Realising effective and sustainable democratic governance in Southern Africa and beyond.

DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION AND POLITICAL PARTIES IN LESOTHO

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INTRODUCTION

The 1990s were dominated by series of concerted efforts from individuals and states to bring about democratic rule in societies where authoritarianism and anarchy appear to be the order of political engagement and activity. The demise of the cold war and the end of apartheid in South Africa affected Lesotho and resulted in a transformation of the political system and saw the end of one party rule and return to multiparty electoral democracy. Although some progress has been made in relation to democratisation, many gaps still need to be filled with regard to the content of democracy in Lesotho. The political situation in Lesotho remains fragile, despite the electoral and parliamentary reforms taking place seeking to give opposition parties more opportunity to participate effectively in the policy-making process. One of the most difficult challenges facing democracy in Lesotho in post-2002 multi-party election is the deepening of intra and inter party democracy.

The prospect for democratic consolidation in Lesotho used to be considered with much optimism but the process continues to be scuttled by the military, monarchy interference in politics and the inability of political parties to transcend adversarial politics and accept the verdict of elections. Different political actors continue to cast doubt on the realisation of Lesotho's potential democracy to pass the 'two-consecutive-election' test.[1] While it is true that democracy does have the capacity to facilitate the resolution of many societal and social problems, the extent of resolution should not be regarded as a measure of democratic

dividend or lack of it. The extent to which institutions are created to support the deepening of democracy is the determinant of whether or not democracy will survive in Lesotho – political parties perpetually remain weak and inefficient as agents of oversight and aggregation of public interest in relation to the strong executive branch of government. The real and pertinent challenge for democratic consolidation in Lesotho will depend of the ability of political parties to build a strong culture of party politics which is based on the practice of effective democratic culture.

This paper is an attempt to conceptually clarify the notion of democratic consolidation and assess the character of political parties in relation to their functioning and dynamics in Lesotho's democratisation process[2] and to make possible recommendation on how political parties could be strengthening if they are to contribute to deepening democracy. The assessment is conducted under the following issues: underlying features and problem with political parties in Lesotho – lack of party institutionalisation, factionalism and lack of internal party democracy, role of opposition parties in parliament, women under-representation in parliament, and public funding to political parties.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

According to Munck (2001)[3], the concept of democratic consolidation has become one of the most frequently used concepts in comparative politics. The idea of democratic consolidation was first introduced as a concept for addressing the challenges of regime stabilisation and to provide an answer to the vital question: when are democracies reasonably secure from breakdown? The concept soon developed to cover a whole

array of political problems confronted by the "third wave"[4] and "fourth wave"[5] democracies.

The majority of theories on democracy concentrate on socioeconomic conditions, state structures, formal institutions, policy practices, and levels of education as the quintessential elements for a nation state to at least have a viable chance of attaining "fully-fledged" democracy. Poverty, high illiteracy rates, and an entrenched hierarchical social structure are considered to be antithetical for the functioning of democracy.[6] Secondly, the Neo-liberal camp of democracy suggests that economic liberalisation and political democratisation are two sides of the same coin.[7] And although it may in fact be true that democracy has the *capacity* to facilitate the resolution to many Southern African problems, in general, it is a disservice to take the extent of determination of the myriad of problems as a criteria for measuring the "success" or "failure" of democratisation.

More importantly, there are "many roads to democracy" that may not always involve "the same social classes, the same types of political issues, or even the same methods of solution."[8] And even the stalwart, economic advocate Samuel Huntington[9] who once actively explored conditions that appeared to endorse or impede democratisation, now asserts that "the causes of democratisation are ... varied and their significance over time is likely to vary considerably." Furthermore, democratisation is a highly contested term, grappling with issues such as what should and should not be included in its definition. For example, should there be Western and non-Western version of

democracy, Christian and Muslim versions as well?

Thus, democracy *broadly* defined means regular elections which are fairly conducted and honestly counted (never mind the 2000 United States Presidential Election, Florida debacle and legitimacy by procedures debate); majority rule; minority rights; cooperation; representatives who represent constituents; participation; access; responsiveness; parliamentary sovereignty; party-in-government; pluralism; federalism; presidentialism; and checks and balances.[10] But democracy must go beyond a set of electoralist, institutionalist, and proceduralist criteria and expand into a broader conceptualisation.[11] The broadening of democracy's definition will help lower the threshold for authoritarian and other non-democratic regimes to democratise. Moreover, the usages of democratisation in this paper focuses mainly on *political democratisation* because it relates to the political realm (i.e. actual practices of states) in Southern Africa and it is the context in which various pro-democracy groups continue to push throughout the SADC region. Thus, economic liberalisation and reforms undoubtedly provide an enabling environment for democratisation as touted by the neo-liberals, but such measures are not part of its (*political democratisation*) definition.[12] In fact, such economic measures may encumber political freedom and democracy "is relative, incremental and phased"[13], i.e., it is not a linear, deterministic process.

In a more formal definition, Sandbrook (2000)[14] suggests that democratisation is a process that involves two phases. First, there is the electoral transition, which begins with the breakdown of an authoritarian government. Sandbrook's electoral transition phase ends with the holding of a "free and fair" election and the installation of a new government. By "free and fair" Sandbrook means that an electoral system must reflect fundamental civil and political liberties such as freedom of movement, association, and expression and the right of all adult citizens to vote and hold office. The second phase of Sandbrook's formal definition of democratisation is the consolidation of democracy, i.e., the growth of widespread support for the formal institutions (e.g., legislative, executive, judicial branches) of democratic competition and governance. Most writers on democratisation agree on two propositions: one that the process of consolidating democracy, which begins with where the 'transition to democracy'[15] ends, i.e., with the inauguration of a new government at the first free and fair elections since the end of the pre-democratic regime, which is much lengthier and difficult process than transition itself. From this follows a second proposition: factors making for the 'consolidation of democracy' are not necessarily the same as those contributing to its establishment, the explanation for democratic consolidation may well be different from the explanation for the transition from authoritarian rule.[16]

'Consolidation of democracy' as the general acceptance of the majority of the population and legitimacy (rightful authority) of the duties and capacities of the formal institutions will have no or little meaning if, between recurring elections, rulers govern with an "iron" fist, i.e., autocratically, as has happened more often than not in Malawi, Zimbabwe and Angola since independence. No doubt, Sandbrook's

democratisation process has its critics, for example, Issa Shivji.[17] Shivji (1990),[18] a pre-eminent African critic of liberal democracy, argues that multipartyism will at best, widen the recruitment of political elites while exacerbating the old practices of cronyism and clientelism throughout Africa. And as Wiredu (1996)[19] has posited, there is no necessary connection between democracy and the multiparty system. Indigenous African systems of politics offer examples of democracy without multipartyism. Another critic of Western-style democratisation, advocates popular democracy, Saul (1997)[20] suggests that Robert Dahl's (1971) "polyarchy" is simply reduced to a procedural exercise. Saul (1997)[21] posits popular democracy as synonymous with democratic empowerment. This type of empowerment may help to not only galvanise the collective nature of Southern Africa's myriad of ethnic groups, but strengthen the Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs)' efforts at the grassroots level as they push for civil rights and civil liberties.

Furthermore, the adoption of multiparty political systems throughout Southern Africa in many cases has cultivated what Ake (1996)[22] called, the democratisation of dis-empowerment: a process whereby multiparty elections allow for the rotation of self-interested elites of various parties, while the vast majority of citizens remain powerless and disconnected from the political system. As Ake convincingly contends, the critical aspect of true democracy is not multiparty elections but the assurance of "popular" (mass) participation within African political systems.[23] Thus, the role of social movements in Southern Africa is salient in comprehending the struggle for democracy.

Barry Weingast's (1997)[24] model of democratic governance takes into consideration social movements or mass behaviour as he calls it. In addition, Weingast's model incorporates elite agreement on the rules of the political "game" and viable political institutions as essential to democratic stability and governance. Weingast suggests that by consolidating all of the above prerequisites such a situation provides "self-enforcing limits on state power." By mass behaviour Weingast is referring to a scenario whereby political elites must expect coordinated resistance should they violate the democratic constraints on their action, e.g., pro-democracy NGOs calling for "fair and open" elections. Elite agreement on the rules means those competing elites must arrive at an equilibrium point at which each of them (or each elite group, which could be based on ideology, class, etc.) finds their advantage in agreeing to a limiting set of rules of engagement to be more beneficial than the alternatives, conflict and violence. Finally, by political institutions, Weingast (1997) means that political institutions like the presidency, legislature, and judiciary, must have the power and legitimacy to "limit the ability of those in power to subvert the system to prevent their opponents from winning the next election."[25]

Although all of these factors have been expounded in the democratisation literature, Weingast's model combines them in the affirmation that democratic stability does not follow the appearance of appropriate democratic values; instead, both stable democracy and citizens' consensus on democratic values come from agreement between elites and the public to compete and to construct policy according to a set of specified rules.[26] Therefore, both stability and

citizen behaviour "reflect the equilibrium" that has been negotiated,[27] that is, stability and citizen behaviour walk hand in hand. So what does all this mean for nascent democracies in Southern Africa? Democratic stability is difficult (although possible) to achieve in a society with high levels of cleavage because of the added pressures of securing both elite consensus and mass coordination among competing groups.

Another factor that scholars have found evidence of having an effect on democratisation is cultural pluralism.[28] In heterogeneous societies such as those in Africa, where there are many ethnic, religious, and linguistic differences, these elements are viewed impeding the chances of democratic consolidation because one group or a coalition might control political and economic power, thus others might be excluded or feel excluded from government and *real* political and economic power. Robert Dahl (1971) found that democracy is mainly found in homogeneous countries.[29] Unfortunately, the democratic consolidation process evident in Lesotho does not provide much support for this view. How does one explain the fact that some culturally heterogeneous countries such as Canada, Belgium, Switzerland and Botswana have managed to preserve national unity and high levels of democratic performance and Lesotho with a total population of approximately two million and reasonably homogeneous culture, with its people sharing same history and customs is failing to consolidate democracy?

Numerous criteria have been proposed in the literature for assessing 'consolidation of democracy'.[30] The following three criteria appear to be most favourable in democratic literature. Firstly, the two

successive and successful elections test that democracy is consolidated when a government that has been elected in a free and fair electoral contest is defeated in a subsequent election and accepts the result of the election.[31] The underlying presupposition with this proposition is that winning election is not what matters, but losing it and accepting the result, which depicts that political actors and their supporters are willing to allow the rule of democratic game to continue.[32] Secondly, the peaceful transfer of power test (regime change) and that the country still enjoy political stability.[33] Thirdly, that democracy is "the only game in town", behavioural, attitudinal and constitutional.[34] Behaviourally, that no political interest group attempt to use undemocratic means to achieve their goal; attitudinally, refers to democratic procedures and institutions are regarded by the majority of the citizens as the preferred method of conducting politics; and constitutionally, that government and non-governmental actors are subject to the laws and institutions of the democratic process.[35]

There are several weaknesses in this line of argument. It is however, possible to have an electoral system that meet certain minimum democratic standards, but where such transfer of power does not necessarily take place for obvious reasons. The electorate might choose to vote for the ruling party because there is no viable alternative political party as the case in South Africa[36] and Botswana. Do we say that these democracies are not consolidated simply because there is no transfer of political power? It is for this reason that other writers support the 'longevity test' or 'generation test': 20 years of regular competitive elections as a sufficient requirement for evaluating a consolidated democracy, even if there is

no change in ruling party. A major problem with generation test is that it's not a good predictor of how a system will behave in the future (e.g. ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe). It is well known that, the longer the same party remains in power, the more indistinguishable it becomes from the state machineries on the one hand and powerful economic interest on the other, and the more doubtful whether electoral competition and or participation takes place on a genuinely level playing field, or that electoral accountability remain the rule of the game.[37] The critical issue here is that, can we separate democratic consolidation from the quality of democracy being consolidated?

Juan Linz and Alfred Stephan (1996) postulates that democracies are consolidated when it's behaviourally, attitudinally and constitutionally internalised by the political elites and the mass population.[38] They further provided five necessitating conditions, which must exist before consolidation can occur. Firstly, the condition must exist for the development of a free and lively civil society.[39] Secondly, there must be an autonomous political society[40]. More importantly, political parties must be able to adapt themselves to the new rules of the game, such as electoral laws and legislative-executive jurisdictions, which structure the "who, what, when, and how" of elite behaviour in a democratic system.[41] Thirdly, all major political actors throughout the state, especially the government and the state apparatus must be subjected to a rule of law, which protects individual freedoms. Fourthly, there must be in place a state bureaucracy, adequate enough to protect the rights of citizens and to deliver basic services to the citizens. Finally, there must be an institutionalised economic society with

described set of norms, regulations, policies and institutions to sustain and grow the economy. The understanding is that democracies cannot be consolidated in command economies, likewise in free market economies. Democracies require markets with legally binding and enforceable contracts, the issuance of money, regulated standards for weights and measure and the protection of the public and private property and a state with policies that generate government mandated public goods in the areas of education, health, transport etc. and must equally provide an economic safety net for its citizens.[42]

It is within this context that political party as an important institution for translating the proceeds of electoral outcomes into effective action and a major component in legitimising control of political office is examined. It is argued that any attempt in understanding a political party should go beyond the historical circumstances, institutional traditions and national characteristics of specific democracies to understanding the extent to which political party has become institutionalised in Lesotho. It follows that understanding political party institutionalisation is critical to explaining the prospect of democratic consolidation in Lesotho.

FEATURES AND WEAKNESSES OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN LESOTHO

Lack of Party Institutionalisation

A noticeable feature of parties in Lesotho is lack of institutionalisation. Institutionalisation refers to a process of crystallizing (i.e. defining, creating, developing, and maintaining) social institutions and the extent or degree of institutional characteristics at any given

time.[43] Political parties have taken little effort through time to stabilise political behaviour. Interests have always been concentrated on entrenching political power. The Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) founded in 1952 as a nationalist movement by Ntsu Mokhehle. The party was later renamed the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) and recently, the Basotho Congress Party (BCP). In 1957 a group of royalist left the party to form the Marematlou Party, which five years later merged with Basutoland Freedom Party (BFP), a brake away party from the BCP. The Catholic chiefs and teachers within the BCP moved away from the party to form the Basutoland National Party, (now Basotho National Party (BNP) because of the Mokhehle's support and admiration for Red socialist China in order to counter the communist threat within the BCP. When the BCP lost the elections in 1965 to the Basotholand National Party (BNP), the then Prime Minister Chief Leabua Jonathan and leader of BNP, responded by suspending the national constitution, arresting and then expelling the King Moshoeshoe II and banning opposition parties. The King was exiled in Holland but was later allowed to return and to contribute to the government of national reconciliation. This was partly a successful effort but was one fiercely resisted by the opposition party (BCP), which precipitated in a failed coup attempt resulting in many deaths within the BCP and the jailing or exile of the BCP leadership. Effectively, this was the beginning of the political stalemate and a *de facto* one party state in Lesotho. The opportunity was missed right from the beginning at according legitimacy to the role of political parties in democratic consolidation. The interest of individual was elevated above that of the party. Political party then became an instrument used by political elite to maintain power and control state resources. Political parties lost ties with citizens' interest and party structures disappeared, at the expense of the routines in intra-party procedures, especially that of selecting and changing party leadership. The unprocedural dismissal of Mokhehle as BCP party leader in February 1997 party conference led to the formation of the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD). Nomination of party leadership within BCP is concentrated in the hands of selecting committees, who are representatives from party members emanating from various village and branche committees. The party leadership within the LCD are generally elected at the party annual national conference through constituency representatives. National executive committee elects members to the electoral college from the various party structures. The process involves the subjective assessment of nominees. They are guided by local political interest, social norms of behaviour and status (Quinlan 1995:80)[44] but with little consideration for intra-party procedure and parties' national policy agendas.

Since the introduction of multiparty democracy in Lesotho, the proliferation of political parties is another characterisation of the lack of political party institutionalisation existing in Lesotho. In a country with approximately 2million population and less than 850 000 registered voters, 19 political parties participated in the last 2002 general elections. One of the key stakeholders alluded to this phenomenon:

> The no and size of political
>
> parties is a
>
> problem…economically

available opportunities are
not too many in
Lesotho…politics is the
easily available avenue to
making a
living…mushrooming of
political parties is a
reality…there is need for
control and representation of
political party formation…3
parties is enough…there is
need for legislation on the
issue…[45]

This problem is partly explained by the regulation prescribed for registering political parties under the Lesotho Society Act. When the law was enacted in 1991, the focus was on liberalisation of politics and not so much on institutional design. Its sole intention was for making it easier to change from a dictatorial regime to a democratic regime. According to the stipulation within the electoral law, a party requires 500 signatures to be registered as a political party with a nominal fee, leading to the formation of a one-person party. Only six parties represent the more or less influential political parties as evident in the 2002 general election results through the allocated number of seats in parliament (see table 1). Most of the other parties are merely one-person parties of shady creation that oscillate on the borders of what a party should not be. Although all the 19 parties who contested in 2002 general election were accorded the legal status of political parties, majority of these parties only few exhibit a measure of institutionalisation and representation in Parliament. The election results returned

the LCD to power with an overwhelming majority by winning 79 constituency seats while 21 PR went to the BNP. Overall, the 2002 general elections were considered by free and fair by domestic and international observer groups[46]. However, the opposition parties, led by the BNP have launched an urgent application in court for re-opening of the ballot boxes for re-count on the basis that the election result was fraudulent. The Lesotho Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) challenged the BNP in court to provide substantive evidence to support their claim for the re-opening and re-counting of ballot papers. The BNP was unable to provide any proof to support the allegation and after a long drawn out legal battle, the court pronounced judgement and the case was thrown out because the case had no basis.

Table 1: Lesotho May 2002 Election Results

Party Name	Votes Cast	%/Votes Cast	No of SMC Seats	No of PR Seats
Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD)	304 316	54,8	79	-
Basotho National Party (BNP)	124 234	22,4	-	21
Lesotho People's Congress (LPC)	32 046	5,9	1	5
National Independent Party (NIP)	30 346	5,5	-	5
Basotho African Congress (BAC)	16 095	2,9	-	3
Basutoland Congress Party (BCP)	14 584	2,6	-	3
Lesotho Workers' Party (LWP)	7 788	1,4	-	1
Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP)	6 890	1,2	-	1
Popular Front for Democracy (PFD)	6 330	1,1	-	1
National Progressive Party (NPP)	3 985	0,7	-	1
Others (9 parties)	7 772	1,4	-	-
Total	**554 386**	**99,9**	**80**	**40**

Source: Independent Electoral Commission

IEC) of Lesotho

Most of these parties are offshoots of BCP. Both BCP and BNP represent the two major streams in Lesotho politics – the congress and the nationalist - formed to lead the demand for independence from British in 1960. The 19 parties have no varied ideological orientation, policy position, organisational structure, and geographical dispersion. One of our sources described the situation in these words:

> parties only differ in names and colors…party manifestos are the same…the difference is only in language used in writing the manifesto and leadership…parties have no activities between elections…[47]

The experience of political parties in post-1993 with its different political actors, aspirations and mobilisation is to a lager extent dependent on the history of the political struggle in Lesotho and the role played by founding political party leaders. Political parties hardly present any alternative sets of policies for addressing the socio-economic challenges facing the country and for taking the country forward. The inherent weakness evident in all the political parties in Lesotho is their unbalanced emphasis on the most politically aware: the urban working class, the skilled professionals and the civil servants to the exclusion of the rural population, which constitute the majority of the population. Parties are failing to immerse themselves in the conditions, experience, and aspirations of the rural majority because they lack the necessary infrastructure. Furthermore they are unable to raise the necessary funds enabling them to finance their operations nationwide. Huntington (1971) suggests that the litmus test of party strength includes the following: the survival of an

organisation without its charismatic founder, development of organisational complexity and depth as well as links with functional associations (trade unions, student bodies, etc.), and the identification of its activists with the party emotionally and morally rather than merely viewing the party as an instrument to achieve career advancement or other objectives. It is therefore not surprising in Lesotho that the distinction between incumbent party (LCD) and state remains blurred because the party ranks have become the bureaucratic arms of the state thereby creating a vacuum within the organisation.

Factionalism and Lack of Internal Party Democracy

One of the most common features evident in Lesotho's political parties is the fragmentation along personality lines. This is contrary to the generally observable practice in Africa, where party factionalism is often induced by ethnicity and/or religious cleavages. Party factionalism in Lesotho is mostly based on personality clashes within party leadership. BCP represents a classical tendency toward factionalism. The Sefate Democratic Union (SDU) was born in 1993, out of split from the BCP after a disagreement ensued between supporters of candidates from the royal family and the political elites. The LCD was subsequently formed in 1997, eight months before the 1998 general elections, after disagreement within the BCP leadership, then the ruling party. In 1996, the BCP party executive was unseated at the national party conference but the leadership refused to vacate the position. The split was between those who wanted Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle to remain as leader of the BCP and those who opposed him.

Mokhehle established the breakaway Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) and formed a majority party in Parliament which went on to win the 1998 general election. According to Southall (2002)[48]:

> the major threat to the LCD lies not amongst the opposition parties, which broadly speaking remain divided and disorganized, but from within. In 1993, the BCP, then the embodiment of the radical congress tradition, secured 75% of the popular vote. In 1998, the LCD, whilst demonstrating that it had appropriated that tradition from the BCP, took 65% of the vote. In 2002, after another internal split, it has taken just 55% of the popular vote. Lesotho's politics have always been riven by factionalism, and the danger to the LCD is that personal rivalries could lead to a further divide which could render its domination of the polity vulnerable.

The important factors that have contributed to factionalism in Lesotho politics are firstly, the nature of the previously used electoral system (FPTP). Within this system the winners-take-all outcome reinforced this kind of behaviour as it created permanent

winners and permanent losers. The country was divided into relatively equal constituencies from which only one representative was elected to represent the constituency in the national Parliament. The principle of territorial representation emphasised the relationship between the voter and the representative as representatives contesting seats within the constituencies could either contest elections as individuals or as political party representatives. This was often not clearly understood by politicians resulting in conflict on the choice of candidates among party leadership and between constituencies, intra-party fights, faction-fighting and formation of new political parties.

Secondly, the lack of internal democracy within political parties is a factor that should be considered. Internal democracy is a rare commodity among political parties in Lesotho. Parties display a great tendency toward oligarchy, in which power is concentrated in the hands of a few political leaders. Party members have little or no control over party leadership, which then makes it easier for party leadership to make party decisions based on political expediency. Party policy and party positions discussion is concentrated within the leadership. Political party constitutions do not have mechanisms that commit members to eradicate any tendency towards factionalism. The linkage and accountability between leadership and party member is often very weak any in many cases non-existent. Although political parties do hold annual congresses, these congresses are merely the mechanism for entrenching political control over the party instead of instituting accountability from the leadership and providing for consultation

with party membership on matter of national interest, party strategy, and tactics. Party leadership is less inclined to consult with membership on matters of policy and procedures. It goes without saying that a party that lacks internal democratic practice is less likely to uphold democratic process and institutions. Openness and transparency in the conduct of party operations, including the nomination of candidates to stand for constituency and cabinet positions, party financial statements and the source of income is generally absent.

The nature of primary elections

Competition for nomination of candidates within political parties in Lesotho is mostly controlled and manipulated by political leadership. Party leadership often imposes tight control and patronage over candidates during party primary elections. Political parties without consultation with electorate at large, often put forward candidates for elections, thereby limiting voter's choice to those who have secured the party's preliminary approval. Constituency member involvement and participation in party primaries is almost non-existent and, where constituency participation in party primaries exists, it is accompanied by a high degree of political leadership manipulation. For example, during the 1998 and 2002 elections, the LCD, the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP), and the Basutho National Party (BNP) were involved in a legal battle resulting from a dispute on choice of candidates for constituency election. According to Matlosa (2003), "the two main reasons for the problems were that the political leadership confused the FPTP system with proportional representation and the lack of inner-party democracy, which led to top-down administrative and decision

making approaches."[49] Although the electoral system does not have a direct relationship with how primary elections were conducted within parties, it does, however, have an indirect relationship with primary elections during nomination of candidates within parties. First-Past-the Post system, as employed in Lesotho from independence until 2002 has indirectly contributed to the divisions that occurred periodically within political parties, as previously mentioned. One of the basic features of this system is that the country is divided into relatively equal constituencies from which only one representative is elected to represent the constituency in the national Parliament. Political parties under this system only provided the institutional home for candidates contesting elections. Those contesting the election under this system do so as individual party members as opposed to those on a party list as party representatives under the proportional representation system. This principle, in which individuals contest elections as individuals is often not clearly understood by politicians, and has resulted in conflict on choice of candidates among party leadership and between constituencies, intra-party fights, faction-fighting and formation of new political parties.

Role of Opposition Parties in Parliament

After achieving a multiparty representation in Parliament, with the introduction of Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system in the 2002 election (80 constituency seats and 40 proportional representation seats), the challenge now is to develop institutions that support the continuous development of a strong parliamentary democracy in Lesotho in which opposition parties are able to maintain a critical stance over the government. The introduction of MMP ended the strong domination of one party in Parliament. Presently, there are 9 opposition parties in Parliament but none has the official status of the opposition party in parliament. Numerous commentators suggest that parliamentary opposition parties are necessary if political incentives towards the consolidation of democracy are to be achieved.[50] In Lesotho, the role of opposition parties is seriously constrained by the lack of capacity within Members of Parliament themselves and the absence of institutional arrangements (i.e. Portfolio Committees) necessary for the effective functioning of Parliament. Parliamentary proceedings, structures, roles and functions need to be clarified and entrenched with speed so that Members can proceed with their fundamental tasks of helping to find solutions, exercising informed oversight and ensuring accountability and transparency.

Habib and Taylor (2001)[51] warn that the existence of political parties does not necessarily mean that they will fulfil the functions usually attributed to them in a democratic polity. Furthermore, they state that political parties must be not only exist in a legal or organisational sense, but there must also be mechanisms that enable the representation and express the social interests of insignificant constituencies in the society.[52] Lesotho is a classical example of where opposition parties exist without democratic function and impact. In an interview with one prominent civil society representative, it was said that:

> The impact of opposition is
> yet to be felt. What has

happened with the change of electoral system to MMP is that the space was created for negotiation and dialogue in Lesotho politics. MMP created opportunity for political representation in Parliament but there is serious lack of accountability and consultation on the part of the elected representatives to the electorate.[53]

If opposition parties are to maintain an effective role in overseeing the consolidation of democracy in Lesotho, they will be compelled to address the serious problem of internal division that exists within the parties, eradicate the inequalities existent in parliamentary allocation (between constituency and PR representatives), transcend adversarial and confrontational modes of engagement and develop effective mechanisms for facilitating a peaceful alternative to the party in government. It is equally important given the political instability which preceded the transition to multiparty representation in Parliament, that opposition parties ensure that the citizen's unhappiness with the government is not automatically translated into a de-legtimation of the democratic order. Opposition parties must provide outlets for an alternative voice and critics of the government to express their dissatisfaction and keep alive the possibility that they could become the governing elite at some future date. This would provide the necessary 'ebb and flow of competitive party politics that democracies require.'[54] The lack of effective opposition, further compounded by the

lack of both internal political pluralism with the ruling party and corporatist mechanisms necessary for sustaining political pluralism and holding government bureaucrats accountable to the citizens amount to a serious threat for democratic consolidation.

Women Under-Representation in Parliament

Ballington (2002)[55] rightly argues that political parties and electoral systems are the major determinants of the notable presence or absence of women in national legislature and despite universal suffrage women still remain under-represented within most political parties in Lesotho. An important factor accounting for the under-representation of women is the deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes of the role of women in Lesotho as in any other African society:

> The problem with women representation lies with women. Although women represent the majority of the electorate, they often resent voting for women instead they prefer electing men. This is partly explained by culture.[56]

In Lesotho, traditional and patriarchal cultures make it difficult, if not impossible for women to penetrate decision making structures within society. According to Rule (1994:15) women face pervasive obstacles in representation caused by social bias, narrow gender roles, restrictive religious doctrines, unequal laws and education, discriminatory socio-economic conditions, male biased party leadership, and the nature of the electoral system, all of which compound women to the private realm.[57] Political parties, as the major determinant in who becomes

nominated for public office, further contribute to the deepening under-representation of women in the public arena. Most political parties in Lesotho demonstrate this. For example within the LCD, there is no quota system in place within the party's constitution to correct the male domination within the party structures. According to a party source:

> The LCD believes that men and women are equal and they should all be subjected to competition through party primaries. On the party proportional list for 2002 election, the party made a deliberate decision to include women on the list (32 out of 40 were women). The 10 women in Parliament are those that won the party primaries and subsequently went on the win the constituency seats.[58]

Table 2: Number of Women in Lesotho Parliament, 1993 - 2003

Year of Election	No. of Seats in Parliament	No. of Women in Parliament and %	Ruling Party	Type of Electoral System
1993	65	3 (4.6%)	BCP	FPTP
1998	80	3 (3.8%)	LCD	FPTP
2002	120	14 (11.7)	LCD	MMP

Source: www.lesotho.gov.ls/articels/2002

In countries where women enjoy greater representation in Parliament, it was made possible because of the use of the quota system by political parties to ensure that women are fairly represented in party candidate list as opposed to a reliance on party elites for nomination. The electoral system (MMP) presents a door of opportunity for political parties to make a commitment in addressing gender inequality within their ranks but it does not guarantee women representation within party hierarchy. 2002 has been a historic year in the Kingdom of Lesotho whereby the first inclusive Parliament ever, was elected and the chide speaker is a woman. Its most unique feature, in comparison to the past, is the high number of women parliamentarians in both the National Assembly and the Senate. Although the 14 women representatives in the National Assembly might be few, it is the highest number in the history of Lesotho's Parliament (lower house) and in comparison to the three members in the previous Parliament. Nations and parliaments throughout Africa face the challenge of gender inequality. It is now the responsibility of women parliamentarians to ensure diversity and quality legislation that answers the needs of the people.

Public funding to political parties

There is no statutory requirement for party funding in Lesotho. In the 2002 General Election, the government allocated M320 000 for political party campaigning activities. This was administered by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and a further M30 000 was allocated to all independent candidates. Political parties were called upon to agree on a formula for allocating the fund. Half of the allocated fund was shared equally among the parties and the other half was shared proportionally among the number of constituency candidates for each party. This move was necessitated out of

the need to level the playing field for all political parties partaking in the election. It emerges from various sources that parties did not use the money for the stipulated purpose and there is no regulation within the law to prosecute misuse of funds allocation.[59] Parties' subsidies through membership subscriptions, investments, donations from both local and international agencies/bodies constitute the major source of funding for political parties. Smaller parties that benefited from government allocation for party campaigning activities, and which enabled them to participate in the last election have either ceased to exist or only exist in person of the leader. If there is no regulation and public funding for political parties beyond the election campaign, the ruling party will continue to be favoured as it has access to state resources and the country could possibly return to a *de facto* one party state.

Conclusion

The future of political parties in Lesotho will depend much on how they conduct themselves within the milieu of parliamentary democracy and through the effective participation of opposition parties in the parliamentary processes. Although there is commitment from most political parties to consolidate multiparty democracy in Lesotho, unless institutions supporting democracy – political parties are strengthened and supported to function in a manner that make it impossible for Lesotho to revert back to a one party dominated state.

Should this not be the case, democratic consolidation will remain somewhat illusory. If multiparty politics is to be consolidated in Lesotho, political parties will have to become institutionalised – become stable in relation to internal competition, wider representation within society at large, active during and after election, and strong organisational culture with distinguishable political identity and ideology. In Lesotho as in other parts of the continent, it is widely accepted that political parties occupy a prominent and critical role in deepening democracy. But the large number of political organisations is no positive account of their contribution to democratic consolidation. They lack institutionalisation, characterized by high degree of factionalism, lack of internal democracy, political mobilization is based upon personality and lack distinguishing sets of policies and parties tend to be mostly prominent and visible in the urban areas. Political parties will have to develop internal political pluralism and conflict management mechanisms for managing intra-party conflict and, similarly develop a culture of opposition party engagement and dialogue necessary for the survival of democratic polity.

ENDNOTES

[1] Huntington. S.P. 1991. *The Third Wave: Democratisation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.

[2] Adopting Garreton (1995:146) definition of democratization as "the process of establishing, strengthening, or extending the principles, mechanisms, and institutions that define a democratic regime", it follows from this definition that democratization will progresses from transition to inauguration of democratic government, and finally to consolidation – the strengthening of the new regime over a period of time to an extent that makes relapse or reversal to authoritarianism very unlikely (Osaghe 1999: 7).

[3] Munck, G.L . 2001. "Democratic Consolidation*." Encyclopaedia of Democratic Thought*, eds. Paul Barry Clarke and Joe Foweraker. London: Routledge.

[4] The democratic third wave came in the aftermath of World War II. It spread beyond countries in Europe through decolonization in Asia and Africa, touching Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, Celyon, Burma, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, and other, with Japan and South Korea both given democratic institutions by withdrawing occupying power. Schmitter, P.C. 1995. "Democratizaion, Waves of" *Encyclopaedia of Democracy Vol II,* ed. Lipset, S.M. London: Routledge.

[5] Began in Southern Europe (1974), spread to Latin America, affected some Asian countries ('80s), swept Eastern Europe (late '80s) and continue through to Sub Saharan Africa and cumulated in the long awaited regime change in South Africa (1994). The notion of waves suggests that with each successive instance of democratization the influence of international events will tend to increase in the same direction. Those countries that come later in the wave will be increasingly influenced by those that preceded them. "Democratizaion, Waves of" *Encyclopaedia of Democracy Vol II,* ed. Lipset, S.M. London: Routledge.

[6] See for example, Lipset 1959; Rustow 1970; Huntington 1984; Dahl 1989

[7] Keller 1995; Bienen and Herbst 1996

[8] Rustow, D.A. 1970

[9] Huntington, S.P. 1991. *The Third Wave: Democratisation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press

[10] Schmitter and Karl 1991

[11] Joseph 1997

[12] Osaghae 1999

[13] Ibid.

[14] Sandbrook, R. 2000. *Closing The Circle: Democratisation and Development in Africa*. Toronto: Between the Lines.

[15] According to Beetham, D. (1994), the process of transition to democracy affects the subsequent prospects for its consolidation in two ways: the character of the previous regime and the actual mode of transition. Detail discussion of these factors is available in "Conditions for Democratic Consolidation." *Review of African Political Economy*, 1994, No 60:157-172.

[16] Rustow, D. 1970

[17] Shivji, I. 1990. "The Pitfalls in the Debate on Democracy." *Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA) Bulletin*, 1 (12). Dakar, Senegal.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Wiredu, K (ed). 1996. "Democracy and Consensus in African Traditional Politics: A Plea for a Non-Party Polity," in *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

[20] Saul, J. 1997. "Liberal Democracy Versus popular Democracy." *Review of African Political Economy*, 73:339-353.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ake, C. 1996. *Democracy and Development in Africa.* Washington, D.C.: Brookings.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Weingast, B.R. 1997. "The Political Foundations of Demo cracy and the Rule of Law." *American Political Science Review*, 91 (2) 245-263.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Aborisade, O. and Mundt, R.J. 2002. *Politics in Nigeria*, 2nd ed. New York: Longman.

[27] Ibid.

[28] For example, Bollen, H. and Jackman, R.W. 1990

[29] Dahl, R.A. 1971 *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

[30] Gunther, R. and Diamandourous, P.N. 1995, Mainwaring, S. and Scully, T. 1995, Jelin, E and Hershberg, E. 1996, Morlino, L. 1998

[31] Huntington 1991 and O' Donnell 1996

[32] Beetham, D. 1994

[33] Huntington, S. 1991

[34] Linz, J. and Stepan, A. 1996

[35] Ibid.

[36] Johnson, A. (1999) described South Africa as one party dominant democracy, which contradicts the idea of a multi party democracy. Friedman, S. (1999) however argue differently, he contend that there are certain criteria for party dominance that the African Nationalist Party (ANC), the ruling political party in South Africa exhibit, but that ANC still has a long way to go before it can fully establish dominance.

[37] Diamond, L. 1996, Rose, R and Shin, D.C. 2001

[38] Behaviourally, democracy is consolidated when no significant national, social, economic, political or institutional actors spend significant resources trying to create a non-democratic regime. Attitudinally, democracy is consolidated when a strong majority of public opinion, even in the midst of major economic problems and deep dissatisfaction with incumbents, holds the belief that democratic procedures and institutions are the most appropriate way to regulate collective life, and when support for anti-system alternatives is quite small or isolated from pro-democracy forces. Constitutionally, democracy is consolidated when governmental and non-governmental forces alike become subject to, and habituated to, the resolution of conflict within the bounds of the specific laws, procedures and institutions sanctioned by the new democratic process.

[39] Civil society is defined as an arena of polity where self-organising and relatively autonomous groups, movements and individuals attempt to articulate values, to create association and to advance their interest exist.

[40] Political society referred to as an arena for political party actors to compete for the legitimate right to exercise control over public power and state apparatus with the political parties, legislatures, elections, electoral rules, political leaderships and inter-party alliances acting as the main political institutions.

[41] Stockton, H. 2001. Political Parties, Party System, and Democracy in East Asia Lessons from Latin America. In *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 34 No.1

[42] Linz, J.J and Stepan, A. 1996

[43] Huntington, S. Political Order in Changing Societies, Cited in Mainwaring, S. Party Systems in the Third Wave. In *Journal of Democracy* Vol. 9, No.3, July 1998.

[44] Quninlan, T. Sentiment of unity, symbol of marginality: Election politics in Khubelu constituency, Mokhotlong district in *Democratization and demilitarization in Lesotho: the general election of 1993 and its aftermth.* Southall, R & Petlane, T. (eds.) Africa Institute of South Africa: Pretoria, South Africa.

[45] A view expressed by Mr M. Likate, Commssioner: Lesotho Independent Electoral Commission

[46] Copies of observer groups media releases is available in the United Nations Electoral Assistance Secretariat, General Elections Lesotho – May 2002, *Final Report*. UNEAS: Maseru, Lesotho.

[47] Statement by Mr V. Letho, Democracy Education Programme: Transformation Resource Centre, Lesotho.

[48] Roger Southall, 2002. Lesotho Elections 2002: 2002 Elections Put Lesotho on Track for Democratic Consolidation. Website. See http://eisa.org.za/WEP/lesotho2a.htm

[49] Matlosa, K. 2003. "The Electoral Process and Democratic Governance in Lesotho: Lessons for the Democratic Republic of Congo", In *Journal of African Elections*, Vol.2, No.1

[50] Robert, Dahl. (ed) 1996. *Political Opposition in Western Democracies,* New Haven: Yale University Press; Leon Epstein, 1967. *Political Parties in Western Democracies*, New York: Praeger; Barrington Moore, Jr. 1989. *Liberal Prospects Under Soviet Socialism: A Comparative Historical Perspective*, New York: Averell Harriman Institute; Samuel Huntington, 1991*. The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth century*, Norman: University of Oaklahoma Press; and Ian Shapiro, 1994. 'Three Ways to be a Democrat", *Political Theory*, Vol. 22

[51] Adam Habib & Rupert Taylor, 2001. Political Alliance and Parliamentary Opposition in Post-Apartheid South Africa, *Democratization*, Vol.8, No.2

[52] Ibid.

[53] In an interview with Lesotho National Council of Non-Governmental Organization.

[54] Howard Barrell, 'The race for the Real Second Place", *Mail and Guardian*, 28 February-4 March 1999

In Adam Habib & Rupert Taylor, 2001. Political Alliance and Parliamentary Opposition in Post-Apartheid South Africa, *Democratization*, Vol.8, No.2

[55] Julie Ballington, 2002. Political Parties, Gender Equality and Elections in South Africa. In *One Woman, One Vote: The Gender Politics of South African Election*, Ficks, G; Meintjes, S; & Simons, M (eds), EISA: Johannesburg, South Africa.

[56] Interview with the President of the Federation of Trade Union in Lesotho.

[57] Rule, W. 1994. 'Parliament of, by and for the People: Except for women?'. In Rule, W. & Zimmerman, J (eds). *Electoral Systems in Comparative Perspective*. Greenwood Press: London.

[58] In an interview with the General Secretary of LCD and a Member of Parliament.

[59] A view expressed by Mr Khothatso Ralitsie, Director of Elections: Lesotho Independent Electoral Commission

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