue' (Kaure, *New Era*, 23 January 2008). Perhaps most tellingly, however, NUDO's vice-president, secretary-general and members of parliament were all either appointed or manoeuvred into office by its president, Kuaima Riruako, who defended his actions with an assertion that 'I have a vision for this party... hence it is very important to have people at the top who I think will be

able to articulate and carry the vision forward' (Kuteeue, *The Namibian*, 7 January 2004). In Namibian opposition politics, therefore, a party's interests, goals and strategy tend to be defined by only one individual: its leader.

This culture of autocracy is rooted in two variables. First, given the persistence of 'big man' politics and relative absence of ideological or policy debate, each of the opposition parties is heavily reliant upon the personal support base cultivated and maintained by its leader (Interview M3, male, RDP national executive committee member, Windhoek, 11 May 2009). Second, in many cases, formal party structures—together with their mechanisms for ensuring proper consultation and accountability—are weak, ineffective or absent. According to CoD president Ben Ulenga (int., 7 June 2009) and former RP councillor Nico Smit (int., 19 November 2009) respectively, for example,

[T]he people who came to [our Keetmanshoop] congress... we invited because... there [were] no regional structures; there was a region, there were members in every region, but there was not much organised within the region. So if you were inviting, if you were calling together a congress, how would you go about it?

The Republican Party had no structures... According to the constitution of the Republican Party, there should be... first, branches established; [...] the chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary... of each branch... form[s] the constituency committee and out of their ranks they elect... the regional committee... Now with the exception of here in Windhoek... there does not even exist a single branch in one of the regions—not a single branch.

Smit's assertion is confirmed in correspondence, passed to me by an informant acting on condition of anonymity, between RP chairman Daan Holtzhausen and president Henk Mudge. Holtzhausen begins the correspondence by complaining that, 'As we currently function... we will not get the car across the ford [*sal ons nie die wa deur die drif kry nie*]. What has become of the

Executive Committee?’ (Holtzhausen to Mudge, 14 July 2009)³⁶ Mudge responds with a concession that the RP’s ‘weak points’ include:

No... [p]arty offices in places like Katima [Mulilo], Rundu, Grootfontein, Outjo, Khorixas, Gobabis, Windhoek Katutura, Swakopmund, Mariental, Keetmanshoop, Lüderitz and Karasburg, where our people can gather... [And the] lack of a financial committee that functions properly and proactively (Mudge to Holtzhausen, 24 July 2009).

For an opposition leader, such shortcomings represent a two-edged sword: whilst undoubtedly deleterious to the party’s prospects of mobilising electoral support, failure to establish proper bureaucratic structures or formalised decision-making processes can also permit the president to circumvent accountability mechanisms and so to maximise his autonomy from the activist base. Indeed, organisational atrophy should be regarded as a major source both of electoral failure and of presidential omnipotence within Namibian opposition politics.

* * * * *

Do any of Namibia’s opposition parties represent an exception to this portrayal of super-centralised power, organisational weakness and despotic leadership? From its inception in 1999, the CoD pursued a policy of recruiting quasi-prominent figures from a diverse range of sources—including SWAPO, the South West Africa National Union (SWANU) and Democratic Coalition of Namibia (DCN)—which served to foster multiple centres of power within its structures and, therefore, to impose substantial limits upon the exercise of presidential authority. In his analysis of the process by which candidates for CoD’s National Assembly list were selected and ranked in 2004, for example, Shane Mac Giollabhuí (2009: 120) noted that,

³⁶ This typically pithy Afrikaans metaphor is used to suggest that, as the RP currently functions, its problems will not be overcome.

The president's "list of favourites" was dismissed [by a steering committee] almost out of hand for a couple of reasons. First, the President's list elevated many relatively unknown party members to high positions and demoted senior members... Second, participants argued that as the president had not been "mandated" to construct a list, it should not be even considered... The rapid rejection of the president's list indicates that the president's control over the rank-ordering of the list was minimal.

These tensions erupted into open conflict after the CoD's second election defeat in 2004, when bitter and sustained recriminations at the elite level paralysed its decision-making organs, emptied its treasury, ruined its reputation as a 'rainbow party' (Interview T, female, journalist, Windhoek, 15 June 2009) and destroyed its mobilisational capacity. Party president Ben Ulenga even suffered the indignity of exclusion from his own headquarters, arrival at a congress to find that no accommodation had been booked for him and formal, though ineffectual, expulsion from the organisation (Ulenga, int., 7 June 2009; Weidlich, *The Namibian*, 13 August 2007). By 2009, however, his faction had managed to secure all but one of the senior elected offices, deprive 'rebel' leader Nora Schimming-Chase of her seat in parliament, oust its opponents from the sub-national authorities and, therefore, to assume complete control over the party's severely depleted organisational network. Indeed, since its disastrous showing in the fourth post-apartheid election, which resulted in the return of just one Member of Parliament, the CoD has ceased to represent an obvious exception to the rule on presidential omnipotence.

A second and stronger claim to exceptionalism might be advanced by the Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP), which exhibits two characteristics rarely observed in Namibian opposition politics. First, the party has made a concerted effort to reproduce SWAPO's relatively sophisticated internal organisation, with a functioning central committee, national executive committee, 'shadow cabinet' and branch structure all having been established since 2007. Second, these structures have attracted a number of relatively prominent figures whose personal profile, prestige and prospects are not necessarily dependent upon presidential patronage; indeed, RDP secretary-general Jesaya Nyamu and secretary for information and publicity Jeremiah

Nambinga arguably represent the party's most charismatic personalities both in private discussion and on a public stage.³⁷ This multiplicity of power sources would suggest that party president Hidipo Hamutenya, though seemingly unencumbered by factional conflict and widely respected for his impeccable liberation credentials, represents a *primus inter pares* rather than a despot.

Yet the extent, quality and depth of RDP's internal democracy should not be over-stated. When asked to describe the process by which his party's 2009 Presidential and National Assembly election manifesto had been prepared, for example, Hamutenya (int., 11 May 2009) told me that, 'We did it here in our office, ourselves, our team. We had two different workshops. The first document we produced... at our first workshop... and then we came back, and subjected [a] draft to our friends and ourselves, and we thought we run with it'. Two conclusions can perhaps be drawn from these remarks. First, despite its efforts to construct the most sophisticated organisational and mobilisational apparatus yet seen in opposition politics, RDP has failed to formalise the processes by which its interests are defined, its policies are devised and its priorities are determined. Second, the party's manifesto commitments appear to have been developed by a small, close-knit cabal of long-time associates rather than through any process of wider consultation; its president might not be a despot, therefore, but he does lead a closed, hierarchical and autocratic oligarchy bound by personal loyalty and by antagonism towards the ruling party. RDP exceptionalism, in other words, lies not in any commitment to internal democracy, collective decision-making and bottom-up consultation, but in the extremely limited dispersion of political authority at an elite level. Moreover, as I will later demonstrate, this peculiarity has so far proven insufficient to produce any variation in its motivation.

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³⁷ This observation is of course subjective, but based on my experience of meeting thirteen RDP leaders and also of attending RDP party rallies.

Why have opposition parties failed to attain a higher standard of institutionalisation? On the one hand, civil society organisations have shown little or no interest in engaging with the opposition. Namibia's largest labour confederation, the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW), for example, was established by—remains entirely subservient to—the ruling party, whilst the smaller but more militant Trade Union Congress of Namibia (TUCNA) was founded in 2002 on a pledge to eschew all forms of partisan affiliation (Trade Union Congress of Namibia 2012). Despite widespread concern around issues of black economic empowerment and land expropriation, private capital is too dependent upon government patronage for open, formal and durable links to be forged with the opposition. Church leaders played a prominent role during the liberation struggle but, perhaps recognising that both civil and religious rights have been largely respected since independence, tend not to participate in contemporary political debate or even to tackle the government on areas of obvious policy failure, such as nation-building, education standards and social equality. For Namibia's third sector, therefore, opposition parties are too weak, too transient and too fragmented to represent an attractive alternative to the ruling elite.

Yet Namibia's opposition parties have also made little or no effort to engage with civil society. Despite his impeccable trades union credentials, for example, CoD president Ben Ulenga chose to recruit established politicians—such as DCN president Moses Katjiuongua and former SWANU notable Nora Schimming-Chase—rather than labour activists into his first leadership team. RP president Henk Mudge told a local analyst in 2004 that his party could 'exploit its Christian links' by appealing for support, not to the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN), but to 'like-minded' organisations in the United States (Hopwood 2005: 135). Why have these and other opposition leaders proven so unwilling to develop links with Namibia's third sector? Two factors are worthy of consideration. First, opposition leaders hold a very weak negotiating position—by virtue of the political, electoral and bureaucratic weaknesses endemic to opposition politics—and might therefore be reluctant to invest personal authority or financial resources in a

collaborative project which many would regard as doomed to failure. Second, any civil society organisation choosing to align with an opposition party would undoubtedly demand political influence in return for mobilisational capacity; labour, business and church leaders each represent an independent base of support and are therefore likely to insist, not only upon a professionalisation of the party bureaucracy, with regular meetings, vertical accountability and increased transparency, but also upon special representation in the party congress and/or parliament. This erosion of presidential autonomy might have been tolerated if increased co-operation offered a realistic prospect of subverting single-party dominance, taking executive office and thereby appropriating state resources, but as many opposition politicians recognise (int., Maass, 30 October 2009), SWAPO's electoral coalition is too broad, too diverse and too dependable for such an objective to be achieved. Opposition parties have failed to achieve a higher standard of institutionalisation, in other words, partly because collaboration would involve a significant sacrifice of presidential power without offering the promise of state office in return.

Rhetoric and Reality

Thus, each of Namibia's opposition parties is dominated by its president and his key advisers, whose role in defining interests, determining priorities and devising policy is often largely unchallenged. What do these leaders wish to achieve? Perhaps unsurprisingly, when asked this question in interview, many informants tended to espouse the loftiest of ideals, the noblest of aspirations and the most far-sighted of objectives. According to All People's Party (APP) president Ignatius Shixwameni (int., 18 May 2009), CoD youth leader Natji Tjirera (int., 8 July 2009) and DTA vice-president Philemon Moongo (int., 15 May 2009) respectively, for example,

My whole life, I have lived to one thing: that is [the] commitment to an ideal, hoping that Namibia will one day become a country of equal opportunities, that all people shall be accommodated, that [we] also shall become a country [...] We really can... change the socio-economic situation in this country.

The party wants to be a vehicle for change, wants to be advancing the interests of the Namibian people, to protect them and... and to change the *status quo* in which the Namibians [are] poor and unemployed.

We strive for true democracy. We do not want [a] one-party state... DTA is for the principle of democracy and rule of law and it goes for free marketing [sic] as an economic principle... We strive to unite Namibians, we respect human rights and we respect the constitution.

When asked to elaborate on these objectives, many informants suggested that protecting Namibia's fledgling democracy necessitated the destruction of SWAPO's super-majority in parliament. According to DTA president Katuutire Kaura (int., 18 May 2009), NUDO president Kuaima Riruako (int., 6 May 2009) and a UDF regional co-ordinator (Interview S, female, Swakopmund, 1 November 2009) respectively,

Our purpose now is to make sure that we will bring... an end to the two-thirds majority of the ruling... It is the only way one can keep democracy alive, because with a two-thirds majority the ruling party becomes too pompous and self-assured and they tend to think that their position at the top is reserved... We want to keep democracy alive in Namibia.

[We are contesting the Presidential and National Assembly elections] in order to neutralise the two-thirds majority [and]... to create the forum of understanding among [sic] the nation as a whole.

In these elections we want to break SWAPO's two-thirds majority. We cannot say that we are going to rule the country, we are not in that position.

How seriously should these assertions be taken? According to Theo-Ben Gurirab (int., 25 November 2009), whose credibility as an informant is enhanced by his position as Speaker of the National Assembly and status as a long-time SWAPO Politburo member, there are indeed a number of opposition parliamentarians with idealistic notions of good governance, duty and public service.

There are some opposition leaders that I have nothing but great admiration for; they are very competent legislators, they do their homework, work hard. I do not think that they are doing it [for personal gain]. If anything some of them are doing [a] disservice [to their outside interests]. [...] I am thinking about chairman of DTA, Johan de Waal; he is the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee [and also] a farmer—should probably spend more time on his farm rather than attending meetings outside of Namibia or here. So I look at people like that and they genuinely feel that they can make a... difference in the lives of the people.

This positive appraisal of opposition politics finds some support in a recent study of parliamentary activity undertaken by Ellison Tjirera and Graham Hopwood (2009), whose analysis of Hansard reports dating from 2005 to 2007 is summarised below.

Table 5.1: Top Ten Contributors to National Assembly debate, 2005-2007				
Rank	Name of MP	Party	No. motions sponsored	No. lines in Hansard
1	McHenry Venaani	DTA	9	9080
2	Ben Ulenga	CoD	5	6442
3	Arnold Tjiuiko	NUDO	1	5279
4	Kazenambo Kazenambo	SWAPO	2	4682
5	Kuaima Riruako	NUDO	1	4267
6	Nora Schimming-Chase	CoD	2	4149
7	Nahas Angula	SWAPO	3	4069
8	Tsudao Gurirab	CoD	5	3959
9	Philemon Moongo	DTA	2	3844
10	Johan de Waal	DTA	0	3606

Source: Hopwood and Tjirera 2009: 3,10.

Table 5.2: Contributions to National Assembly debate by Party, 2005-2007

Party	Proportion of seats* (%)	Proportion of motions (%)	Proportion of lines in Hansard (%)
SWAPO	76.4	47.3	51.9
CoD	6.9	26.3	16.5
DTA	5.6	17.9	15.8
NUDO	4.2	3.2	8.8
UDF	4.2	0.0	2.6
RP	1.4	3.2	2.4
MAG	1.4	2.1	2.0

* Five non-voting presidential appointees are excluded from this analysis.

Source: Tjirera and Hopwood 2009: 10.

Table 5.3: Motions Debated in the National Assembly, 2005-2007

Subject	No. motions sponsored by SWAPO MPs*	No. motions sponsored by opposition MPs	Total no. motions
Foreign relations	1	4	5
Law and order	5	3	8
Town planning		3	3
Education		3	3
Arts, culture and sport	3	3	6
Business and enterprise	3	3	6
Welfare		3	3
Agriculture and land reform	2	3	5
Traditional authorities		2	2
Affirmative action		2	2
Labour	1	2	3
National reconciliation		2	2
Utilities		2	2
Health	1	1	2
Environment	5	1	6
Herero/Nama genocide		1	1
Transport	3		3
Other	22	11	33
Total	26	38	64

* Five non-voting presidential appointees are excluded from this analysis.

Source: Tjirera and Hopwood 2009: 10.

Two tentative conclusions can be drawn from these data. On the one hand, opposition legislators are far more likely than their SWAPO counterparts either to introduce a parliamentary motion or to speak in debate: eight of the ten members identified as having been most active in the chamber between September 2005 and October 2007 were drawn from minority parties, whilst forty-six of the fifty *least* prominent legislators occupied government benches. On the other hand, a significant number of these opposition contributions appear to have focused upon issues of demonstrable concern to under-privileged communities, such as crime, educational under-attainment, poverty and land reform.³⁸ Given that opposition leaders must have few illusions about their capacity to influence legislative priorities or even to prevent non-binding parliamentary motions from being ignored by a numerically dominant executive, do these patterns of activity lend credence to the suggestion that their principal motivation is to represent interests, defend the constitution and prevent abuse of Namibia's democratic institutions? Three problems confront such a perspective.

First, there have been no serious attempts since independence to construct a grand coalition capable of challenging SWAPO dominance; indeed, as Du Pisani and Lindeke (2009: 13) have noted, most of Namibia's opposition party leaders seem content to remain 'big fish in a very small pond'. Such parochialism is evident in the continued proliferation of minor parties unlikely ever to exercise an influence upon public policy, including the APP, RP and Democratic Party of Namibia (DPN), as well as in the abrupt termination of a DTA/UDF parliamentary alliance in 2005 and the failure of negotiations intended to produce an anti-SWAPO electoral pact five years later (Ndjebela, *New Era*, 14 September 2010). Had opposition leaders wished to safeguard Namibia's democracy and its constitution from the 'danger' posed by SWAPO dominance, they might reasonably have been expected to construct an electoral combination with the strength to achieve this objective.

³⁸ In 2008, the national problems most frequently cited by Afrobarometer respondents were: unemployment (33 per cent), poverty/destitution (13 per cent), education (6 per cent), economic management (6 per cent) and crime or corruption (6 per cent). See: Afrobarometer (2010).

Second, given that atrocities occurred on both sides of Namibia's liberation-era conflict, many opposition party leaders have an ambiguous record on the question of democracy, free expression and human rights. DTA leader Katuutire Kaura, for example, was vice-president of the party during its violent, fraudulent and widely discredited election campaign of 1989 (Hopwood 2008: 184). NUDO president Kuaima Riruako has been accused of encouraging the apartheid-era Hereroland government in its 'introduction of public flogging administered on the buttocks of offenders who were often children' (Soggot 1986: 278). According to Leys and Saul (1995: 56), RDP president Hidipo Hamutenya—who served the liberation movement as its secretary for information and publicity between 1981 and 1991—was one of only five SWAPO officials (alongside Sam Nujoma, Peter Nanyemba, Peter Mueshihange and Moses Garoëb) permitted to visit the detention camp at Lubango in Angola, where hundreds of people accused of spying for apartheid South Africa were imprisoned, tortured and murdered. Critics might suggest that such conduct does not necessarily represent an indicator of present disposition, since individuals are capable of re-evaluating and changing established modes of behaviour; yet many of the civil society activists interviewed for this research project took a more cynical view. Thus one independent observer (Interview W, male, civil society activist, Windhoek, 24 June 2009) and Phil ya Nangoloh of NamRights (int., 17 July 2009) told me respectively,

The RDP... talk[s] about democracy now, but when they were in power³⁹ they didn't say anything about it; when they were on the receiving end of some rough treatment, they suddenly became converts. In the nineties I went to interview [RDP secretary-general] Nyamu about the Epupa dam project... and he told me basically that... I shouldn't interfere. He was a bully really.

People in RDP say, "We want democracy". Bullshit! [...] It is not democracy, it is more that they were affected personally... Where were Hamutenya and others when people were being killed in Kavango?

³⁹ The informant is referring here to when RDP leaders, such as Hidipo Hamutenya and Jesaya Nyamu, served as SWAPO cabinet ministers.

Finally, the relative prominence of opposition MPs in Hansard appears to reflect, not an idealistic concern with parliamentary oversight or minority representation, but a desire to attract media attention, to reinforce processes of ethnic or racial mobilisation (cf. NUDO's demand for reparations from Germany in respect of the Herero/Nama genocide) and to avoid accusations of lethargy. According to Hopwood and Tjirera (2009: 6), who endorse the last of these three points,

It may be that some [SWAPO] MPs are concerned not to be seen stepping out of (the party) line and therefore prefer to keep quiet. It is easier for SWAPO MPs to hide when there are fifty-five of them (the backbenches are even out of view of the public and press galleries). Non-performing opposition members are more noticeable simply because there are so few opposition MPs.

Indeed, the preponderance of parliamentary motions on crime, welfare provision, education and land reform (see Table 5.3) should not be regarded as an indication of ideological concern either. According to the NUDO member of parliament Arnold Tjihuiko (int., 18 May 2009), 'You [sometimes] bring in a motion... because you want to score a political point... [On two occasions] I wanted to be a little bit naughty and put the ruling party in a corner and hammer them, so eventually they realised that this is just a political motion and [threw] it out'. Such opportunism is consistent with the scholarly assumption that pragmatism, flexibility and philosophical listlessness represent the principal features of political discourse in Namibia (Bauer 2001: 43; LeBeau 2005: 7). Martin Boer (2005: 54), for example, suggests that, 'Ideology itself does not seem to play a large role in Namibian politics. All the parties generally favour a social democratic system, a mixed economy, and human rights and freedoms for all Namibians'. Given that opposition demands for greater democracy, transparency and equality appear, therefore, to represent little more than self-serving rhetoric, why are minority parties formed and reproduced? To answer this question, I will now explore the various personal, organisational and political benefits associated with holding office at each tier of government.

Party Contestation

My analysis of interview and archive material gathered during fieldwork would suggest that, in Namibia, opposition parties assess the advantages and drawbacks of contesting office at each tier of government against four criteria: electoral system design, personal remuneration, party funding and publicity generation. These variables are discussed here in descending order of importance.

Electoral System Design

Since its local authority reorganisation of 1992, Namibia has employed a distinct electoral system at each tier of government: majoritarianism at the presidential level, a single-constituency closed party list mechanism at the National Assembly level, a plurality system at the regional authority level and a multi-member constituency closed party list mechanism at local government level. This variation is important when assessing party motivation because, as demonstrated in chapter two, Namibia's opposition support is sufficiently dispersed for electoral system design to exert a substantial influence upon the distribution of political office. Any tier of government with an electoral system characterised by high levels of permissiveness is likely, in other words, to prove an attractive proposition.

In Table 5.4 below, I use four measures to rank Namibia's electoral systems in order of permissiveness: the number of voting districts; the number of representatives elected in each voting district (district magnitude); the percentage of electoral support needed in each voting district to win a single seat (district quota); and the cumulative total of seats presently held by opposition parties. As in any polity, large district magnitudes tend to produce a small district quota and thus to denote a highly permissive electoral system, whilst small district magnitudes and large district quotas generally have the opposite effect.

Table 5.4: Electoral System Design					
Election	System	Voting districts	District magnitude	District quota (%)	Opposition-held seats (%)
National Assembly	Closed party list	1	72	1.4	25.0
Local Authority	Closed party list	29	5-15	6.7-20.0	31.3
Regional Authority	Plurality	107	1	Plurality	8.4
President	Majoritarian	1	1	50.0 + 1 vote	0.0

Source: Electoral Commission of Namibia, 2009; Kisting, *The Namibian*, 1 December 2010.

As these data indicate, Namibia's most permissive electoral mechanism is to be found at the National Assembly level, where a closed party list system has been adopted for the purpose of drawing minority groups—above all, whites—into the political process. Two aspects of this system serve to facilitate opposition representation. First, given that all seventy-two legislators are drawn from a single, nationwide constituency, any party with 1.4 per cent or more of the vote is guaranteed a seat in parliament, regardless of the degree to which its electoral support is concentrated or dispersed. Second, this effective quota is further reduced by means of a 'largest remainder' system, whereby the largest party *failing* to qualify automatically for legislative office is allocated one seat in parliament. Thus, Kosie Pretorius' Monitor Action Group (MAG) managed to hold a legislative seat over three electoral cycles (1995-2010) without ever having secured more than 0.9 per cent of the vote, whilst in 2010 the South West Africa National Union (SWANU) took its place with a mere 0.6 per cent of national support. Namibia's single-constituency closed party list system is so extraordinarily permissive, in other words, that parties can reasonably expect to secure parliamentary representation with no more than a few thousand votes.

The second most permissive electoral system listed in Table 5.4 is to be found at the local authority level, where twenty-nine towns, cities and villages each constitute a multi-member voting district and where representation is awarded to each party in proportion to its share of the local vote. District magnitudes vary according to a council's status as defined by central

government, with villages electing five members, towns such as Rundu and Oshakati returning seven members, Walvis Bay and Swakopmund choosing ten members and Windhoek, as Namibia's largest urban centre, boasting fifteen elected representatives. Given this range of district magnitudes, the minimum vote share needed to win a single seat varies from 20.0 per cent in villages to 14.3 per cent in towns and just 6.7 per cent in Windhoek, where SWAPO, the CoD, RP, NUDO and UDF all secured office in 2004. For opposition parties, large municipalities probably therefore represent a more attractive target than towns or villages, although elected office can be obtained in many small communities, such as Koës in the Karas Region and Kalkrand in the Hardap Region, for as little as one hundred votes.

At the regional authority level, by contrast, elected office can only be achieved with a considerable concentration of support, since each constituency returns one representative on the basis of a winner-takes-all system; given that SWAPO's electoral coalition spans three-quarters of the population and that rival parties are generally unwilling to field unity candidates, these arrangements have tended to produce a gross under-representation of opposition support. In 2010, for example, minority parties secured 21.0 per cent of the national vote but only 9.3 per cent of regional council representation, whilst in 2004 the CoD took 5.4 per cent of the vote—a figure second only to that of the ruling party—but failed to win a single seat. Perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, opposition parties tend to regard electoral system design as a significant barrier to contesting office at the regional authority level. As Democratic Party of Namibia (DPN) secretary-general Adam Isak remarked,

We would prefer that the first-past-the-post system should be replaced with the proportional one, like in the local authority elections... [The plurality system] is something which is causing a big deficit, because let us say our party lose[s] with only five votes... we do have so much support, but we do not have any recognition within the regional council set-up.

Even this system might appear to be permissive, however, when compared with the majoritarian device employed at presidential level, where a winning candidate must have secured more than fifty per cent of the national vote and where runners-up receive no pay-off whatsoever. Indeed, given that seventy-five per cent of voters favour the ruling party and that opposition support is characterised by acute volatility, no opposition candidate has even come close to capturing this prize; DTA president Mishake Muyongo secured 23.7 per cent of the vote in 1994, when his candidacy represented the only challenge to SWAPO incumbent Sam Nujoma, but subsequent contenders have never managed to muster more than a mere 11.1 per cent. Indeed, ten of the eleven opposition leaders to contest Namibia's presidential election in 2009 forfeited a N\$10,000 (US\$1,236) deposit levied by the electoral commission for the purpose of discouraging frivolous candidacies (Maletsky, *The Namibian*, 8 December 2009). For opposition parties, therefore, presidential campaigns are highly likely to end, not only in defeat, but also in a considerable depletion of scarce resources; when MAG chairman Kosie Pretorius stood for the state presidency in 2004, for example, his deposit may have represented as much as ten per cent of the party's annual budget. Single-party dominance, resource scarcity and financial costs have, in other words, created a significant disincentive to contesting presidential office.

To summarise, it would appear that Namibia's adoption of a distinct electoral system at each tier of government has created a strong incentive for contesting office at the National Assembly level, where opposition parties can hope to secure representation even with less than one per cent of the vote. Local authority office can also be obtained with a relatively small proportion of the vote, especially in major cities such as Windhoek, but regional authority elections have consistently produced an under-representation of opposition support and presidential office is far beyond the capacity of any opposition candidate to obtain. Electoral system design, in other words, serves in Namibia to promote party contestation at the parliamentary level.

Conditions of Service

To many politicians, regardless of their time or place, power is a tool for extracting bribes, embezzling development aid, plundering government ministries and parastatals, seizing mineral resources and otherwise amassing personal fortunes (Bayart *et al.* 1999) In Namibia, however, opposition politicians are—for three reasons—unlikely to be motivated by the corrupt accumulation of wealth. First, central government has been monopolised by the ruling party, which appears entirely uninterested in co-opting other groups and thus in widening access to state resources. Second, given that Namibia's political system is characterised by minimal devolution, regional and local authorities are vested with very limited powers and consequently offer—even when controlled by opposition parties—few opportunities for self-aggrandisement. Finally, Namibia's law enforcement agencies have a considerable degree of autonomy and a long record of prosecuting officials suspected of stealing state funds, even when these alleged perpetrators are closely connected to the ruling party. Single-party dominance, political centralisation and state autonomy have served, in other words, to minimise the opportunities for wealth accumulation through corruption, embezzlement and fraud.

It should not be assumed from such realities, however, that opposition party leaders are indifferent to the financial incentives associated with elected office. Although Namibia's government has consistently refused to publish details of the salaries and benefits paid to its elected representatives, presumably fearing popular opprobrium, an official document sent me by a civil society contact acting on condition of anonymity outlines the following scheme.

Table 5.5: Salaries and Benefits paid to Elected Officials (US\$)							
Remuneration Type	President	National Assembly				Regional Authority councillor	Local Authority councillor
		Leader of the Opposition	Chief Whip	Deputy Chief Whip	Member		
Salary	53,294	32,423	29,670	28,060	27,055	18,183	0
Special allowance	37,627	0	0	0	0	0	0
Entertainment	6,180	1,483	1,483	1,483	1,483	1,236	0
Furniture	Unlimited	4,635	4,635	4,635	4,635	3,864	0
Housing	Provided	12,014	12,014	12,014	12,014	9,611	0
Utilities	Unlimited	200	200	200	200	168	0
Telephone	Unlimited	107	107	107	107	89	0
Transport	Provided	11,674	11,674	11,674	11,674	9,728	0
Pension	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Total	>97,101	62,536	59,783	58,173	57,168	42,879	0

Exchange rate, US\$1:N\$8.09 (9 July 2012)

Source: Department [of] Public Service Management, 2007.

As these data indicate, Namibia's best-paid elected official is its state president, whose remuneration package comprises a US\$53,000 basic salary, a US\$38,000 'special allowance', a US\$6,000 entertainment allowance, a state pension, two official residences and unlimited expenditure on furniture, utilities and transportation, alongside a US\$7,000 special allowance made available to his or her spouse. Given that none of SWAPO's rivals stand any chance of securing this position, however, the most lucrative prize *available* to an opposition politician is parliamentary office, which attracts US\$57,000 per annum in salary and allowances, a considerable degree of social privilege (as denoted by the designation 'Honourable') and multiple opportunities to undertake expenses-paid trips both at home and abroad, many of which involve free travel in business-class accommodation. Indeed, this basic package can be—as indicated in Table 5.5 above—significantly improved when additional, though often largely symbolic, responsibilities are undertaken. As leader of the opposition, for example, RDP president Hidipo Hamutenya draws US\$63,000 in salary and benefits, whilst SWANU president Usutuajie Maamberua earns \$60,000 as a committee chairman and DTA secretary-general McHenry Venaani received, until his exit from parliament in 2010, some US\$60,000 per annum as chief whip. Ironically, opposition members enjoy excellent prospects of being 'promoted' to one of these senior positions precisely because minority parties occupy so few seats in the National Assembly; NUDO, for example, appointed Arnold Tjihuiko as chief whip in 2004, even though party president Kuaima Riruako and secretary-general Asser Mbai were its only other members of parliament. Thus, Namibia's public service pay structure—combined with its dominant-party system—has created a powerful incentive for seeking office at the National Assembly level.

How attractive are parliamentary salaries when compared with the opportunities for wealth accumulation outside politics? Given that only two per cent of Namibia's population earns US\$25,000 or more per annum (World Bank 2009: 2), opposition parliamentarians inhabit an exclusive world of wealth and privilege, enjoying lifestyles more familiar to the European or

North American professional classes than to the subsistence farmer of Kunene or shack-dweller of Katutura. In Olympia, Pioneerspark and the other upmarket suburbs of Windhoek, politicians commonly own a villa with swimming pool and manicured garden, drive a luxury car and socialise in Western-style restaurants, whilst some senior figures even maintain a second home or farm outside the capital.⁴⁰ Most importantly perhaps, this privilege can rarely be sustained once parliamentary office has been lost, since Namibia's formal sector economy is not only poorly developed, but also heavily dependent upon government expenditure and, therefore, vulnerable to SWAPO manipulation (Du Pisani and Lindeke 2009, 15). As one senior journalist (Interview V, male, Windhoek, 23 June 2009) noted,

Many of these guys... have been in parliament since independence. It is their livelihood. It is a salary equivalent to being the director of a company. Most of them have no qualifications, so they cannot get something outside of parliament; the moment they lose their seats in parliament, they lose their houses, their cars and the private schooling for their children... [They] also get privilege—there is a lot of travelling and you get to be on various committees. You travel all round the world and around this country—and basically do very little!

An example of this 'dependency syndrome' is offered by UDF president Justus //Garoëb, whose entire career has been spent in opposition politics and whose prospects of securing lucrative employment in the private sector might, therefore, be limited. A brief sketch of his life will perhaps bear out this supposition. After matriculating at the Augustineum Training College in Okahandja, an institute of further education established by the apartheid regime, //Garoëb embarked upon a medical degree at the University College of Zululand but was forced—by personal circumstances rather than government pressure—to abandon this course before its completion (Dierks, 2004). In 1971, at the age of twenty-nine, he joined the government-inspired Damara Advisory Council and, as heir to paramount chief David Goreseb, assumed its chairmanship six years later. Keen to steer a course between resistance and collaboration, he

⁴⁰ RDP parliamentarian Jesaya Nyamu, for example, owns a commercial farm, whilst DTA secretary-general McHenry Venaani owns a farm and a service station in Okakarara.

boycotted Namibia's 'internal election' of 1978 but won control of its Damaraland bantustan in 1980, before launching the UDF—a 'curious hotchpotch of tribal interests, hardline socialists, Caprivian politicians, and former SWAPO detainees' (Hopwood 2008: 75)—in 1989. Aside from a brief period during the mid-1990s, when he resigned to undertake research on the Damara traditional authority, //Garoëb has spent the entire post-colonial period in parliament, leading a small band of predominantly Damara politicians notable primarily for their inactivity; none of the UDF's three legislators proposed a single motion between September 2005 and October 2007, for example, whilst //Garoëb himself asked only four parliamentary questions during this period (Tjirera and Hopwood 2009: 10). Given his limited education and professional experience, as well as his relatively advanced age, it is possible that //Garoëb would struggle to find employment in the private or voluntary sectors with an equivalent level of remuneration, security and social status. Parliamentary office, in other words, represents the best guarantor of personal privilege.

Party Finance

Party funding is a vitally important, but little studied, aspect of democratic politics in Sub-Saharan Africa. To secure elected office, politicians must establish bureaucratic networks, organise rallies, print leaflets, purchase newspaper space, hire billboards, rent vehicles and compensate staff, all of which cost a considerable sum of money; indeed, electoral strength often appears to be positively correlated—not only in Africa, but throughout the world—with the capacity to raise funds. It would appear reasonable, therefore, to hypothesise that Namibia's opposition leaders covet office at whichever tier of government offers the best opportunities for raising finance.

According to Saffu (2003: 22-27), whose work represents one of the few comparative analyses of political funding in Africa, parties typically derive income from public subsidies, donations, kickbacks, investments, 'indirect' government aid (such as free access to state television, vehicles, equipment or personnel) and/or 'other' sources (including membership subscriptions, local fund-raising events and front organisations). Affiliate structures, such as trades unions, chambers of commerce and church alliances, are not mentioned in this list but also commonly represent an important source of finance. Which of these revenue streams do Namibia's opposition parties regard as particularly important? In 1997, President Nujoma's government created a public funding scheme under which 0.2 per cent of state revenues are distributed amongst political parties according to their share of parliamentary representation; recipients have no legal obligation to publish audited accounts or even to declare the amount of money obtained. According to Hopwood (2005: 138), however, the following disbursements are likely to have been made during the six years to 2005/2006.⁴¹

⁴¹ I have attempted to calculate figures for the subsequent years, but was unfortunately unable to obtain the requisite budget data.

Table 5.6: Allocation of State Funding to Political Parties (US\$1,000)							
Party	Financial Year						Total
	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
CoD	160	170	220	230	200	120	1,100
DTA/UDF coalition	200	220	280	300	250	-	1,250
MAG	10	10	10	10	10	20	70
SWAPO	1,190	1,330	1,710	1,820	1,510	1,450	9,010
RP						20	20
DTA						110	110
UDF						70	70
NUDO						70	70
SWANU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NDMC					0	0	0
Total	1,560	1,730	2,220	2,360	1,970	1,860	11,700

Conversion rate, US\$1:N\$8.09 (9 July 2012)

Source: Hopwood 2005: 138.

Two implications can be drawn from these data. First, given its electoral dominance, SWAPO receives by far the largest allocation of public money, taking some US\$9m of the US\$11.7m distributed between 2000/2001 and 2005/2006. Second, any party not represented within the National Assembly—such as SWANU and the NDMC, which captured regional authority office in 2004—is excluded from the state funding scheme. As APP president Ignatius Shixwameni (int., 18 May 2009), a member of the RDP national executive committee (Interview L, male, Windhoek, 23 June 2009) and SWANU president Usutuaijie Maamberua (int., 26 June 2009) implied when describing their medium-term objectives, alternative sources of revenue are generally so inadequate that parliamentary office alone represents the key to political survival:

Our vision is that in twelve months' time we shall definitely be in parliament...
Once we are in parliament, we [will] have access to state resources.

[State funds] will make a great impact on us because you can stabilise your operations, set up party structures everywhere and give your staff something to survive on. Almost everyone who works here at the moment is a volunteer.

If a party has got representation in the National Assembly, then you have funding... That will enable the party... to be more mobile, to do more in terms of resources. So from that point of view, it is perhaps in the first instance, more important to get into the National Assembly [than to compete at other tiers of government]... I think the National Assembly elections, in terms of importance, in terms of making the party move forward, that could be something to value.

Once elected to parliament, most political parties rapidly develop an ‘addiction’ to public funding. In 2004, for example, the DTA admitted that more than ninety-nine per cent of its revenue was derived from this source (Boer 2010: 4), whilst a year later UDF president Justus //Garoëb conceded that state subsidies represent ‘the only resource we have’ (Hopwood 2005: 138). When the CoD collapsed in 2007, leadership rivals Ben Ulenga and Nora Schimming-Chase fought bitterly for control over the party’s funding allocation, which secretary-general Kala Gertze described as the ‘only money’ in its account (Kanguechi, *New Era*, 7 October 2008). Two years later, RP chairman Daan Holtzhausen stated in a private letter to party president Henk Mudge,

I must have the conviction that the RP’s chances of getting more than one representative in the National Assembly are above average. If we cannot achieve it then there is no way in which the RP can fulfil its liability to the Bank after the election... I would not even consider the consequences if the RP does not get a representative in the National Assembly (Holtzhausen to Mudge, 14 July 2009).

After failing to secure a second parliamentary seat in 2009, when his party slumped from 2.0 per cent to 0.8 per cent of the vote, Mudge signed a ‘unification agreement’ with the RDP under which, significantly, all RP assets and liabilities were assumed by Hamutenya’s party (Weidlich, *The Namibian*, 8 September 2010). Parliamentary representation, in this case, was regarded as making the difference between insolvency and survival.

Such dependence upon state subsidies is far from typical in Africa, where relatively few countries offer public funding schemes and where most parties therefore rely upon business donors, wealthy individuals, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and foreign governments. Why have Namibia's opposition parties largely failed to elicit funds from these sources? On the one hand, many foreign governments, companies, members of the diaspora and other wealthy stakeholders offer party funding in the expectation that particular policies will be promoted or favours granted; donors, in other words, tend to gravitate towards the centre of power. In Namibia, however, opposition parties have consistently failed to develop a policy platform distinct from that of the former liberation movement, executive power is monopolised by the ruling elite and sub-national authorities represent little more than an administrative appendage of central government. On the other hand, any NGO wishing to promote democratic consolidation through capacity-building is unlikely to find an attractive partner in Namibia, where most opposition parties are regarded—even by many of their own supporters—as ephemeral, factionalised and/or discredited by collaboration with apartheid South Africa. Opposition parties are, in short, too small, weak, marginalised and self-absorbed to attract financial support from either the business community or from international donors.

Yet why have minority parties also failed to raise funds from other sources? Business investments, as Saffu implies (2003: 26), require a considerable amount of start-up capital and tend, therefore, to be monopolised by former or current ruling parties, such as SWAPO, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the *Partie Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire* (PDCI). Namibia's third sector has tended to eschew affiliation, as noted above, because opposition parties stand little chance of exercising state power and are, in any case, generally unwilling to trade presidential autonomy for political influence. Bribes and kickbacks represent a dependable source of income only when state resources can be appropriated and law enforcement agencies corrupted, but in Namibia, as noted above, neither of these conditions

applies. Membership subscriptions tend not to be collected, as Hopwood (2005: 135-136) as argued, because proper records are rarely kept and, in any case, many voters are unable to afford even the nominal sums demanded. Fundraising activities are also probably precluded by widespread poverty, whilst 'indirect' state aid is monopolised—except for a limited amount of free television broadcasting time, which in any case RDP leaders boycotted over a scheduling dispute in 2009—by the ruling party. Namibia's public funding regime, therefore, represents a uniquely important source of income because opposition politicians are unable or unwilling to establish business ventures, extract bribes, collect membership fees, organise fundraising activities or make full use of indirect state aid.

Publicity

A complaint often made about African political parties is that, after securing the spoils of office, elected representatives tend to disappear from public view. Gyimah-Boadi (2007: 25), for example, asserts that parties rarely exist 'as mechanisms for representation, conflict resolution, opposition and accountability, or the institutionalisation of democratic behaviour and attitudes. Consequently, there tends to be very little party activity between elections'. Such arguments are, however, difficult to sustain in Namibia, where opposition politicians organise press conferences, attend cultural events, participate in 'outreach' programmes, propose parliamentary motions and contribute to public discussion throughout the electoral cycle; by attracting favourable media attention, they hope to create an impression that ethnic, racial or social grievances are being raised and that, consequently, continued partisan loyalty is justified. Opposition parties, in other words, are likely to seek office at whichever tier of government offers the best opportunities for attracting 'free' publicity and thus of communicating with the electorate.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the elected official to feature most prominently and most frequently in media coverage is Namibia's president, whose activities always receive top-billing in television or radio broadcasts and whose stated opinion is rarely (at least in the government-owned press) contradicted. Given that SWAPO has established a monopoly over this tier of government, however, opposition parties tend to regard parliamentary office as offering the best opportunities for publicity generation. As a former member of the CoD's National Working Group (Interview E, female, Windhoek, 2 June 2009), APP president Ignatius Shixwameni (int., 18 May 2009) and SWANU president Usutuaije Maamberua (int., 26 June 2009) noted respectively,

Depending on how strong or weak your members of parliament are, you get a lot of free publicity by being in parliament. Otherwise, you have to go to the trouble of holding press conferences... Speeches in parliament are reported in the media, especially on radio; this spreads the gospel of the party and means you are still alive as a party.

The value of sitting in parliament is that we can make new ideas heard, new ideas that has [sic] hitherto never been advocated... [We can] use it as a propaganda platform to advance the cause and the interests of the party.

The National Assembly is more visible [than regional and local councils] in terms of television coverage, in terms of opportunities to go around the whole country, because in local elections you are confined to only one region [or] one constituency.

Indeed, the second largest party in Namibia's National Assembly is regarded as its 'official opposition' and entitled to a relatively prominent role in certain aspects of parliamentary business, including the President's annual State of the Nation address. When asked about their prospects leading into the 2009 Presidential and National Assembly elections, a DTA national executive committee member (Interview F, male, Windhoek, 27 May 2009), an APP executive

committee member (Interview A, male, Windhoek, 10 June 2009) and RP secretary-general Tartisius 'Cap' Gaeseb (int., 29 June 2009) replied respectively,

We are fighting to re-emerge as the official opposition... That way we can promote our ideas more effectively.

We might be the official opposition or the second largest opposition party. The APP has a home ground—where it was formed [the Kavango Region]. The Kavangos are the second largest [ethnic] group to the Owambos and we are enjoying the support of the region.

We want to be the official opposition.

Local and regional council office, by contrast, offer extremely limited opportunities for publicity generation. Two factors account for this lack of visibility. On the one hand, Namibia's acute centralisation has ensured that its sub-national authorities rarely take a decision of wider political significance; many town and village councils are heavily reliant upon a bloc grant disbursed by central government (Hopwood 2008: 25), whilst regional councils exercise no executive or legislative power whatsoever. On the other hand, sub-national authorities rarely attract the prominent or charismatic personalities needed to capture media attention, since parliamentary office is both more easily attained and more generously rewarded. As RDP secretary-general Jesaya Nyamu (int., 5 June 2009) noted when reminiscing about his time as a SWAPO official, 'We neglected the regional leadership and we put the most useless cadres there—most of them semi-literate, former commanders or former political commissar[s] of PLAN'.⁴² Opposition parties are likely to derive much more free publicity from parliamentary than from local or regional government office, in other words, because sub-national authorities not only exercise heavily circumscribed powers, but also tend to attract politicians of a relatively low calibre.

⁴² As noted in chapter one, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) was the name given to SWAPO's military wing.

This analysis of the benefits and drawbacks associated with contesting office at each tier of government has shown that opposition parties face a clear set of incentives for seeking office at the National Assembly level. Such findings run counter, however, to the consensus on electoral politics in Sub-Saharan Africa, which suggests that presidential contests represent the principal arena of party competition and that legislative elections ‘constitute a subplot, even if they link to the key aspects of the drama in ways we need to identify’ (van de Walle 2003: 310-311). Namibia offers an exception to this rule because opposition parties stand no chance of attaining executive power and tend, therefore, to regard presidential elections as little more than a costly distraction. According to UDF city councillor Werner Claassen (int., 30 June 2009), a member of the CoD’s National Working Group (Interview C, female, Windhoek, 9 June 2009) and Monitor Action Group (MAG) parliamentarian Jurie Viljoen respectively, for example:

I am not really thinking about the presidential set-up, you know, [the] presidential elections; but for the National Assembly we are working hard.

I would say that opposition parties must not even waste money on standing for presidential elections.

We are not going to participate in the presidential election, because I think one must be realistic: we do not have a chance, we will waste money and I do not need to be ridiculous, to put a photo and I say, “I am the President-in-Waiting”.

Despite such reservations, however, the number of opposition candidates standing for president has soared from one in 1994 to three in 1999, six in 2004 and eleven in 2009. Why do parties contest an election when the odds of victory are so long and the prospects of losing a US\$1,236 deposit are so high? SWANU leader Usutuaije Maamberua (int., 26 June 2009), who secured 0.4 per cent of the vote in 2009, offers a possible answer to this puzzle:

Even if I do not win the election, we still gain by standing in it. If you stand in the National Assembly elections but not the presidential elections, people will not take you seriously; they think, “If you are not going to stand in the presidential election, why should I vote for you in the parliamentary election?”

The principal purpose of a presidential candidacy is, in other words, to maximise the prospects of capturing office at a lower—but more attainable—tier of government rather than to contest for executive power; opposition parties derive enhanced prestige from their participation in a presidential election, but not much more.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that each of Namibia’s opposition parties is principally interested in securing and retaining parliamentary representation, with local government office regarded as a secondary objective and presidential elections largely dismissed as a costly distraction. Four factors appear to explain this ranking of priorities.

First, and most important, the single-constituency closed party list mechanism employed in National Assembly elections is substantially more permissive than the majoritarian, plurality and multi-constituency systems adopted for use at other tiers of government. To obtain public office, a political party must capture more than half of all votes cast in the presidential election, a plurality in any regional authority constituency and at least 6.7 per cent of the vote in a local authority district but, with the adoption of a largest remainder system and absence of an effective threshold, substantially less than one per cent of the vote to win a seat in the National Assembly. Given SWAPO’s continued success in reproducing single-party dominance at all four tiers of government, therefore, opposition leaders stand no chance whatsoever of seizing the presidency and enjoy only limited prospects of capturing office at the regional government level, but might

reasonably expect to secure representation either in parliament or in one of the large municipal authorities, such as Windhoek. Interview evidence would suggest that the rising number of presidential candidacies witnessed over recent elections is related to party proliferation and the desire to bolster parliamentary campaigns, rather than to a demand for co-optation.

Second, given SWAPO's monopolisation of executive power, the most generously remunerated elected office available to its rivals is located at the National Assembly level, where opposition members earn up to US\$63,000 in salary and allowances, enjoy a considerable degree of social privilege and benefit from such perks as expenses-paid visits to outlying communities, diplomatic missions and cultural events. This combination of social and economic privilege is sufficiently attractive not only to prevent certain under-educated and ageing party presidents from accepting retirement, but also to produce a new wave of party bosses driven by the desire for publicity, status and income. In Namibia, therefore, remunerative packages are structured in a manner likely to encourage the capture and retention of parliamentary representation.

Third, Namibia provides a small amount of public money to its parliamentary parties, which each receive a bloc grant worth up to US\$20,000 per seat per annum, whilst disbursing nothing either to parties competing in their debut election or to groups with representation only at the regional and/or local authority level. For opposition parties unable to attract business donations or to establish proper membership structures, this relatively enlightened scheme represents a uniquely reliable source of finance and, therefore, a powerful incentive for seeking election to the National Assembly. Indeed, as the DCN's example has shown, parliamentary representation can make the difference between a party's dissolution and its survival.

Finally, given that SWAPO has established a stranglehold on presidential office and that sub-national authorities are unable either to enact by-laws or to attract prominent personalities, parliamentary representation offers the best platform from which to attract publicity and thus to reproduce electoral support. By developing media contacts, holding press conferences,

proposing motions, participating in debates, attending cultural events and organising rallies, opposition leaders seek to convince voters that 'Owambo domination' is being countered and that continued partisan loyalty is therefore justified. Far from disappearing between elections, in other words, minority parties appear to recognise in Namibia that successful electoral mobilisation depends upon perennial communication with certain key sections of the population.

These findings are somewhat at odds with the comparative literature on African democratisation, which tends to portray minor parties as driven by the desire to secure co-optation. I suggest that such interpretations overlook three intervening variables. First, in societies with a high degree of personal antagonism at the elite level, such as Namibia, the personal networks and friendships needed to facilitate co-optation by a governing party are either insufficiently durable or absent. Second, where polities are characterised by single-party dominance, the ruling elite is generally able to establish a single-party executive and, therefore, to avoid sharing power within a post-election governing coalition. Finally, but perhaps most importantly, when a dominant-party embodies both the principle and practice of ethnic inclusionism, as in SWAPO's case, there is no need to enhance its popular legitimacy by co-opting the self-proclaimed representatives of 'marginalised', 'oppressed' or otherwise 'victimised' ethnic minority communities. In such circumstances, opposition parties have little alternative but to accept that parliamentary salaries, pensions and perks represent the only state resources available for their exploitation.

6. Conclusion: Parties, Factions and Votes in Comparative Perspective

They are comparable to the Biblical Judas Iscariot—they were with us, but they betrayed us.

President Pohamba speaking in 2008 about members of the Rally for Democracy and Progress

[Those] with an uncontrollable urge for power are clearly suffering from psychological problems and have until the Limpopo conference to seek counselling.

African National Congress youth leader Fikile Mbalula speaking in 2007 about President Mbeki

On Tuesday night, I led a team which met with a group of BDP members known as Barata-Phathi... Following very candid discussions, it was agreed... that all efforts must be made by both Barata-Phathi and the party leadership to bring peace within the party.

President Sir Quett Masire speaking in 2009 about conflict within Botswana's ruling party

Since January 2009, when this research project began, Africa's journey towards democratic consolidation has been marked—as Diamond and Plattner (2010) note—by instances of both progress and retreat. In Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mali and Niger, on the one hand, elected governments have been overthrown by the military, whilst in Malawi a threatened slide into authoritarianism was halted only by the death of President Bingu wa Mutharika and, in Côte d'Ivoire disputed elections prompted a resumption of civil war. In Senegal and Zambia, on the other hand, Huntington's (1991: 266-267) 'two turnover test'—by which democratic consolidation is diagnosed after two legitimate alternations of power—has been met,⁴³ whilst in Botswana, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, the Comoros, Lesotho, Liberia, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, São Tomé and Príncipe, the Seychelles,

⁴³ I am not suggesting here that Senegal and Zambia have each undergone democratic consolidation—merely that they met Huntington's test.

Somaliland, South Africa and Tanzania, credible or largely credible multi-party elections have been held. On balance, therefore, party competition remains a defining feature of Africa's political landscape, playing an often decisive role in the manner by which public office is allocated, institutions are legitimised, groups represented and resources distributed.

As noted in the introduction chapter, this thesis has been principally concerned with four aspects of electoral competition in Namibia: opposition volatility, party cohesion, dominant-party motivation and opposition motivation. Its adoption of a case study research design was informed by my concern with multiple dependent variables and justified on the grounds that, as George and Bennett (2004: 19, 90-91) argue, such approaches permit the researcher to examine contextual factors, explain outliers, explore the impact of historical processes and accommodate 'complex causal relations such as equifinality, complex interactions [sic] effects, and path dependency'. Despite this single-country orientation, however, I recognise the value of comparative analysis in testing hypotheses and will, therefore, use my final chapter to determine the wider relevance of research findings and to challenge, where appropriate, the secondary literature on South Africa and Botswana.

To some extent, of course, a comparative enquiry of this type can only be as good as the secondary sources upon which it is based; omission, distortion and misinterpretation are more difficult to detect when fieldwork has not been undertaken, informant testimony is anonymised and primary material cannot be readily triangulated. Fortunately, however, each of the comparative cases examined here has generated—by virtue of its remarkable history and sizeable academic community—a large and wide-ranging literature with several works of good or even outstanding quality. My analysis of politics in Botswana, for example, draws upon a considerable number of studies published both locally and further afield, including Makgala's (2006) book on factionalism, Good's (2008) work on democratic consolidation, Molomo's (2003) chapter on party politics, Holm's (1987) study of electoral competition, and Edge and Lekorwe's (1998)

wide-ranging collection on 'politics and society'. Not surprisingly, given its population size, regional hegemony and apartheid history, South Africa has generated a much larger body of literature than any other African country, with thousands of books, articles and theses written in every conceivable academic discipline. My comparative analysis engages most extensively with the growing literature on electoral competition, party politics and intra-party competition, including Lodge's (2004, 2006) research on democratisation, Beinart's (2001) book on twentieth-century history, Southall's (2001) collection on opposition politics and Seekings' (2009) chapter on governance, as well as election studies published by Taylor and Hoeane (1999), Kotzé (1999), Lemon (2009) and Reynolds (1999). As in Botswana, therefore, scholarship has created a body of research sufficiently broad, rigorous and penetrative for credible analysis of contemporary events to be undertaken.

The chapter is divided into five sections. First, I discuss the advantages and opportunities associated with comparative study of Namibia, South Africa and Botswana, focusing upon the variables held constant and hypotheses tested. In the second section, I show that opposition politics is characterised by acute electoral volatility in Namibia and South Africa, but considerable stability in Botswana. This variation is attributed to a high level of party formation in Namibia and South Africa, where ethno-racial identities are readily mobilised and where acutely permissive electoral systems have allowed numerous micro-parties to secure parliamentary representation. In the third section, I argue that dominant-party leadership contests have been less successfully managed in Namibia and South Africa than in Botswana, where state presidents proved adept at mitigating the centrifugal effects of factional conflict until a rupture finally took place in 2010. This variation is explained by differences in political culture, leadership style and factional mobilisation, with intolerance, coercion and the activation of salient discourses each found to increase the potential for schism. In the following section, I suggest that all three dominant parties are driven primarily by the desire to foster and reproduce a 'state

bourgeoisie’—comprising senior politicians, bureaucrats, parastatal directors, security chiefs and well-connected businesspeople—defined by its proximity to power and dependence upon established patronage networks. I also demonstrate, however, that these outcomes can be traced to the apartheid legacy in South Africa and Namibia, on the one hand, and to the reproduction of dominant-partyism in Botswana. In the fifth section, I argue that opposition leaders are motivated in Namibia and Botswana by the desire to capture parliamentary representation, whilst in South Africa any opposition leader with control of a provincial assembly or with an ethnic support base is likely to regard sub-national office as an attractive proposition. This variation is attributed to differences in the configuration of state power, since provincial assemblies enjoy sufficient autonomy in South Africa for opposition parties to attract donations, appropriate patronage or generate publicity at this level, whilst devolved authorities in Namibia and Botswana constitute little more than an appendage of central government. Finally, I outline the principal contributions of my research project and highlight opportunities for further investigation, emphasising in particular the need, not only to conduct fieldwork in South Africa and Botswana, but also to determine whether my analysis might be applied elsewhere in Africa.

Namibia, South Africa and Botswana: a Case for Comparative Analysis

In the introduction to this research project, I argued that party system type and political freedom play a vitally important role in shaping political behaviour and that, consequently, any comparative study of electoral democracy in post-colonial Namibia must endeavour to hold these two variables constant. Given that Namibia’s political system is widely regarded as exhibiting both single-party dominance and a relatively high standard of personal liberty, I have used Sartori’s three-term definition to identify every dominant-party system in contemporary Africa, before classifying each of these polities as ‘free’, ‘partly free’ or ‘not free’ according to its

score in the most recent Freedom House (2011) assessment. My results are displayed in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1: Dominant-Partyism and Democracy, 2011			
Country	Freedom House score		
	Political rights	Civil liberties	Designation
Namibia	2	2	Free
South Africa	2	2	Free
Botswana	3	2	Free
Lesotho	3	3	Partly Free
Seychelles	3	3	Partly Free
Tanzania	3	3	Partly Free
Mozambique	4	3	Partly Free
Nigeria	4	4	Partly Free
Burkina Faso	5	3	Partly Free
Togo	5	4	Partly Free
The Gambia	5	5	Partly Free
Gabon	6	5	Not Free
Cameroon	6	6	Not Free
Ethiopia	6	6	Not Free
Equatorial Guinea	7	7	Not Free

Source: Freedom House, 2011.

Two points can be drawn from these data. On the one hand, four of Africa's fifteen dominant-party systems (Gabon, Cameroon, Ethiopia and Equatorial Guinea) exhibit highly authoritarian forms of governance and are, therefore, entirely unsuited to comparison with Namibia. On the other hand, Namibia's relatively high standard of democracy—as reflected in its designation as a 'free' country—is replicated by only two of the remaining dominant-party systems identified in this table: South Africa and Botswana, both of which achieved scores of three or better on civil and political liberty. Indeed, despite some concern about rising levels of centralisation, cronyism and government hostility towards the private media, each of these three countries has attracted

widespread praise for its success in conducting free and relatively fair elections, its separation of executive and judicial authority,⁴⁴ tolerance of opposition, subordination of military forces and compliance, on the whole, with constitutional guarantees on freedom of movement, association and religion (Du Pisani and Lindeke 2009: 2; Friedman 2010: 266; Ayeni 2002: 195-196). These achievements have moreover coincided with the construction and reproduction of a relatively strong state, such that central authority is recognised throughout the national territory and public institutions elicit compliance, not by deploying or threatening to deploy force, but by establishing and maintaining a high level of popular consent. By comparing Namibia, South Africa and Botswana, a significant source of variation in political behaviour—the size and quality of democratic space—can therefore be controlled.

Inevitably, however, these three countries are not identical in every respect (see Table 6.2 below). South Africa, on the one hand, has a population some twelve times greater than that of Botswana and Namibia combined—indeed, its most populous city, Johannesburg, is thirty times larger than Windhoek and forty-five times bigger than Gaborone (World City Information, 2012; SWAPO Party, 2012a; Central Statistics Office, 2012). All three countries exhibit an exceptionally high level of social inequality, with Gini coefficients ranging from 0.57 (Botswana) to 0.68 (South Africa) (Presidency of the Republic of South Africa 2009: 25; Republic of Botswana/European Commission 2006: 10; World Bank, 2012), but South Africa's economy—with its diverse mining, manufacturing, banking and service industries—is by far the largest and most sophisticated in southern Africa, whilst Namibia and Botswana appear unwilling or unable to overcome a chronic over-reliance upon mineral extraction, industrial underdevelopment and dependence upon South African imports. Botswana, on the other hand, achieved political liberation some three decades earlier than Namibia or South Africa, where electoral competition is still shaped by social cleavages forged during the struggle era and where dominant-party rule

⁴⁴ Although it should be added here that the ANC succession battle of 2005-2008 raised serious questions about the extent to which South Africa's prosecuting authorities have been subverted by dominant-party rule.

has not, therefore, reached a comparable stage of development. Any comparative study of these three countries cannot, in other words, claim to have controlled for the effects of demography, economics or political history.

Table 6.2: Namibia, South Africa and Botswana Compared			
Indicator	Namibia	South Africa	Botswana
Population (2009)	2.2m	50.0m	2.0m
Capital	Windhoek	Pretoria (exec.)	Gaborone
Authoritarian regime	Settler-state	Settler-state	N/A
Date of independence	1990	1910/1994*	1966
Freedom House grade	Free	Free	Free
Federal/Unitary	Unitary	Quasi-federal	Unitary
No. regional/provincial units	13	9	0
State president	Directly elected	Indirectly elected	Indirectly elected
Electoral system (legis.)	Closed party list	Closed party list	Plurality
No. seats in legislature	72	400	57
Party system type	Dominant	Dominant	Dominant
GDP (US\$bn)	11.7	363.7	14.9
GDP per capita (US\$)	5,125	7,255	7,403
Currency	Namibian dollar	Rand	Pula
Urban population (%)	33	56	61
Literacy rate (%)	81.0	86.4	81.2

* Date that majority rule achieved.

Sources: National Planning Commission (Namibia); United Nations Data, 2012; Central Intelligence Agency (United States); Statistics South Africa; Republic of Botswana and United Nations; Transparency International.

Table 6.3: National Assembly Elections in South Africa, 1994-2009								
Party	1994		1999		2004		2009	
	Vote share (%)	No. Seats	Vote share (%)	No. Seats	Vote share (%)	No. Seats	Vote share (%)	No. Seats
African National Congress (ANC)	62.7	252	66.4	266	69.7	279	65.9	264
National Party/New National Party (NP)	20.4	82	6.9	28	1.7	7		
Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)	10.5	43	8.6	34	7.0	28	4.6	18
Freedom Front Plus (VF+)	2.2	9	0.8	3	0.9	4	0.8	4
African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP)	0.5	2	1.4	6	1.6	7	0.8	3
Democratic Party (DP)/Democratic Alliance (DA)	1.7	7	9.6	38	12.4	50	16.7	67
Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC)	1.3	5	0.7	3	0.7	3	0.3	1
Minority Front (MF)			0.3	1	0.4	2	0.3	1
Federal Alliance (FA)			0.5	2				
Afrikaner Unity Movement (AEB)			0.3	1				
United Christian Democratic Party (UCDP)			0.8	3	0.8	3	0.4	2
Azania People's Organisation (AZAPO)			0.2	1	0.3	1	0.3	1
United Democratic Movement (UDM)			3.4	14	2.3	9	0.9	4
Independent Democrats (ID)					1.7	7	0.9	4
Congress of the People (COPE)							7.4	30
African People's Convention (APC)							0.3	1
Others	0.7	0	0.1	0	0.5		0.4	0
Total	100.1	400	100.0	400	100.0	400	100.0	400

Source: Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (2011).

Table 6.4: Provincial Assembly Elections in South Africa, 1994-2009								
Party	1994		1999		2004		2009	
	No. Provinces	No. seats	No. Provinces	No. seats	No. Provinces	No. seats	No. Provinces	No. seats
African National Congress (ANC)	7	266	8*	289	9**	304	8	292
National Party/New National Party (NP)	1	82	1**	38	1**	7		
Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)	1	44	1*	37	0	32	0	19
Freedom Front Plus (VF+)	0	14	0	5	0	5	0	2
Democratic Party (DP)	0	12	1**	35				
Democratic Alliance (DA)					0	51	1	65
African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP)	0	3	0	4	0	8	0	3
Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC)	0	3	0	2	0	2		
Minority Front (MF)	0	1	0	2	0	2	0	2
Federal Alliance (FA)			0	1				
Afrikaner Unity Movement (AEB)			0	0				
United Christian Democratic Party (UCDP)			0	3	0	3	0	2
Azania People's Organisation (AZAPO)					0	0	0	0
United Democratic Movement (UDM)			0	14	0	10	0	3
Independent Democrats (ID)					0	6	0	5
Congress of the People (COPE)							0	36
African Independent Congress							0	1
Total	9	425	9	430	9	430	9	430

* Coalition government in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

** Coalition government in Western Cape Province.

Source: Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (2011).

Table 6.5: Vote Share by Party in Botswana Parliamentary Elections, 1965-2009										
Party	1965	1969	1974	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009
Botswana Democratic Party (BDP)	80.4	68.4	76.6	75.4	67.9	64.7	54.4	57.2	51.7	53.3
Botswana People's Party (BPP)	14.2	12.1	6.6	7.5	6.6	4.5	4.2		1.9	1.4
Botswana Independence Party (BIP)	4.6	6.0	4.8	4.3	3.0	2.4				
Botswana National Front (BNF)		13.5	11.5	12.5	20.5	26.9	37.1	26.0	26.1	21.9
Botswana Congress Party (BCP)								11.9	16.6	19.2
Botswana Alliance Movement (BAM)								4.7	2.8	2.3
Independents									0.0	1.9
Others	0.8	0.0	0.5	0.3	2.0	1.5	4.3	0.2	0.9	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (2011).

Table 6.6: Number of Seats by Party in Botswana Parliamentary Elections, 1965-2009										
Party	1965	1969	1974	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009
Botswana Democratic Party (BDP)	28	24	27	29	28	31	26	33	44	45
Botswana People's Party (BPP)	3	3	2	1	1	0	0		0	0
Botswana Independence Party (BIP)	0	1	1	0	0	0				
Botswana National Front (BNF)		3	2	2	5	3	13	6	12	6
Botswana Congress Party (BCP)								1	1	4
Botswana Alliance Movement (BAM)								0	0	1
Independents									0	1
Others	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	31	31	32	32	34	34	39	40	57	57

Source: Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (2011)

Despite these disparities, however, my comparative research design does permit several important hypotheses to be tested. In chapter two, for example, I argue that Namibia's acute opposition volatility can be traced in part to its adoption of a closed party list system for use in parliamentary elections, whilst in chapter five I suggest that opposition parties are discouraged from contesting presidential, regional and local polls by virtue of unfavourable electoral systems employed at these tiers of government. My comparative study offers an opportunity to test these hypotheses because Namibia's closed party list system is almost identical to the proportional mechanism used in South Africa but entirely different from the plurality, winner-takes-all device employed at both tiers of government in Botswana. If electoral system design does exert a significant effect upon opposition volatility and party motivation, in other words, Namibia's experience is much more likely to be replicated in South Africa than in Botswana, where the political incentives created by legal and regulatory frameworks are different.

An additional opportunity for hypothesis-testing is presented by differences in the configuration of state power, since Namibia and Botswana have both adopted a unitary system of government in which political authority is overwhelmingly concentrated at the centre, whilst South Africa operates a quasi-federal system with some devolution to provincial and municipal authorities. In chapter five, I argue that Namibia's acute centralisation of power has tended to encourage electoral competition at the parliamentary level because sub-national office cannot realistically be used for the purpose of generating party income or attracting media attention. If this hypothesis is correct, opposition parties are more likely to shun sub-national elections in Namibia and Botswana than in South Africa, where provincial government distributes a significant proportion of public expenditure and is vested with at least some executive power; unitary systems of government, in other words, will experience a pronounced 'centralisation' of party contestation, whilst federalism encourages competition at lower levels of the political system.

A third opportunity for hypothesis-testing is presented by differences in social cleavage structure, since ethnicity and race exercise a much more profound influence upon electoral behaviour in Namibia and South Africa than in Botswana, where urban/rural location represents a strong predictor of partisan allegiance. In chapter two, I argue that party formation necessarily entails a degree of personal risk; even where freedom of association is respected, the danger of electoral defeat, humiliation and insolvency is real. When social competition is characterised by ethnic or racial particularism, however, new parties have an easily manipulated mobilisational resource with which to construct a support coalition capable of securing parliamentary office and are more likely, therefore, to appropriate the state resources needed for survival. If particularism does indeed encourage party formation, as my case study suggests, Namibia and South Africa could be expected to exhibit a much greater degree of opposition volatility than Botswana, where urban/rural cleavages have never been politicised by discriminatory policies and should, therefore, represent an easily manipulated electoral resource.

A final opportunity for hypothesis-testing is presented by differences in political culture, since Namibia and South Africa are both governed by former liberation movements with a struggle-era history of internal repression, whilst Botswana is dominated by a former collaborationist party noted, until recently, for its relatively benign responses to dissent. In chapter three, I argue that intra-party leadership contests are more likely to provoke a significant rupture when defeated candidates are vilified, marginalised and coerced rather than reconciled, accommodated or co-opted; SWAPO's tendency to follow the former course, as manifested in the disastrous purge of 2004-2007,⁴⁵ can be traced partly to its long-held assumption that criticism and treachery represent two sides of the same coin. If this hypothesis is correct, dominant-party rule will have been characterised by a much greater degree of internecine conflict and fragmentation in Namibia and South Africa than in Botswana, where party elites traditionally preferred to accommodate rather than to isolate opponents of the incumbent president.

⁴⁵ See chapter three.

To conclude, therefore, it would appear that the advantages of conducting a comparative analysis of Namibia, South Africa and Botswana—rather than using any other combination of cases—are twofold. On the one hand, a considerable number of independent variables (such as party system type, standard of democracy and state strength) can be controlled and thereby eliminated from the enquiry. On the other hand, differences in electoral system design, political system type, social cleavage structure and political culture should serve to facilitate hypothesis-testing and thus to indicate whether Namibia's political circumstances are unique or replicated elsewhere. My results, as outlined below, not only reinforce many of the arguments developed through case study work, but also challenge some of the prevailing assumptions on electoral behaviour, party motivation and party fragmentation in South Africa and Botswana.

Opposition Volatility

In chapter two, I noted that much of the literature on electoral politics in Africa has portrayed the 'typical' party system as exhibiting both high levels of concentration *and* low levels of electoral volatility, with static cleavages and incumbent advantage blamed for producing highly predictable election outcomes. My analysis suggests, however, that such perspectives are only partially applicable to Namibia, where low levels of party system volatility reflect SWAPO's huge and remarkably cohesive support base but obscure the acute instability characteristic of opposition politics. In Table 6.7 below, I use four measures to ascertain whether this phenomenon is replicated in South Africa and Botswana: mean opposition support, which provides an indication of party system type; standard deviation from this mean, which indicates to what extent total opposition support has fluctuated; party system volatility, as measured

against the Pedersen index;⁴⁶ and opposition volatility, as estimated through an adaptation of the Pedersen index outlined in chapter two.

Table 6.7: Electoral Volatility in Namibia, South Africa and Botswana, 1994-2009			
Indicator	Mean value across 3 elections		
	Namibia	South Africa	Botswana
Total opposition support (%)	24.1	32.7	45.9
Standard deviation from total opposition support (%)	0.4	1.7	2.3
Pedersen score (all parties)	11.1	15.9	11.0
Pedersen score (opposition only)	43.0	40.3	20.5

Source: Own calculations, from Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa, 2011.

Two inferences can be drawn from these data. First, although electoral politics are more competitive in Botswana than in South Africa or Namibia, all three cases appear to confirm the expectation that dominance is combined with low electoral volatility: total opposition support has been relatively limited, the standard deviation from this mean insignificant and the Pedersen party system scores small over the past three electoral cycles. When each ruling party is excluded from the Pedersen calculation, however, it becomes apparent that opposition parties in South Africa and Namibia experience a much greater degree of volatility than in Botswana. The critical question to be answered here is, therefore: why do South Africa and Namibia exhibit such acute opposition volatility when Botswana does not? In the following discussion, I argue that Botswana's exceptionalism can be traced to its low rate of party formation, which is in turn attributable to the adoption of a first-past-the-post electoral system and to a comparative lack of ethno-racial particularism.

My discussion of electoral volatility in chapter two highlighted four processes by which established partisan loyalties might be broken and re-forged. First, a merger of established parties

⁴⁶ The Pedersen index of volatility is derived by adding together each percentage change in electoral support and dividing the total by two.

can prompt voters either to coalesce around, or seek alternatives to, the new organisation. This phenomenon is however almost entirely absent from Namibia, where a short-lived parliamentary coalition formed by the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) and United Democratic Front (UDF) in 2000 represents the only significant case of inter-party co-operation. In South Africa, a significant consolidation of opposition parties did take place in 2000, when the Democratic Party (DP), New National Party (NNP) and Federal Alliance (FA) merged to form the Democratic Alliance (DA), although other incidences of coalition-building activity have been limited to the absorption—usually by the ruling African National Congress (ANC) or the DA—of minor parties interested in pre-empting their own electoral extinction. In Botswana, several fringe parties have concluded election pacts designed to facilitate entry into parliament, but the two largest players in opposition politics—the Botswana National Front (BNF) and Botswana Congress Party (BCP)—appear to be interested in competition rather than co-operation. Merger activity cannot, therefore, explain variation in opposition volatility, since South Africa is alone in having experienced this causal phenomenon.

A second driver of opposition volatility might be that certain parties are disproportionately affected by changing patterns of voting turnout. According to Weiland (1995), SWAPO's electoral breakthrough in 1994 should be attributed not to increased penetration of the electorate, but to apathy amongst DTA supporters; as noted in chapter two, however, this hypothesis is discredited by subsequent election results, which reveal a remarkably consistent level of SWAPO support regardless of turnout. In South Africa, some analysts consider the *dominant party* to be disproportionately affected by shifts in electoral turnout, since disaffected ANC supporters often stay at home rather than vote for the opposition (Letsholo 2005: 5). In Botswana, partisan allegiances are sufficiently fluid to permit a degree of switching between the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) and opposition, although here too changing patterns of electoral turnout seem not to be correlated with fluctuations in opposition volatility (Makgala,

personal comm., 13 January 2012). Turnout, in other words, does not cause variation in electoral volatility across my three cases.

A third possible cause of opposition volatility might be that voters shift *en masse* between ‘established parties’, abandoning their earlier loyalties in response to perceived changes of context. As noted in chapter two, however, this phenomenon is absent from Namibia, where not one opposition party has improved significantly upon the vote share achieved at its debut election. In South Africa, by contrast, the NNP’s unwillingness to pursue a confrontational style of opposition allowed the DP, which secured only 1.7 per cent of the vote in 1994, to lure many white, Coloured and Indian voters away from the former ruling party and, thus, to emerge as official opposition in 1999 (Kotzé 1999: 174; Welsh 1999: 91; Giliomee, Myburgh and Schlemmer 2001: 165-166). In Botswana, opposition voters appear to have shifted from the BNF to the BCP at each of the past three general elections, a reflection perhaps of the former’s failure to provide effective opposition to the ruling party (Makgala, personal comm., 13 January 2012). The large-scale transfer of electoral support between established parties cannot, therefore, be used to conceptualise opposition volatility because Botswana is not alone amongst our three cases in having experienced this phenomenon.

A final possible cause of electoral volatility is that new parties capture enough support to realign the party system, as Michael Sata’s Patriotic Front did in Zambia after 2001. Since variation in the degree of opposition volatility across our three cases cannot be traced either to coalition-building, voter turnout or competition between established parties, I argue here that high rates of *viable party formation*—i.e., the frequency with which voting patterns are disrupted by credible new parties—correspond with acute electoral instability and that Botswana’s exceptionalism, as indicated by its small turnover of political parties, can be traced to a lack of institutional and social incentives for political entrepreneurs to break away from established sources of political loyalty.

In Table 6.8 below, I use election data to determine the rate at which parties have emerged in Namibia, South Africa and Botswana since 1994. The uppermost values (row A) relate to opposition volatility as estimated by the Pedersen index, whilst row B provides the number of registered parties competing in each election, row C provides the number of parties registered since the previous national election, row D provides the number of new parties to gain parliamentary representation and row E provides the number of new parties to secure more than 0.25 per cent of the vote. This latter threshold corresponds to the minimum level of support needed to win at least one parliamentary seat under the most permissive of the three electoral systems and is intended to determine whether variation in the number of new parties securing parliamentary representation can be attributed to institutional barriers or to mobilisational capacity.

Table 6.8: Party Formation Rate in Namibia, South Africa and Botswana, 1994-2009					
Key	Indicator	Mean value over three electoral cycles			Mean value across all countries
		Namibia	South Africa	Botswana	
A	Pedersen score (opposition only)	43.0	40.3	11.0	31.4
B	Number of registered parties	9.0	21.0	6.3	12.1
C	Number of new parties	2.7	9.7	1.3	4.6
D	Number of new parties to secure parliamentary representation	1.7	2.3	0.3	1.4
E	Number of new parties to win more than 0.25 per cent of vote	2.0	2.0	0.7	1.6

Source: Own calculations, from Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa, 2011.

Three conclusions can be drawn from these data. First, Namibia and South Africa have a higher rate of party formation than Botswana, which produced less than half as many new parties as its western neighbour and less than one-seventh as many parties as its southern neighbour during the study period. Second, new parties are more likely to secure legislative representation in Namibia and South Africa than in Botswana, where only one organisation has entered parliament since 1999. Finally, this variation can be only partly attributed to the mechanical effects of

institutional design, since new parties tend to secure less support in Botswana than in either Namibia or South Africa: the mean number of such parties to capture at least 0.25 per cent of the vote in any given election was 2.0 in Namibia, 2.0 in South Africa and 0.7 in Botswana. Such outcomes suggest that, to explore variation in the degree of opposition volatility, it is necessary to determine the reasons for which parties have proliferated in Namibia and South Africa but not in Botswana. Two of the arguments outlined earlier in this thesis would appear to have explanatory value.

First, proportional representation tends to create an institutional incentive for party formation when, crucially, opposition support is characterised by a high degree of spatial dispersion. In Namibia, for example, parliamentary elections are conducted under a closed party list system designed to facilitate the maximum possible degree of inclusion; the entire country is treated as a single, seventy-two member constituency, with representation distributed according to the highly proportional Hare formula and a 'largest remainder' system used to allocate one seat for the largest party unable to qualify automatically for office. Given that Namibia's opposition support is characterised by high levels of spatial dispersion, with only eight of its 107 voting districts returning a plurality for any single opposition party in 2009, this institutional formula has permitted minor parties to secure parliamentary representation and, thus, to appropriate the public money necessary for political survival.⁴⁷ Namibia's acute opposition volatility can be traced, in other words, partly to the institutional incentives arising from its combination of proportional representation and opposition dispersion.

Remarkably, South Africa's system of proportional representation is even more permissive than that used in Namibia: its 400-member National Assembly is derived from a combination of national and provincial party lists, representation is distributed according to the highly permissive Droop formula and a largest remainder system is used to reward parties unable

⁴⁷ For a discussion of opposition motivation, see chapter five.

to qualify automatically for parliamentary representation (Reynolds 1999a: 182). In 2009, ten of the thirteen parties elected to South Africa's lower chamber of parliament each secured less than one per cent of the vote, whilst a decade earlier the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) secured legislative representation with 0.17 per cent of the vote. Most importantly, however, opposition votes are so scattered that many of these fringe parties would have failed to secure parliamentary office under the plurality system used in Botswana or even under the 72-member constituency mechanism used in Namibia. Reynolds (1999a: 223-224), for example, estimates that re-running South Africa's 1994 election results under a plurality system would have caused the VF, PAC, DP and the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) to be excluded from parliament and the NP to lose fourteen of its eight-two seats, whilst increasing the ANC's legislative caucus from 252 to 283 seats. As Pottie (2001: 38) has noted, South Africa's 'low threshold is very promising for new parties seeking to gain access to elected office' and, therefore, represents an institutional incentive for party formation.

In Botswana, by contrast, national elections are held under a majoritarian system whereby fifty-seven constituencies each return a single member to parliament, with a further four legislators appointed by the president. As many authors have argued (Norris 2004: 82), such mechanisms exhibit high levels of disproportionality and tend to penalise spatial dispersion of support, since parliamentary representation can be achieved only by capturing a plurality at the constituency level. In 1999, for example, the BCP took 11.9 per cent of the vote but secured only one seat in parliament, whilst five years later the BPP failed to obtain a single seat with 1.9 per cent of the vote. Such failures might reasonably be expected to discourage political entrepreneurs from embarking upon the risky business of party formation, especially when additional barriers to entry—including a legal stipulation that no traditional leader or public servant may run for office and that all candidates must be fluent in the English language—are taken into account (Holm 1987: 125-126). Botswana's institutional framework, in other words, has created a

disincentive to party formation, whereas its counterparts in Namibia and South Africa have had the opposite effect.

A second argument made in chapter two is that party formation necessarily entails a degree of personal risk; even where freedom of association is respected, the danger of electoral annihilation, humiliation and bankruptcy is real. When social competition is characterised by ethnic or racial particularism, however, new parties have an easily manipulated mobilisational resource with which to construct a support coalition capable of securing parliamentary office. Particularism, in other words, can be conducive to high rates of party formation.

In Namibia, as demonstrated in chapter two, ethno-racial identities have undergone a process of codification and politicisation since the colonial period, when white officials supervised the expropriation of grazing land, imposed a system of racial segregation and tried to balkanise the black population, not only by extending preferential treatment to minority groups, but also by portraying SWAPO as a ruthless, Owambo-dominated organisation determined to impose its will by force. After independence, SWAPO's success in monopolising the Owambo vote appeared at least partially to confirm this propaganda message and allowed opposition politicians to argue that north-central regions of the country, from where many SWAPO leaders hail, receive a disproportionately large share of infrastructural investment, development expenditure and public sector employment opportunities. When white fears of black economic empowerment are added to the mix, it is perhaps unsurprising that minority groups have consistently favoured whichever party appears best placed either to challenge single-party dominance or to articulate sectional interests. For any political entrepreneur seeking to establish his or her own party, therefore, ethnic or racial identity represents an easily manipulated resource with which to construct a support base capable of securing elected office.

In South Africa, academic opinion is to some extent divided on the origin and drivers of electoral behaviour (Friedman 2005: 243; Piombo 2005: 457; Mangcu 2009: 127), although

survey data suggest a strong correlation between racial identity and partisan allegiance: in 2008, the ANC was supported by 88.7 per cent of blacks but only 5.9 per cent of whites questioned by Afrobarometer (2008/2009), whilst the DA appealed to 61.8 per cent of whites and 46.2 per cent of Coloureds but only 3.3 per cent of blacks.⁴⁸ This polarisation can perhaps be traced to two sources. First, the ANC is ‘held together by a common (largely black) response to racial domination’ and has, ‘over more than eight decades, established itself as the almost unchallenged symbolic vehicle of majority aspirations for “liberation”’ (Friedman 1999: 97-98). Second, given that most whites fall into the highest income decile and that most members of the poorest income decile are black (Friedman 1999: 105; Lodge 1999: 58-59; Sarakinsky 2001: 150-151), South Africa has largely failed to eradicate the acute horizontal inequality bequeathed by apartheid. This alignment of racial and class identities ‘makes it possible to issue cloaked appeals to race groups through carefully constructed messages that raise specific interests... [R]ace combined with other factors renders it one of the most easily mobilized and most encompassing social divisions’ (Piombo 2005: 457). The Minority Front (MF), for example, has survived largely on the basis of Indian support (Lemon 2009: 672; Piombo 1999: 137), whilst in 1999 the DP ‘aggressively targeted racial minority communities dissatisfied with ANC governance’ (Piombo 2005: 462) and, after its formation in 2003, Patricia de Lille’s Independent Democrats (ID) attracted Coloured votes in the Northern Cape and Western Cape provinces (Seekings 2009: 140).

Ethnicity, by contrast, is commonly regarded as a relatively weak indicator of partisan allegiance in South Africa, where ‘European-style industrialisation produced a class cleavage... which cuts across, and undermines, the salience’ of this identity type (Mac Giollabhuí 2009: 40). Such perspectives must, however, be qualified to the extent that South Africa’s apartheid-era bantustan policy created, not only enduring networks of personal and chiefly loyalty in certain

⁴⁸ Respondents selecting the ‘would not vote’, ‘refused to answer’ and ‘don’t know’ options were excluded from these figures.

areas of the country, such as the Eastern Cape, but also—after the homeland governments had been abolished in 1994—a large number of unemployed homeland officials receptive to notions of ethnic particularism (Southall 1999: 156; Ndletyana 1999: 186; Lemon 2001: 338). In KwaZulu-Natal, for example, Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) forged a close alliance with the Zulu aristocracy during its period of bantustan rule and has continued, since liberation, to rely upon this influential group for purposes of rural mobilisation. In North West Province, Lucas Mangope's United Christian Democratic Party (UCDP)—an electoral vehicle for the former president of Boputhatswana—has mobilised support by 'appealing to Setswana-speaking citizens and arguing that the ANC is a "Xhosa-led" political party, that during Mangope's administration things were better because the "Tswana people" were ruling themselves, and that life has steadily got worse under "Xhosa rule"' (Taylor and Hoeane 1999: 138). In Eastern Cape Province, the United Democratic Movement (UDM) has:

overtly proclaimed that it best represented "Xhosa interests", and UDM leader Bantu Holomisa—former leader of the Transkei bantustan—sought to emphasize the ANC's neglect of tradition and rural development. The UDM was able to exploit the local popularity of Holomisa and his close ties to traditional leaders, as well as a "politics of discontent" rooted in the lack of delivery, the collapse of former patronage networks and the grievances confronting civil servants (Taylor and Hoeane 1999: 138).

Ethnicity might, therefore, represent a poor overall indicator of partisan allegiance in South Africa, but its activation has permitted several minor parties to survive and, more importantly perhaps, a number of new parties—including the UDM, UCDP, FA and Afrikaner Unity Movement (AEB)—to secure parliamentary representation.

Electoral behaviour is also to some degree conditioned by identity in Botswana, where BDP dominance rests partly upon Bangwato chiefly authority, BNF support is especially strong within the Ngwaketse community and Botswana People's Party (BPP) voters are concentrated in North-East District. Yet ethnic cleavages have actually declined in importance since the 1970s, as

urbanisation produced a number of population centres characterised by cultural heterogeneity, political radicalism and opposition to the ruling party (Molutsi 1998: 370). Indeed, ‘electoral support for the BNF has overwhelmingly come from the urban and peri-urban areas to which most of its campaigning slogans and tactics have been addressed’, with eight of the party’s thirteen parliamentarians representing urban constituencies in 1994 (Neocosmos 2002: 55; see also Molutsi 1998: 370). These developments have arguably contributed to Botswana’s low rate of party formation because urban/rural identity, unlike ethno-racial cleavages in South Africa and Namibia, has never been employed for the purpose of constructing a system of political or cultural domination; its social salience and utility as an instrument of electoral mobilisation are, therefore, limited.

This disparity is illustrated in Table 6.9 below, where Afrobarometer (2010) data on perceptions of ethnic discrimination have been aggregated and exhibited.

Table 6.9: Perceptions of Ethnic Discrimination in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa, 2008				
Question	Response	Botswana (%)	Namibia (%)	South Africa (%)
How often is [your ethnic group] treated unfairly by the government?	Never	72.6	29.3	25.7
	Sometimes	15.6	38.9	27.8
	Often	3.7	13.0	15.2
	Always	3.7	12.0	8.6
	Not Applicable	1.5	0.7	14.2
	Don’t know	2.8	6.0	8.6
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

1,200 adults were questioned in each of the three countries shown.

Source: Afrobarometer 2010.

Two points can be drawn from these data. First, but most strikingly, a substantial majority (72.6 per cent) of Botswana respondents believed that their own ethnic community is ‘never’ treated unfairly by government, with a further 15.6 per cent perceiving only occasional acts of discrimination. In Namibia, by contrast, a mere 29.3 per cent of informants rejected the notion

of official favouritism, with an additional 38.9 per cent believing that government ‘sometimes’ treats their own group unfairly; in South Africa, the corresponding figures were 25.7 per cent and 27.8 per cent respectively. Second, the proportion of respondents to believe that members of their own community are either ‘often’ or ‘always’ treated unfairly by government is much higher in Namibia (25 per cent) and South Africa (23.8 per cent) than in Botswana, where fewer than one in ten informants took this position. Botswana, in other words, are not only more than twice as likely than either Namibians or South Africans to believe that their own community is never treated unfairly, but also one-third as likely to perceive systematic discrimination. Such findings reinforce the impression, gained from my review of the secondary literature, that ethno-racial identities are more salient in Namibia and South Africa than in Botswana.

* * * * *

This analysis has endeavoured to show that opposition voting is characterised by acute volatility in Namibia and South Africa, but relative stability in Botswana; that party formation rates represent the principal factor underpinning this variation; and that two phenomena explain the differences in party formation rate observed across our three cases. First, but most important, the electoral systems used in South Africa and Namibia are far more permissive than their counterpart in Botswana, where new parties have been adversely affected by a combination of electoral dispersion and mechanical disproportionality. This effect is however amplified by differences in the level of ethno-racial particularism, since any political entrepreneur with a reasonable claim to represent minority interests has at least some chance of securing elected office in South Africa and Namibia, whilst internal migration is producing an urban/rural cleavage in Botswana with much less attraction for new parties seeking to reconfigure existing patterns of support. A complex interaction of political, social and institutional phenomena has served, in other words, to produce variation in the degree of opposition volatility across my three cases.

Leadership Succession, Factional Mobilisation and Party Cohesion

In chapter three, I noted that—aside from a small number of single-case studies focused upon Alliance politics in South Africa—factionalism and its effects are largely absent from the literature on African democratisation. Mac Giollabhui's recent article on dominant-party cohesion represents an important and much-needed step towards conceptualisation, although its emphasis upon parliamentary candidate selection is not supported by my research, which suggested that *leadership* selection represents the principal driver of party fragmentation in Namibia. Given that such contests do not necessarily lead to party fragmentation, however, my analysis sought to answer the following question: why do leadership succession battles differ in their propensity for triggering splinter party formation?

In Namibia, as noted in chapter three, succession politics caused SWAPO and the CoD to split in 2007 and 2008 respectively, whilst the DTA emerged from its 2005 leadership election seemingly unscathed. This puzzle was explained by three factors. First, ethnic mobilisation—which SWAPO and CoD leadership candidates freely embraced, but DTA candidates eschewed—is positively correlated with splinter party formation because defeated actors tend to assume that particularistic narratives can be reproduced in the electoral arena. Second, SWAPO's succession battle of 2004 was followed by a systematic purge of party members considered loyal to defeated candidate Hidipo Hamutenya, whose material incentives for remaining within the ruling elite were correspondingly reduced. This campaign was attributed partly to SWAPO's political culture, with its cult of personality centred upon the autocratic President Nujoma and its emphasis upon unity rather than debate, but also to the short-term separation of party and state leadership engendered by Nujoma's partial retirement in 2004. Finally, I suggested that age-based mobilisation dominated DTA succession politics but was absent from SWAPO and CoD factional discourses, which tended to focus instead upon ethnic identity, patronage or leadership style. This variation is important not only because age-based discrimination rarely involves

permanent exclusion from office (at least when its victims are members of the younger generation), but also because age-based discourses lack political salience and are therefore conducive to post-election reconciliation.

To what extent can such insights be applied to ANC succession politics in South Africa? When in 1999 Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma became president and deputy president of the country respectively, a cordial relationship appears to have existed between the two men, whose long-standing personal association was reinforced by Zuma's apparent lack of presidential ambition (Gumede 2005: 394). This charade was belatedly recognised by Mbeki, however, who in 2005 seized the opportunity provided by Zuma's implication in a corruption scandal to remove his deputy and thus to marginalise a potential challenger for the succession. Yet the president under-estimated Zuma's tenacity, charm and political skill, whilst misjudging his own capacity to mobilise support within the Tripartite Alliance. At the ANC's Polokwane conference in December 2007, therefore, Mbeki's bid to secure a third term as party leader was defeated by Zuma, whose faction also captured almost every other senior position within the leadership (Southall 2009: 4). Nine months later, Judge Chris Nicholson ruled that Zuma's prosecution for corruption had been prejudiced by political interference and, when Mbeki signalled his intention to appeal this verdict, the ANC's National Executive Committee 'recalled' him from the state presidency, installed deputy president Kgalema Motlanthe as a temporary successor and thus facilitated Zuma's final assumption of state power (Southall 2009: 4). Three months later, a breakaway party known as the Congress of the People (COPE) was established by several leading members of Mbeki's inner circle, including former Free State premier Mosiuoa 'Terror' Lekota, former Gauteng premier Mbhazima Shilowa and former deputy president Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka. In South Africa, as in Namibia, therefore, dominant-party fragmentation was caused, in part at least, by a failure to manage the centrifugal forces unleashed by leadership

selection, although Mbeki—unlike SWAPO's defeated presidential contender, Hidipo Hamutenya—chose not to join his supporters in resigning from the party.

To what extent can the ANC's fragmentation in 2008 be traced to particular types of factional mobilisation? Although Mbeki and Zuma both tailored their appeals to complement the ambitions, prejudices and interests expressed by a diverse range of actors, three themes emerge from the literature and from personal communication with local observers. First, but most important, both candidates appear to have wielded state patronage: Mbeki, for example, appointed loyalist ministers across almost all government departments in 2004 (Butler 2005: 722; Gumede 2005: 343), whilst Zuma courted a considerable number of people marginalised or disgraced during his opponent's term in office, including Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Tokyo Sexwale and Free State chairperson Ace Magashule (Piombo 2009: 17). Perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, Mbeki's defeat at Polokwane was followed by a significant purge in which many of his clients lost positions of power and influence in parliament, the party and public service. According to Booysen (2011: 369-370),

The Zuma camp's quest to replace Mbeki would extend beyond his mere removal as ANC president—into minimal institutional re-engineering, yet maximum redeployment... Bureaucratic mayhem prevailed as the processes of exorcising the Mbeki influence reached through the ranks of the top state office-bearers and into the tiers of the mid- and lower-level bureaucrats.

This purge was to climax in Mbeki's own recall from the state presidency in September 2008, which deprived his remaining clients of protection and caused ten Cabinet ministers—including Mlambo-Ngcuka, Lekota and Erwin, all of whom later participated in COPE's formation—to resign. As Friedman (2010: 268) noted simply, 'the ANC leadership's call for Mbeki to step down as state president led to the formation of COPE'.

A second major feature of ANC succession politics was that both candidates mobilised support around an ideological platform, with Mbeki leading a ‘pragmatic’ group dedicated to neo-liberal orthodoxy and Zuma courting a left-wing coalition committed to more broad-based forms of black empowerment. This bifurcation originated in an ANC decision—taken eleven years before the Polokwane conference—to launch a neo-liberal Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy that prioritised inflation-targeting over unemployment reduction and thus alienated much of the organised left, which found itself increasingly excluded from power and influence after Mbeki’s accession to the presidency in 1999 (Lodge 2004: 202).⁴⁹ Thus COSATU, the SACP and other collectivist elements of the Alliance ‘latched onto Zuma’s platform’ after his dismissal in 2005, ‘pledging their support on condition that, once in power, he would usher them into the inner sanctum of decision- and policy-making’ (Gumede 2005: 401). Mbeki responded in part by mobilising middle-class support around his model of Black Economic Empowerment (which emphasised elite creation rather than broad-based redistribution) and by encouraging rank-and-file activists to believe that ‘the “ultra left” [was] to blame for the disunity that threatened their movement’ (Lodge 2004: 212). When COPE was formed by a section of Mbeki’s support base in 2008, therefore, its ‘position on the political spectrum was signposted in several ways: willingness to enter coalition with the DA to form a government, reference to the black middle class that found Zuma’s behaviour offputting... and a firm assertion of the irreversibility of South Africa’s position in the free market economy’ (Lemon, 2010). Although COPE’s leadership has at no point exhibited a commonality of ideological purpose, with free marketeers such as Lekota aligning with former communists such as Erwin, the conflict between left and right does appear to have at least contributed to its secession from the ruling party.

⁴⁹ GEAR actually included the goal of creating 400,000 jobs per annum, but in practice inflation-targeting took priority.

A third and final feature of ANC succession politics was ethnic mobilisation, by which Zuma sought—after losing the vice-presidency in 2005—to construct a durable support base around his Zulu identity (Russell 2010: 234-236; Gumede 2005: 405-407). This strategy was, however, largely cast aside when COSATU and the SACP threw their weight behind his campaign and was never, in any case, replicated by Mbeki, who enjoyed a considerable degree of support within his birth province (Eastern Cape) but apparently regarded ethnic mobilisation with contempt (Gumede 2005: 407). Indeed, most authors concur that both candidates attracted a broad spectrum of support at Polokwane—where Mbeki’s vote share was much greater than the numerical preponderance of his own ethnic community—and that identity politics played little or no role in COPE’s formation (Russell 2010: 236-237; Booysen 2009: 97). ANC fragmentation cannot, in other words, be traced to ethnic particularism.

In South Africa and Namibia, therefore, dominant-parties have tended to rupture when leadership candidates employ both coercion and divisive social discourses for the purpose of factional mobilisation. To what extent can this insight be applied to Botswana? Superficially at least, the potential for undertaking such a comparison would appear to be slim, since Botswana’s ruling party is unique amongst our three cases in never having experienced a contested presidential succession; two factors appear to account for this lack of formal contestation. First, Botswana’s state president is vested with the power to appoint a vice-president, who automatically succeeds to its highest office in the event of his patron’s mid-term retirement or death; in other words, each of the country’s three most recent presidents has been hand-picked by his predecessor. Second, Botswana’s head of state has a *right* to act as chief executive of the ruling party, since BDP rules state that—when the party is in power—its leadership and the state presidency shall be vested in a single individual (Lotshwao, personal comm., 26 February 2012). Yet such idiosyncracies should not cause the analyst to conclude that factional competition is absent from Botswana’s ruling party or that politicians do not mobilise support in pursuit of

presidential ambition. Indeed, according to Makgala (2006: 125) the ‘key bone of contention is the... presidency. Who attains it, how and with what consequences, is imperative as elite conflict revolves around this’. When asked about the purpose of BDP factionalism, another local commentator told me that: ‘the control of the ruling party is very important. It brings with it many benefits, patronage etc. He who controls the ruling party control the government and all patronage, and Botswana being a single dominant party [system], you can even determine the future or direction of the country if you control the BDP’ (Lotshwao, personal comm., 20 February 2012). In other words, Botswana’s presidential aspirants mobilise factional support, not to win an intra-party election, but to attain a pre-eminent position within the BDP’s Central Committee and thus to strengthen their own case for selection as heir apparent.

BDP factionalism appears to have entered the public arena in 1992, when an official investigation into illegal land acquisition caused Vice-President Peter Mmusi and Minister of Agriculture Daniel Kwelagobe to resign from the government (Good 2008: 54). This unprecedented scandal not only dented Botswana’s reputation for probity, but also triggered a factional struggle in which Mmusi and Kwelagobe fought to wrest control of the ruling party from an ‘A-team’ led by Central Committee member Mompoti Merafhe. At a party congress held in 1993, the Mmusi/Kwelagobe (or ‘Barata-Phathi’)⁵⁰ faction secured a landslide victory over its rival, which captured almost no seats on the Central Committee, although President Masire later restored some balance to party structures by co-opting Merafhe and four of his supporters on to this key decision-making body (Maundeni 1998: 386). A year later Mmusi died, vice-president Festus Mogae—a former civil servant appointed to replace by Masire in 1992—aligned himself with the ‘A-team’ and Ponatshego Kedikilwe, a party stalwart of fierce presidential ambition (Makgala 2006: 117), joined forces with Kwelagobe in the hope of securing Masire’s endorsement as his chosen successor (Makgala 2006: 178). These efforts proved however to be in vain and, after taking office in 1998, President Mogae appointed Lieutenant-General Ian

⁵⁰ This term translates from Setswana as, ‘Those who love the party’.

Khama as his deputy and chosen successor, apparently in the belief that this career soldier and traditional leader could mobilise Bamangwato votes and promote harmony within the ruling party (Makgala 2006: 182). A decade later Khama succeeded to the presidency, but his barely-disguised sympathy for the A-team led to a major humiliation at the BDP's 2009 party congress, when every single position on the Central Committee was captured by members of the Barata-Phathi faction (Lotshwao 2011: 107). Factional infighting intensified to such an extent thereafter that in 2010 Khama's party ruptured for the first time in its forty-eight year history, as a section of Barata-Phathi supporters led by Gomolemo Motswaledi broke away to form the Botswana Movement for Democracy (BMD).

How, then, did the BDP manage to contain its centrifugal pressures for so long and why did this remarkable record unravel in 2010? Unfortunately the BMD's formation occurred too recently for its causes to have been analysed in the literature, although two factors do emerge from an examination of newspaper material and from correspondence with local commentators. First, both factions appear to have mobilised support, not only around personal friendships and loyalties, but also around issues of party organisation: Merafhe attracted many 'newcomers who tried to reform and modernise the party' in a technocratic direction, whilst Kwelagobe and Kedikilwe led 'conservative veterans who saw the newcomers as a threat to their positions' (Makgala 2006: 169). This cleavage 'gave Kwelagobe, with a strong grassroots support base in the party, the upper hand over Merafhe' (Makgala 2006: 116), but also represented a weak agent of electoral mobilisation because relatively few voters, especially on the opposition side, could be expected to exhibit a keen interest in the BDP's internal workings. After President Ian Khama's rise to power, however, national discourses began to reflect a growing concern with political centralisation and control which could be more easily championed not only by the Barata-Phathi faction, but also by a breakaway party.⁵¹

⁵¹ For an example of these discourses, see: *Africa Confidential*, 23 October 2009.

A second feature of BDP succession politics is the way in which public resources have been used, until recently, to mitigate the centrifugal forces unleashed by factional conflict. In 1993, as we have seen, President Masire used his powers of patronage to ameliorate the dejection and resentment felt by Mompoti Merafhe and his supporters after their humiliating defeat in elections to the Central Committee. After taking office in 1998, President Mogae ‘redeployed’ Ponatshego Kedikilwe from the Ministry of Finance to the ‘less prestigious and trouble-prone’ Ministry of Education, presumably in the hope that his arch-rival would be too enamoured with the trappings of office to contemplate secession (Makgala 2006: 117). This tendency to mediate or co-opt—rather than bully or exclude—is perhaps explained by three factors. First, Botswana’s ruling party might not welcome or encourage internal debate, but its political culture has never been characterised by the intolerance and repression witnessed during the liberation struggles in Namibia and South Africa (South African academic, personal comm., 22 December 2011). Second, the BDP’s presidential nomination and its party leadership became vacant at the same juncture, with the result that Botswana managed to avoid the separation of state and party leadership that proved so destructive in Namibia and South Africa. Finally, but most importantly, executive power was exercised with considerable skill in Botswana, where Presidents Masire and Mogae both sought to temper rather than to exploit the centrifugal forces unleashed by BDP succession politics (Lotshwao, personal comm., 20 February 2012); SWAPO’s Sam Nujoma and the ANC’s Jacob Zuma, by contrast, used their authority to mobilise factional support and to weaken, marginalise and neutralise opponents within the party.

When President Ian Khama took power in 2008, however, this tradition of presidential neutrality and independence appears to have been superseded by a policy of favouritism, intervention and coercion. Once Barata-Phathi had captured the BDP’s Central Committee, for example,

[he] devised a strategy to neutralise the Kedikilwe/Kwelagobe victory. He immediately used his powers in the BDP constitution to unilaterally nominate additional members from the Merafhe/Nkate faction, including the faction's leaders, Mompoti Merafhe and Jacob Nkate into the Central Committee. He also appointed seventy-seven Merafhe/Nkate loyalists to various subcommittees of the party... Khama's actions infuriated the Kedikilwe/Kwelagobe faction whose victory was being neutralised (Lotshwao 2011: 107).

When Gomolemo Motswaledi—a prominent Barata-Phathi member and the BDP's newly-elected secretary-general—sought advice on the legality of these actions, Khama recalled him as BDP prospective parliamentary candidate for Gaborone Central and imposed a sixty-day suspension from the party (Lotshwao 2011: 107). According to Lotshwao (2011: 107), this demonstration of presidential intolerance appears to have convinced Motswaledi and his colleagues that splinter party formation represented the only viable means of advancing their interests: 'out of frustration over lack of democracy in the BDP, some members of the Barata-Phathi faction split from the BDP to form the BMD'.

Why have BDP responses to factional competition switched from conciliation and mediation to confrontation over the past four years? As many authors have noted, Botswana's political system is characterised by an extremely high degree of centralisation; its president selects Cabinet ministers, High Court judges, ambassadors, permanent secretaries, senior military officers, four members of parliament, the chief justice, attorney-general, Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) secretary and commissioner of police, whilst exercising disciplinary authority over each of these positions (except in the judiciary) and supervising the budgets allocated to parliament (Otlhogile 1998: 219; Good 2008: 28-33). Indeed, these powers are reinforced by the BDP's subordination to its leader, whose authority to vet, discipline and dismiss candidates for elected office appears to be relatively unfettered. Whilst every politician inevitably operates within—and is constrained by—a set of social, political and economic circumstances peculiar to his or her time and place, Botswana's chief executive therefore enjoys such autonomy from both party and state that his character, assumptions and priorities inevitably shape the manner in

which power is wielded. By mediating between the BDP's warring factions from a relatively neutral position, Presidents Masire and Mogae were able to contain the centrifugal forces unleashed by its repeated succession crises, whereas Ian Khama—a former army officer widely suspected of initiating a considerable militarisation of both state and society—precipitated the BMD's formation by attempting to coerce his opponents into submission. Botswana's ruling party is, in other words, vulnerable to presidential whim and has paid the price—albeit belatedly—for its failure to construct a viable internal democracy.

* * * * *

What comparative lessons might be drawn from this analysis of dominant-party cohesion in Namibia, South Africa and Botswana? Three arguments appear to have wider application. First, dominant-party fragmentation can often be traced to leadership selection, since splinter party formation tends to be initiated by defeated presidential contenders and/or prominent members of a defeated faction. In Namibia, for example, the RDP was established and led by defeated SWAPO presidential aspirant Hidipo Hamutenya, whilst in Botswana and South Africa the BDM and COPE were formed by high-profile supporters of leadership hopeful Daniel Kwelagobe and ousted President Thabo Mbeki respectively. Second, dominant-party fragmentation is more likely to occur when leadership candidates have mobilised highly salient social cleavages than when insignificant or idiosyncratic discourses are activated. Thus in Namibia and South Africa, succession battles involved an activation of extremely divisive narratives—ethnicity and ideology respectively—which exacerbated existing tensions and, at least in the former case, created expectations of successful electoral mobilisation, whilst in Botswana the recourse to technocratic/traditionalist narratives offered no such advantages to a would-be secessionist. Finally, my comparative study suggests that a dominant-party's prospects of emerging from succession crises unscathed depend, to a considerable extent, upon the position adopted by its leader. If presidential authority is used to mediate between a party's warring

factions, as in Botswana under President Masire, defeated leadership candidates and their supporters are likely to conclude that further opportunities for career progression will arise and that, consequently, splinter party formation is unnecessary. If state or party leadership is used to strengthen one faction at the expense of its rivals, however, the balance of risk and reward associated with splinter party formation can be expected to shift decisively in favour of secession. In Namibia, President Nujoma's marginalisation and exclusion of the Hamutenya faction contributed greatly to the eventual rupture of his party, whilst in Botswana President Khama's support for the 'A-team' caused a section of the Barata-Phathi faction to defect from the ruling party and, in South Africa, President Mbeki's recall acted as a catalyst for the formation of a breakaway party. These purges have been attributed to several factors: in Namibia and South Africa, the suspicion of dissent fostered by liberation-era politics and, most importantly, a temporary separation of party and state leadership greatly increased the chances that a defeated candidate would be victimised, whilst in Namibia and Botswana the lack of internal democracy created space for an autocratic leader to distribute state resources as he deemed appropriate. If Africa's political parties are to improve their prospects of emerging from a succession battle unscathed, in other words, internal democracy must be deepened and leaders prevented from seeking to retain party office after renouncing state power.

Dominant-Party Motivation

For many scholars, political parties represent a 'weak link' in the chain of African democratisation. According to Manning (2005: 718-719), parties are supposed 'to rein in divisive, expansive, even explosive, social forces unleashed by socio-economic modernisation processes. In many African states it is just the opposite—elites... do not represent social cleavages so much as manage and manipulate them'. Yet relatively few attempts have so far been made to address a seemingly basic question: what do African parties wish to achieve? In chapter four, I argued that

SWAPO is unique amongst Namibian parties in having any prospect—or, indeed, any expectation—of exercising power and that, consequently, its motivation must be studied in isolation. The present discussion is therefore concerned with exploring dominant-party motivation in Namibia, South Africa and Botswana, whilst the following section analyses opposition motivation.

In Namibia, as noted in chapter four, SWAPO inherited at independence a bureaucracy, security establishment and judiciary dominated by former servants of the apartheid regime, for whom the liberation movement represented, at best, an unknown quantity and, at worst, an object of undisguised hostility. Perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, President Nujoma's first government launched a process of wholesale Africanisation in which colonial-era officials were replaced by black appointees considered loyal to the new dispensation, including former SWAPO security chief Solomon 'Jesus' Hawala, who served as commander-in-chief of the Namibian Defence Force; former SWAPO military commander Peter Tsheehama, who led the Central Intelligence Service; and former SWAPO guerrilla fighter Sebastian Ndeitunga, who served as inspector-general of the Namibian Police. Many of these political recruits were to demonstrate a high level of professionalism, competence and probity, carrying out their duties with considerable honesty and skill, but a significant proportion also proved themselves willing and able to emulate some politicians in abusing public office for the purpose of private gain. By the second decade of independence, therefore, SWAPO's destiny had become inextricably intertwined with that of a 'state bourgeoisie'—comprising politicians, senior civil servants, parastatal directors, security chiefs and black entrepreneurs—defined by its proximity to power and dependence upon continue dominant-party rule.

These developments have been to some extent replicated in South Africa, where the ANC also inherited at liberation a civil service, security establishment, judiciary and formal sector economy deeply tainted by past association, whether direct or indirect, with the apartheid regime.

Its response was twofold. On the one hand, as in Namibia, the government launched a programme of wholesale Africanisation in which white officials were replaced by liberation stalwarts and other 'politically reliable' figures appointed on the basis of partisan allegiance rather than professional merit (Beinart 2001: 302). Thus former ANC parliamentarian Pravin Gordhan served as deputy commissioner of the South African Revenue Service, former ANC military commander Siphiwe Nyanda succeeded Georg Meiring as commander-in-chief of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), former labour minister Tito Mboweni worked as governor of the South African Reserve Bank, former ANC negotiator Bulelani Ngcuka acted as National Director of Public Prosecutions and former ANC youth league president Jackie Selebi worked first as director-general of foreign affairs and, later, as commissioner of police. According to Seekings and Nattrass (2005: 313), the proportion of African public sector managers increased from 30.0 per cent in 1995 to 51.1 per cent in 2001, whilst the proportion of black⁵² senior managers rose from 37.3 per cent to 54.5 per cent over that same period. As Beinart (2001: 303) notes, therefore,

Political power has changed dramatically and irrevocably in South Africa. There has been a rapid, tangible formation of a new political class, largely but not only African, straddling parliament, bureaucracy, provincial government, parastatals, commissions, defence force, and many related research and advisory institutions. Identification with a successful political struggle, and with rectifying past injustices, has provided a shared purpose; so has awareness of power and its possibilities.

On the other hand, post-apartheid South Africa has gone much further than Namibia in developing a Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policy capable of encouraging black entrepreneurialism, facilitating increased share ownership and, thus, of deracialising local capitalism. Its approach has been to enact legislation stipulating that all businesses with a turnover of more than R5m (US\$725,000) must be rated against a BEE scorecard, that black-

⁵² This term refers to Africans, Coloureds and Indians.

owned companies should receive preferential treatment when tendering for public contracts and that certain key industries, such as mining and tourism, should devise a 'charter' describing empowerment targets (Seekings 2009: 142), whilst encouraging increased black share ownership through privatisation or commercialisation of state assets. Although ANC membership is not a prerequisite to receiving preferential treatment, many leading members of the ruling party have profited hugely from the award of public tenders, licences and other opportunities for private accumulation, including human settlements minister Tokyo Sexwale, former COSATU general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa, ANC treasurer-general Mathew Phosa, former provincial premier Popo Molefe and former presidential spokesman Saki Macozoma. As Seekings (2009: 149) has argued,

Much of the ANC leadership is preoccupied with sharing in the opportunities for rapid financial enrichment through BEE. It is not surprising that critics wonder whether their enthusiasm for sharing in these opportunities might have led political elites to enact the policies that create these very opportunities. No other social group has the pervasive influence of the aspiring black bourgeoisie... The political elite is now too entangled in capitalism either to allow too much power to anti-capitalist critics on its left or to go too far down the Zimbabwean route of undermining capitalist production itself.

In Botswana, by contrast, the BDP's path to power was characterised, not by mass mobilisation or revolutionary violence, but by collaboration: its formation represented a conservative reaction to the emergence of radical black nationalism and attracted considerable support from the colonial state, which even appointed four 'trainee ministers' to the protectorate's executive council (Picard 1987: 138). At independence, BDP leader Sir Seretse Khama and his associates therefore exhibited no discernible hostility towards the expatriate personnel managing Botswana's civil service and, indeed, vigorously resisted calls for rapid indigenisation; in 1967, the president went so far as to declare publicly that 'we would never sacrifice efficiency on the altar of localisation... no-one can charge me with going back on promises to localise the service

at a faster pace' (Samatar 1999: 80). Posts were 'localised' (BDP leaders even eschewed the terms 'indigenisation' and 'Africanisation') only when suitable Batswana had been trained and, remarkably, all appointees—from permanent secretaries to middle-managers, teachers, doctors and nurses—were strictly prohibited from engaging in either partisan or commercial activity. By 1980, when Khama died and was succeeded by Sir Quett Masire, Botswana's civil service had attained such a degree of professionalism and institutional autonomy that its influence over policy formulation was often considered to be greater even than that of the ruling party (Ayeni 2002: 207).

This informal partnership was undoubtedly facilitated by a confluence of attitudes, assumptions and class interests at the highest levels of the state, since BDP leaders and senior bureaucrats tended to hail from a small, wealthy and predominantly agrarian elite which regarded state power as a tool partly for enhancing its own social privilege (Picard 1985: 165). In 1975, for example, the government launched a Tribal Grazing Land Policy which 'privatized communal land resources and in the process offered big opportunities for ambitious cattlemen. Inside a decade, between seventeen-hundred and two thousand cattle ranches were established. More than 12 percent of tribal land was zoned for commercial ranches, while almost no land was reserved for the rural poor' (Good 2010: 282). Perhaps unsurprisingly, Picard (1987: 147) concluded during the mid-1980s that Botswana's political system was 'dominated by (and policy is set in the interest of) a coalition of wealthy, well-educated, cattle-owning political elites'.

Yet even before these lines had been published, a new generation of BDP politicians and bureaucrats had persuaded the government to revoke its ban on engaging in commercial activity, thereby heralding a period of heightened accumulation in which government ministers, parliamentarians and civil servants acquired interests in real estate, parastatals, trust funds, banks and other enterprises (Neocosmos 2002: 54). Financial mismanagement and corruption had been rare during the first two decades of independence, but from the early 1990s a series of scandals shook the government to its core and tarnished Botswana's hard-earned reputation for probity.

First to emerge was the Kgabo Report on illegal land transactions in Mogoditshane and other villages around Gaborone, as noted above,⁵³ which found that vice-president Peter Mmusi had abused his power as local government minister and violated the Tribal Land Act by overseeing a property transfer to his friend, minister of agriculture Daniel Kwelagobe (Good 2008: 50-51; Molomo 1998: 207). Subsequent revelations indicated that public money had been squandered by a fraudulent supplier of school books and by the Botswana Housing Corporation (Good 2010: 283), but perhaps most damaging to the government's reputation was a revelation that, after writing off debts owed by Cabinet ministers, members of parliament and other prominent supporters of the ruling party (Jefferis 1998: 328), the National Development Bank (NDB) had come close to bankruptcy. As Good (2008: 51-52) notes, the NDB's most prominent debtors included minister of presidential affairs Lt.-Gen. Mompoti Merafhe, who owed P47,000 (US\$6,000); minister of commerce and industry Ponatshego Kedikilwe, who borrowed P640,000 (US\$81,000)—of which one-third was in arrears; minister of labour and home affairs Patrick Balopi, whose company owed P1.1m (US\$139,000); and President Masire himself, who owed P546,000 (US\$69,000). In all, BDP parliamentarians were estimated to owe the Bank a combined total of P30m (US\$3.8m), or three-quarters of its accumulated loss (Good 2008: 51-52).

Thus, Botswana might have succeeded after independence in constructing and reproducing a civil service largely free from political interference, but this separation of power always disguised a commonality of purpose and has, in any case, been undermined in recent years by an increased tendency to exploit public office for personal gain. As Makgala has argued (2006: 147-197), Botswana's political and bureaucratic elites:

are fighting to gain or retain power, money (wealth) and influence... Ascription and entitlement, as played out in the ruling BDP power politics, have negatively affected merit and productivity in the public service... Those elites holding the reins of power—especially through the ruling party—use the state political machinery to reward those closest to them.

⁵³ See the comparative analysis of BDP factionalism.

In Namibia, South Africa and Botswana, therefore, dominant-party rule appears to have been characterised by a process of class formation in which senior politicians and administrators appropriate public resources for the purpose of private gain. These outcomes have been reached, however, by two distinct paths. On the one hand, SWAPO and the ANC both inherited a bureaucracy, security establishment and judiciary tainted by its responsibility for apartheid-era atrocities and, fearing obstructionism or even military intervention, launched a programme of fast-track Africanisation in which liberation stalwarts were ‘parachuted’ into the public service. As vacancies were filled on the basis of partisan allegiance rather than professional merit and appointees were instructed to embrace the ruling party’s ‘transformation agenda’, the distinction between party, government and state began to break down and the tendency for public servants to abuse state resources increased. In Botswana, on the other hand, BDP leaders from Seretse Khama downwards enjoyed a good relationship with the colonial state and resisted demands for rapid Africanisation, preferring instead to appoint officials on the basis of merit and thus to construct a bureaucracy relatively free from political interference. These practices obscured, however, a confluence of elite interests which, as the state apparatus expanded, opportunities for cattle ownership diminished and BDP dominance became more entrenched, led to an erosion of the distinction between party, government and state, a decline in the quality of governance and the emergence of a state bourgeoisie intent upon appropriating public resources. SWAPO, the ANC and the BDP have, in other words, reached the same destination by two different routes, a phenomenon known as equifinality which, as noted in my introductory chapter (Bennett and George 2004: 19-91), is most readily detected through case study work.

Opposition Motivation

For many scholars, presidential elections represent the principal arena of party competition in Africa. According to van de Walle (2003: 315), for example, elites’ tendency to regard the state

‘as the ultimate prize puts an enormous premium on competition for the presidency, control of which is most important for patronage and rent seeking. Relative to the executive branch, party competition in the legislative branch is a sideshow’. In chapter five, I demonstrated that such arguments have only limited resonance in Namibia, where opposition parties tend to regard parliamentary representation as the most important prize in politics and to denigrate other tiers of government, except perhaps local council office, as little more than a costly distraction. This prioritisation of parliamentary office is evident, not only in the interview and newspaper material collected during my fieldwork, but also in the historical record: no active party has ever failed to contest a parliamentary election and no opposition leader has occupied a regional or local council seat rather than legislative office, whilst Kosie Pretorius’ Monitor Action Group (MAG) repeatedly declined even to field candidates at the presidential or sub-national level. Such behaviour suggests that, in Namibia at least, legislative elections represent the principal arena of party competition, whilst presidential, regional and local council contests are of relatively little importance.

To what extent are these insights relevant beyond Namibia? In Botswana, opposition leaders also appear to regard legislative representation as the most significant prize in electoral politics: each BNF, BCP and Botswana Alliance Movement (BAM) leader has chosen to contest National Assembly rather than district council office, whilst all six of the minority parties active in 2009 fielded candidates only at the parliamentary level. This strategic orientation is not, however, entirely replicated in South Africa, where fourteen parties competed exclusively at the sub-national level in 2009 and where several national politicians have chosen to occupy *provincial* rather than parliamentary office; NNP president Marthinus van Schalkwyk and DA leader Helen Zille, for example, have both served as premier of the Western Cape, whilst UCDP founder Lucas Mangope and MF president Amichand Rajbansi took office in the North West and KwaZulu-Natal provincial assemblies respectively. Such cases indicate that—whilst NP president F.W. de Klerk, DP leader Tony Leon, COPE chairman ‘Terror’ Lekota, IFP founder

Mangosuthu Buthelezi, UDM president Bantu Holomisa, VF+ leader Pieter Mulder and ACDP president Kenneth Meshoe chose to serve at the parliamentary rather than sub-national level—provincial assembly office represents a considerably more attractive prize in South Africa than in either Namibia or Botswana. My final comparative analysis seeks, therefore, to explain this cross-national variation by exploring three of the arguments outlined in chapter five.

The first contention suggests that, when popular support is sufficiently scattered for electoral system design to exert a significant effect upon the distribution of political representation, minority parties are likely to seek office at whichever tier of government operates the most permissive electoral system. In Table 6.10 below, I use several variables to assess electoral system permissiveness: the number of representatives elected in each voting district (district magnitude); the percentage of electoral support needed to win a single seat (district quota); and whether a largest remainder system is employed.

Table 6.10: Electoral System Design in Namibia, South Africa and Botswana					
Country	Tier of Government	Electoral System Type	District Magnitude	District Quota (%)	Largest Remainder?
Namibia	President	Majoritarian	1	>50.0	No
	National Assembly	Closed party list	72	1.4	Yes
	Regional Authority	Plurality	1	Plurality	No
	Local Authority	Closed party list	5-15	6.7-20.0	Yes
South Africa	President	-	-	-	-
	National Assembly	Closed party list	400	0.25	Yes
	Provincial Assembly	Closed party list	30-80	3.3-1.25	Yes
	Local Authority	Mixed	3-130	0.77-33.0	Yes
Botswana	President	-	-	-	-
	National Assembly	Plurality	1	Plurality	No
	Local Authority	Plurality	1	Plurality	No

As these data indicate, Namibia's adoption of a distinct electoral system at each tier of government has created a powerful incentive to contest office at the National Assembly level,

where representation is guaranteed to any party with 1.4 per cent of the popular vote and where the largest party failing to reach this target is co-opted by means of a largest remainder system. In Botswana, parliamentary and local authority contests are held under the same (plurality) system, although ministers' power to 'swamp' opposition-run councils with BDP appointees has arguably created a disincentive to seek office at the municipal level (Holm 1987: 131; Healey 1995: 17). In South Africa, as noted above, an extraordinarily permissive electoral system has been adopted for use at the parliamentary level, where any party securing 0.25 per cent of the vote is guaranteed representation and where even this diminutive quota is reduced by means of a largest remainder system. Nevertheless, provincial assembly office can also be attained with relatively little popular support in South Africa, since district magnitudes not only range from a modest 3.3 per cent in the sparsely-populated Northern Cape to a mere 1.25 per cent in KwaZulu-Natal, but are further diminished by means of a largest remainder system. In 2009, therefore, Pieter Mulder's VF+ secured a seat in the Free State with 2.01 per cent of provincial support, whilst Kenneth Meshoe's ACDP captured a seat in KwaZulu-Natal and Patricia de Lille's ID took a seat in Gauteng with 0.68 per cent and 0.61 per cent of the vote respectively. South Africa's electoral architecture has created an incentive to contest National Assembly office, in other words, but this inducement is not as strong as in Namibia and Botswana, where sub-national office can be either attained *much* more easily than parliamentary representation or rendered unattractive by central government interference.

A second argument made in chapter five is that, since electoral mobilisation requires a considerable degree of expenditure, opposition parties tend to seek office at whichever tier of government offers the best opportunities for raising finance. In Namibia, this imperative has tended to encourage electoral contestation at the National Assembly level, since parliamentary parties are entitled to a state subsidy, membership subscriptions are rarely collected and sub-national authorities are insufficiently autonomous to extract donations from the business

community. In Botswana, successive administrations have refused either to create a public funding mechanism or to devolve power, with the result that each opposition party relies primarily upon a fixed levy paid by office-bearers into its treasury (Somolekae 2006: 9); since parliamentarians contribute a much larger sum than councillors, as noted above, this practice has also created an incentive for parties to contest National Assembly office. In South Africa, parliamentary representation is closely associated with two important sources of finance: a public funding scheme in which nine-tenths of allotted money is distributed at National Assembly level (with the remainder allocated at provincial level); and an informal arrangement whereby Standard Bank, Anglo-American and other major corporations give money to each party in accordance with its share of parliamentary office (Robinson and Brümmer 2006: 16). These revenue streams are often complemented by donations, membership subscriptions, a levy on elected officials, fund-raising events or, in the ACDP's case, a tithe on members' income (Lodge 2001: 58), but nevertheless represent a valuable prize and, therefore, a considerable incentive to contest office at the parliamentary level.

Scholars have tended to regard provincial and municipal government, by contrast, as presenting few opportunities to raise political finance in South Africa. According to Piombo (2009: 46, 135), for example, 'the weak status and uncertain future of provinces made them less attractive arenas for political contestation [than parliament]... With the excessive nationalisation [i.e., centralisation] of power in the South African political system, provinces did not provide patronage bases' capable of mobilising either electoral or donor support in 1999. Such perspectives are undoubtedly correct in arguing that South Africa's political system is characterised by a limited degree of devolution, since ninety-five per cent of provincial government revenue is derived from the centre (Piombo 2005: 455), but they nevertheless overlook a number of cases in which sub-national office has been used for the purpose of raising money. In 2006, for example, former Western Cape MEC and NNP official David Malatsi was

convicted of having received a R100,000 (US\$12,360) party donation in exchange for regulatory approval of a proposed golf estate at Plettenberg Bay (Robinson and Brümmer 2006: 3; Schroeder, *IOL News*, 12 December 2006). Six years earlier, the DA had become embroiled in a scandal when Western Cape MEC Leon Markowitz solicited a R500,000 (US\$61,805) donation from German fraudster Jürgen Harksen, who apparently hoped in return ‘to be seen with prominent persons and... obtain benefit therefrom’ (Western Cape Government 2002: 194). Critics might argue that such cases represent an exception rather than the rule, since further scandals have so far been avoided in the Western Cape; clear evidence of both open and systematic abuse of power has however emerged in KwaZulu-Natal, where the IFP formed a governing majority (either alone or alongside the ANC) until 2004. According to Lodge (2001: 56-57), Buthelezi’s party extracted money not only from sugar plantations and illegal gambling operations, but also from foreign businessmen—such as John Aspinall and James Goldsmith—seeking to secure casino licences. Such practices suggest that, whilst parliamentary office undoubtedly represents the most important source of opposition funding in South Africa, scholars may have under-estimated the extent to which sub-national government can be used to augment this income.

The final argument made in chapter five is that opposition parties seek office at whichever tier of government offers the best opportunities for attracting favourable media attention and, thus, for retaining electoral support. In Namibia, this imperative has tended to encourage party competition at the parliamentary level, since executive office is beyond reach and sub-national authorities are unable either to enact by-laws or to attract competent personnel. In Botswana, media activity and its effects have so far generated relatively little research (Zaffiro, 1993), but a replication of Namibia’s incentive structure can perhaps be detected in the BDP’s monopolisation of executive office and unwillingness to decentralise power, as well as in the paucity of competent, prominent or well-educated officials at municipal level (Picard 1987: 190).

In South Africa, parliamentary office also provides an excellent platform from which to mobilise electoral support; former DP leader Tony Leon and his colleagues, for example, established such a reputation for aggression, energy and dynamism after 1994 that white voters, attracted by the prospect of ‘robust opposition’, deserted the NNP in droves (Beinart 2001: 297). Yet a closer examination of South Africa’s political system suggests that provincial assembly office can, under two particular circumstances, offer superior opportunities to communicate with the electorate.

First, when an opposition party takes power at the sub-national level, as the IFP, NNP and DA have all done since 1994, its capacity to command media attention and thus to disseminate electoral narratives is substantially increased. Shortly before assuming office as premier of the Western Cape, for example, DA leader Helen Zille told an interviewer that,

In our attempts to establish multi-party democracy in the new South Africa, it is essential to win power wherever we can, so that we can demonstrate that our policies make a real difference to the lives of all the people... I think it is fair to say that most people believe we are doing a significantly better job (for all) than the previous administration [in Cape Town]. People can now compare progress and development under administrations led by the ANC on the one hand, and the DA on the other (World Mayor, *Cape Town mayor Helen Zille*, 2008).

This strategy, by which Zille and her associates hope to create a ‘flagship’ authority capable of showcasing their administrative competence, can be traced partly to Zille’s reputation for probity, energy and skill,⁵⁴ but primarily to the devolution of power mandated by South Africa’s quasi-federal constitution and its accompanying legislation. Given that provincial and municipal governments are commonly regarded in South Africa as representing little more than an appendage of central government (Piombo 2009: 41), such an argument might appear to be, at best, counter-intuitive. Yet when an opposition party declares that sub-national government will be transformed into a beacon of competence, this ambition presupposes the capacity to effect change; service delivery can only be improved and economic growth stimulated when local

⁵⁴ In 2008, Zille pipped some 820 contenders to receive the World Mayor of the Year award (World Mayor, 2008).

priorities are reshaped, by-laws enacted, public resources redistributed and personnel recruited. In Namibia, regional councils are vested with none of these powers—indeed, their only statutory role is to offer advice on development planning—and could not therefore be used to replicate the DA strategy of establishing a reputation for competence, compassion and efficiency. In South Africa, by contrast, sub-national authorities do wield sufficient power for public services to be improved and can therefore, when captured by a (competent) opposition party, offer excellent opportunities for communicating with the electorate.

The second factor distinguishing South Africa from Namibia and Botswana is that, when an opposition party draws electoral support from a single province or locality, its communication strategy is often best served by holding office at the sub-national level. Thus UCDP president Lucas Mangope and the late MF president Amichand Rajbansi chose to occupy provincial assembly (North West and KwaZulu-Natal respectively) rather than parliamentary seats, even though neither party stood any chance of forming a majority at the sub-national level and, indeed, Rajbansi had once served as a member of the apartheid parliament. By taking office at the provincial level, however, both men were able to reproduce networks of personal loyalty, to attract local media attention and to direct patronage resources towards key sections of the population; Mangope, for example, managed to retain his position as *kgosi* of the Motsweda Bahurutshe-Boo-Manyane traditional community, whilst Rajbansi used his power as KwaZulu-Natal's MEC for sports and recreation to construct leisure facilities and recruit Indians into his department (Minority Front, 2008, 2011). If either party leader had chosen to enter parliament in faraway Cape Town rather than to serve as provincial legislator, his capacity to activate local contacts, to promote sectional interests and thereby to reproduce electoral support would have been significantly diminished.

* * * * *

This fourth and final comparative section has sought to explain, using a conceptualisation of opposition motivation developed in chapter five, why sub-national office should be regarded as a more valuable electoral prize in South Africa than in either Namibia or Botswana. My discussion has raised three points of wider significance. First, when opposition support is characterised by spatial dispersion, a plurality system is employed in sub-national elections and the degree of administrative decentralisation is low, as in Namibia and Botswana, opposition parties can be expected to compete exclusively or almost exclusively at the parliamentary level. Second, when a system of proportional representation is employed in sub-national elections and the degree of administrative decentralisation is high, party competition is likely *ceteris paribus* to be most intense at the provincial or regional level. Finally, when a system of proportional representation is employed in sub-national elections and the degree of administrative decentralisation is only moderately high, as in South Africa, opposition parties will compete strongly at multiple tiers of government.

Contribution and Research Agenda

As noted above, the past four comparative analyses—on electoral volatility, party cohesion, dominant-party motivation and opposition motivation—have been designed to test the validity and wider relevance of hypotheses developed during my work on Namibia. These findings are used here to outline the principal contributions of my project and to highlight opportunities for further research.

In chapter two, I built upon van de Walle's (2003: 302-303) characterisation of a typical African party system—with its combination of dominance and opposition fragmentation—to measure the degree of opposition volatility at each National Assembly election held in Namibia since 1994. My findings confirmed that a significant proportion of opposition voters can be

expected to shift between parties at any given election and that three factors have contributed to this instability: electoral system design, party weakness and ethno-racial particularism, all of which serve to encourage splinter group formation. By testing these hypotheses against the statistical data and secondary literature on South Africa and Botswana, where differences in electoral behaviour do appear to correlate with variation in the rate of party formation, I have demonstrated the wider relevance of my arguments and thereby contributed to the emerging literature on political parties and party systems in Africa.

In chapter three, I argued that leadership selection contests—rather than parliamentary candidate selection, as Mac Giollabhuí (2011) has suggested—represent the principal arena of factional competition in Namibia. This hypothesis gave rise, first, to the only comparative analysis of SWAPO, CoD and DTA factionalism yet undertaken and, second, to an original conceptualisation of party cohesion in which leadership candidates' activation of highly divisive issues and coercion of opponents is predicted to increase the potential for splinter party formation. By applying these insights to dominant-party factionalism in South Africa and Botswana, I demonstrated not only that Namibia's ruling party is far from alone in struggling to contain the centrifugal forces unleashed by succession politics, but also that a higher standard of internal party democracy might serve to constrain capricious incumbent presidents and thereby to diminish the potential for further schism.

Chapter four began with an outline of the academic consensus on party motivation in Africa, during which I related a widespread perception that politicians are more interested in stealing state resources than in pursuing ideological objectives, representing interests or promoting democratic consolidation. My analysis of dominant-party motivation in post-independence Namibia challenges this assumption in two respects. First, SWAPO's strategy of elite accumulation has been shown to revolve, not around legalised gangsterism, but around a formally legitimate process in which public resources are distributed on the basis of partisan

affiliation or political connection rather than professional merit. Second, Namibia's political leadership has enacted policies designed, at least in part, to facilitate popular emancipation, development and empowerment; its old-age pension scheme, for example, is one of the few such systems to have been created in Africa, whilst its lavish expenditure on public services has served to widen access and diminish the racial inequalities inherited from white minority rule. In this final chapter, I have demonstrated that SWAPO's determination to foster and defend elite privilege is replicated in South Africa and Botswana, where dominant-party rule has also been characterised by an erosion of the boundaries between party, government and state.

In chapter five, I argued that conventional perspectives on opposition motivation—which portray African parties as driven by the desire to capture executive office through election or co-optation—have limited utility in Namibia, where opposition politicians stand no chance of either winning or forming a coalition with the presidency. This insight gave rise to an innovative conceptualisation of opposition motivation in which electoral strategy is attributed to four key variables: electoral system design, public sector remuneration structure, party finance and publicity generation. In Namibia and Botswana, therefore, parliamentary representation is regarded as the most valuable prize in electoral politics because no other tier of government offers a comparable level of access, pay, party funding and media attention, whilst in South Africa provincial and municipal office can—under particular circumstances—offer superior opportunities to communicate with the electorate.

Given that party research is still in its infancy across much of the African continent, where many countries have yet to attract a single publication on electoral politics, this thesis has created two avenues for further study. Perhaps the most obvious such possibility would involve rigorous, fieldwork-based research on opposition volatility, party cohesion and party motivation in South Africa and Botswana, using interview and archive material to explore the events described and arguments outlined here. Such a project could be undertaken within either a

comparative or a case study framework but would undoubtedly offer invaluable opportunities, not only to reappraise the past, but also to examine a host of contemporary developments—such as the emerging succession struggles in Namibia and South Africa—for which insufficient scholarly analysis is presently available. By exploring the dependent variables and employing the methodological approaches adopted here, in other words, an investigator might generate insights useful not only to theorists interested in conceptualising political party activity, but also to empiricists concerned with exploring and explaining specific events in each of the three countries concerned.

An additional, but related avenue for further research would involve extending my conceptual insights to other countries in Africa, perhaps by performing a case study or by launching a small-*n* comparative project consistent with Mill's Method of Difference.⁵⁵ Suitable candidates for such a project might include Mozambique, where single-party dominance has perhaps prevented opposition politicians from aspiring to executive office and where in 2004 the ruling party survived a presidential succession battle intact; Nigeria, where single-party dominance and federalism might be expected to encourage party competition at the sub-national level; and Zambia, where the ruling party's failure to resolve a succession crisis in 2001 resulted in its rupture and eventual loss of power. Any investigation of this type would serve, not only to test the conceptual models developed here, but also to augment the burgeoning empirical literature on electoral behaviour, factionalism and party motivation in Africa.

⁵⁵ For a description of this method, see the introductory chapter.

Appendix I: Individuals Interviewed for this Research Project

All People's Party (APP)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Interview Date</u>
Mwilima, D.	Male	Deputy Secretary-General	Katima Mulilo	8 November 2009
Shixwameni, I.	Male	President	Windhoek	18 May 2009
Interview A	Male	National executive committee member	Windhoek	10 June 2009

Congress of Democrats (CoD)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Interview Date</u>
Gawaseb, H.	Male	Congress delegate	Swakopmund	27 October 2009
Gurirab, T.	Male	Secretary-General	Windhoek	3 June 2009
Ipumpu, K.	Female	Secretary-General, Young Democrats	Windhoek	17 June 2009
Katjiuongua, M.	Male	National executive member	Windhoek	15 July 2009
Maass, A.	Male	Regional councillor	Swakopmund	30 October 2009
Mubuenwa, K.	Female	Local councillor	Katima Mulilo	11 November 2009
Namises, R.	Female	National executive member	Windhoek	19 May 2009
Schimming-Chase, N.	Female	Vice-President	Windhoek	4 November 2009
Schultz, H.	Male	Municipal councillor	Windhoek	16 June 2009
Tjirera, N.	Male	Secretary, Young Democrats	Windhoek	8 July 2009
Ulunga, B.	Male	President	Windhoek	7 June 2009
Interview B	Male	National Working Group member	Windhoek	4 June 2009
Interview C	Female	National Working Group member	Windhoek	9 June 2009
Interview D	Female	National Working Group member	Windhoek	10 June 2009
Interview E	Female	Former National Working Group member	Windhoek	2 June 2009
Interview E2	Male	National Working Group member	Windhoek	14 July 2009
Interview E3	Female	National Working Group member	Windhoek	17 June 2009
Interview E4	Female	Former regional chairperson	Windhoek	2 November 2009

Democratic Party of Namibia (DPN)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Interview Date</u>
Isak, A.	Male	Secretary-General	Windhoek	20 November 2009

Democratic Turnhalle Alliance of Namibia (DTA)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Interview Date</u>
Gende, A.	Male	Former Secretary-General	Windhoek	2 June 2009
Katjijova, R.	Male	Secretary for Information and Publicity	Windhoek	25 June 2009
Kaura, K.	Male	President	Windhoek	18 May 2009
Moongo, P.	Male	Vice-President	Windhoek	15 May 2009
Interview F	Male	National executive committee member	Windhoek	27 May 2009
Interview G	Male	Youth league activist	Windhoek	1 July 2009
Interview H	Male	Youth league activist	Windhoek	1 July 2009

Monitor Action Group (MAG)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Interview Date</u>
Pretorius, J.	Male	Chairman	Windhoek	13 May 2009
Viljoen, J.	Male	Member of Parliament	Windhoek	23 June 2009

National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Interview Date</u>
Kandundu, B.	Male	City councillor	Windhoek	16 July 2009
Mbai, A.	Male	Secretary-General	Windhoek	23 June 2009
Riruako, Kuaima	Male	President	Windhoek	6 May 2009
Tjiuiko, Alfred	Male	Chief Whip	Windhoek	18 June 2009

Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Interview Date</u>
Hamutenya, H.	Male	President	Windhoek	11 May 2009
Kanime, P.	Male	Secretary of Transport and Logistics	Windhoek	24 June 2009
Nambinga, J.	Male	Secretary of Information and Publicity	Windhoek	4 June 2009
Nyamu, J.	Male	Secretary-General	Windhoek	5 June 2009
Unnoovene, A.	Male	Secretary, Erongo Region	Swakopmund	27 October 2009
Interview I	Male	National executive committee member	Windhoek	3 June 2009
Interview J	Male	National executive committee member	Windhoek	27 May 2009
Interview K	Female	National executive committee member	Windhoek	26 May 2009
Interview L	Male	National executive committee member	Windhoek	23 June 2009
Interview M	Female	Regional secretary	Windhoek	1 June 2009
Interview M2	Male	Constituency organiser	Windhoek	9 July 2009
Interview M3	Male	National executive committee member	Windhoek	11 May 2009

Republican Party (RP)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Interview Date</u>
Gaeseb, T.	Male	Acting Secretary-General	Windhoek	29 June 2009
Gowases, C.	Female	National Organiser	Windhoek	22 June 2009
Mudge, H.	Male	President	Windhoek	14 May 2009
Smit, N.	Male	City councillor	Windhoek	19 November 2009

South West Africa National Union (SWANU)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Interview Date</u>
Maamberua, U.	Male	President	Windhoek	26 June 2009

South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Interview Date</u>
Geingob, H.	Male	Vice-President	Windhoek	16 July 2009
Gurirab, T-B	Male	Former Prime Minister	Windhoek	25 November 2009
Kalomoh, T.	Male	Presidential adviser on foreign affairs	Windhoek	15 July 2009
Mbumba, N.	Male	Deputy Secretary-General	Windhoek	25 November 2009
Ngurare, E.	Male	Secretary, Youth League	Windhoek	19 July 2009
Interview N	Male	Cabinet minister	Windhoek	8 July 2009
Interview O	Male	Regional co-ordinator	Windhoek	19 November 2009
Interview P	Female	Regional secretary, Youth League	Swakopmund	29 October 2009
Interview Q	Male	Regional secretary, Youth League	Katima Mulilo	9 November 2009
Interview R	Male	Journalist	Windhoek	10 July 2009

United Democratic Front (UDF)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Interview Date</u>
!Auxab, A.	Male	Regional councillor	Windhoek	10 June 2009
Claassen, W.	Male	City councillor	Windhoek	30 June 2009
//Garoëb, J.	Male	President	Windhoek	18 June 2009
Goreseb, M.	Male	Member of Parliament	Windhoek	8 June 2009
Kharuchas, V.	Female	Branch secretary, Katutura Central	Windhoek	13 July 2009
Naimab, C.	Male	Co-ordinator, Khomas Region	Windhoek	6 July 2009
Interview S	Female	Regional co-ordinator	Swakopmund	1 November 2009

Other Interviews

<u>Name</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Interview Date</u>
Lister, G.	Female	Editor, <i>The Namibian</i>	Windhoek	10 July 2009
Ya Nangoloh, P.	Male	Director, NamRights	Windhoek	17 July 2009
Habib, A.	Male	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Johannesburg	Oxford	1 March 2012
Interview T	Female	Journalist	Windhoek	15 June 2009
Interview U	Male	Journalist	Windhoek	16 June 2009
Interview V	Male	Journalist	Windhoek	23 June 2009
Interview W	Male	Civil society activist	Windhoek	7 May 2009
			Windhoek	24 June 2009
			Windhoek	20 November 2009
Interview X	Male	Researcher	Windhoek	9 June 2009
Interview Y	Male	Academic	Windhoek	8 May 2009
Interview Z	Female	Hotel worker	Windhoek	12 July 2009
Interview A2	Female	Guest house worker	Windhoek	27 May 2009

Appendix II: Electoral Volatility in Namibia, South Africa and Botswana

Party Formation Rate in Namibia, 1994-2009				
Indicator	2009	2004	1999	Mean value over three elections
Pedersen score (all parties)	13.3	7.6	12.4	11.1
Pedersen score (opposition only)	53.9	32.2	43.0	43.0
Number of registered parties	12	8	7	9
Number of new parties	4	3	1	2.7
Number of new parties to secure parliamentary representation	2	2	1	1.7
Number of new parties to win more than 0.25 per cent of vote	2	3	1	2

Source: Own calculations, from Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa, 2011.

Party Formation Rate in South Africa, 1994-2009				
Indicator	2009	2004	1999	Mean value over three elections
Pedersen score (all parties)	12.0	18.1	17.7	15.9
Pedersen score (opposition only)	26.6	50.9	43.3	40.3
Number of registered parties	14	8	7	9.7
Number of new parties	2	1	4	2.3
Number of new parties to secure parliamentary representation	1	1	4	2.0
Number of new parties to win more than 0.25 per cent of vote	14	8	7	9.7

Source: Own calculations, from Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa, 2011.

Party Formation Rate in Botswana, 1994-2009				
Indicator	2009	2004	1999	Mean value over three elections
Pedersen score (all parties)	6.1	7.4	19.4	11.0
Pedersen score (opposition only)	10.8	11.9	38.8	20.5
Number of registered parties	7	7	5	6.3
Number of new parties	1	1	2	1.3
Number of new parties to secure parliamentary representation	0	0	1	0.3
Number of new parties to win more than 0.25 per cent of vote	0	1	1	0.7

Source: Own calculations, from Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa, 2011.

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