

# AFRICAN POLITICAL PARTIES

Evolution, Institutionalisation and Governance

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# Abbreviations

AAPO	All Amhara People's Organisation (Ethiopia)
ACN	Action Christian Nation (Namibia)
AFC	Alliance des Forces du Changement (Niger)
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (Ghana)
ALF	Afar Liberation Front (Ethiopia)
ANC	African National Congress (South Africa)
APC	All People's Congress (Sierra Leone)
APP	All People's Party (Ghana)
APRP	All People's Republican Party (Ghana)
AZ	Agenda for Zambia
BAC	Basotho African Congress (Lesotho)
BAM	Botswana Alliance Movement
BCP	Basotho Congress Party (Lesotho)
BCP	Botswana Congress Party
BDP	Botswana Democratic Party
BNF	Botswana National Front
BNP	Basotho National Party (Lesotho)
BPP	Botswana People's Party
BPU	Botswana Progressive Union
CAFPDE	Council of Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy in Ethiopia
CCM	Chama Cha Mapinduzi (Tanzania)
CDA	Christian Democratic Actio (Namibia)
CDC	Constitutional Drafting Committee (Nigeria)
CDEM	Civic Development Education Movement (Sierra Leone)
CDS	Convention Démocratique et Sociale (Niger)
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (USA)
CKGR	Central Kalahari Game Reserve
CoD	Congress of Democrats (Namibia)
CoP	Congress of the People (South Africa)
COPWE	Commission to Organise the Party of the Workers of Ethiopia
CPDM	Cameroon People's Democratic Movement
CPP	Convention People's Party (Ghana)
DPP	Democratic People's Party (Sierra Leone)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DTA	Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (Namibia)
ECZ	Electoral Commission of Zambia

EDU	Ethiopian Democratic Union
EDUP	Ethiopian Democratic Unity Party
EPDM	Ethiopia People's Democratic Movement
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
EPRP	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party
ESC	Electoral Supervisory Commission (Zimbabwe)
EU	European Union
FCN	Federal Convention of Namibia
FDD	Forum for Democracy and Development (Zambia)
FNLA	Front for the Liberation of Angola
FORD	Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (Kenya)
FPTP	'first past the post'
FRELIMO	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
GA	Great Alliance (Ghana)
GCP	Ghana Congress Party
GSK	Ga Shifimo Kpee (or Ga Standfast Party) (Ghana)
HP	Heritage Party (Zambia)
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IFP	Independence Freedom Party (Botswana)
IMD	Institute for Multi-party Democracy (Netherlands)
ISS	Institute of Social Studies
KADU	Kenya Africa Democratic Union
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KPU	Kenya People's Union
LCD	Lesotho Congress for Democracy
LCN	Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations
LNCM	Lesotho Network for Conflict Management
LPC	Lesotho People's Congress
LWP	Lesotho Workers' Party
MAG	Monitor Action Group (Namibia)
MAP	Moslem Association Party (Ghana)
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change (Zimbabwe)
<i>Meisone</i>	All-Ethiopian Socialist Movement
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MFDC	Democratic Forces of Casamance Movement (Senegal)
MFP	Marematlou Freedom Party (Lesotho)
MMD	Movement for Multi-party Democracy (Zambia)
MNSD	National Movement for a Developing Society (Niger)
MP	member of parliament
MPLA	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
NAL	National Alliance of Liberals (Ghana)

NAP	National Action Party (Sierra Leone)
NAPDO	Namibia African People's Democratic Organisation
NCC	National Citizens' Coalition (Zambia)
NCDP	Namibia Christian Democratic Party
NCP	National Convention Party (Ghana)
NDA	National Action Party (Sierra Leone)
NDA	National Democratic Alliance (Sudan)
NDC	National Democratic Congress (Ghana)
NDP	National Democratic Party (Kenya)
NDP	National Democratic Party (Sierra Leone)
Nepad	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NF	National Front (Sudan)
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NIF	National Islamic Front (Sudan)
NIP	National Independent Party (Ghana)
NIP	National Independent Party (Lesotho)
NLD	National Leadership Development (Zambia)
NLM	National Liberation Movement (Ghana)
NNF	Namibia National Front
NPC	Northern People's Congress (Nigeria)
NPFN	National Patriotic Front of Namibia
NPP	National Progressive Party (Lesotho)
NPP	New Patriotic Party (Ghana)
NRC	National Republican Convention (Nigeria)
NRM	National Resistance Movement (Uganda)
NRP	National Reform Party (Ghana)
NUDO	National Unity Democratic Organisation (Namibia)
OAU	Organisation for African Unity
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front (Ethiopia)
ONEL	Independent National Election Observatory (Senegal)
OPDO	Oromo People's Democratic Organisation (Ethiopia)
OPO	Ovamboland People's Organisation (South Africa)
OSSREA	Organisation for Social Science Research in East and Southern Africa
PA	Progressive Alliance (Ghana)
PADS	African Party for Democracy and Socialism (Senegal)
PAI	African Independent Party (Senegal)
PAP	People's Action Party (Ghana)
PDA	Preventive Detention Act (Ghana)
PDRE	People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
PF	Patriotic Front (Zambia)
PFD	Popular Front for Democracy (Lesotho)

PFP	Popular Front Party (Ghana)
PHP	People's Heritage Party (Ghana)
PMAC	Provisional Military Administrative Council (Ethiopia)
PNC	People's National Convention (Ghana)
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council (Ghana)
PNDS	Parti Nigérienne pour la Démocratie et le Socialisme
PNP	People's National Party (Ghana)
PNP	People's National Party (Sierra Leone)
POMOA	Provisional Office for Mass Organisational Affairs (Ethiopia)
PP	Progress Party (Ghana)
PR	proportional representation
PRA	Parti Rassemblement Africain (Senegal)
PRB	Parti de la renaissance du Bénin
PS	Socialist Party (Senegal)
RCC	Revolutionary Command Council (Sudan)
RENAMO	Mozambique National Resistance
RPP	People's Progressive Assembly (Djibouti)
RPT	Rally for the Togolese Peoples
RUF	Revolutionary United Front (Sierra Leone)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SANNC	South African Native National Congress
SCP	Sudanese Communist Party
SDP	Social Democratic Party (Kenya)
SDP	Social Democratic Party (Nigeria)
SDP	Social Democratic Party (Zambia)
SEPDC	Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Coalition
SEPRDF	Southern Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SMC	single-member constituency
SNC	Sudan National Congress
SNF	Senegalese National Front
SNLM	Sidama National Liberation Movement (Ethiopia)
Sopi	Alliance of Forces for Change (Senegal)
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SPP	Senegalese People's Party
SPPF	Seychelles People's Progressive Front
SPS	Socialist Party of Senegal
SSU	Sudanese Socialist Union
SWANLA	South West Africa Native Labour Association (Namibia)



SWANU	South West African National Union (Namibia)
SWAPA	South West Africa Progressive Association (Namibia)
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation (Namibia)
SWAPO-D	South West Africa People's Organisation – Democrats (Namibia)
SWASB	South-West African Student Body (Namibia)
SWAUNIO	South West Africa United National Independence Organisation (Namibia)
TANU	Tanzania African National Union
TC	Togoland Congress (Ghana)
TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
TMC	Transitional Military Council (Sudan)
UDF	United Democratic Front (Botswana)
UDF	United Democratic Front (Malawi)
UDF	United Democratic Front (Namibia)
UDFP	Union Démocratique des Forces Progressistes (Niger)
UDM	United Democratic Movement (Kenya)
UDMP	Democratic Union of Malawian People
UDP	United Democratic Party
UGCC	United Gold Coast Convention (Ghana)
UN	United Nations
UNC	United National Convention (Ghana)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFORM	United Front of Political Movements (Sierra Leone)
UNIP	United National Independence Party (Zambia)
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UNP	United National Party (Sierra Leone)
UNP	United Nationalist Party (Ghana)
UNPP	United National People's Party (Sierra Leone)
UP	Umma Party (Sudan)
UP	United Party (Ghana)
UPDP	Union des Patriotes Démocrates et Progressistes (Niger)
UPND	United Party for National Development (Zambia)
UPP	United Progressive Party (Zambia)
UPS	Senegalese Progressive Union
WPE	Workers' Party of Ethiopia
WRP	Workers' Revolutionary Party (Namibia)
ZANU-Ndonga	Zimbabwe African National Union-Ndonga
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZCTU	Zambia Congress of Trade Unions
ZNBC	Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation
ZRP	Zambia Republican Party

# Foreword

This volume is the product of research cooperation between the Organisation for Social Science Research in East and Southern Africa (OSSREA) and the Institute of Social Studies (ISS), The Hague, The Netherlands. It is also part of a long tradition of research cooperation between the two institutions, which dates back to the 1980s. Before introducing the significance of this volume, I will introduce OSSREA and the ISS.

OSSREA was established in April 1980 by east African social scientists working in universities and research institutions in the region. OSSREA promotes the interests of African scholars in the social sciences and, as well as collaborative study and research, it facilitates the scholarly exchange of ideas. OSSREA has set a specific mission for itself: to develop and promote the emergence of a distinctive African tradition in social sciences study, research and training. Through basic, action-oriented policy research, OSSREA influences relevant institutions in generating knowledge for informed interventions critical to improvements in the quality of life of African people. The ISS generates, accumulates and transfers knowledge on the human aspects of economic and social change, with a focus on development and transition. It works with and for a multicultural community, in a dynamic environment, stimulating open dialogue and the exchange of development experiences among students and staff, who collectively represent an exceptional range of practical expertise and theoretical interest. It is therefore natural that the objectives and missions of the two institutions are mutually reinforcing.

The shared actions of the ISS and OSSREA in an Innovation Fund project in the category of States, Societies and World Development have resulted in this volume, with the particular innovation project that made this volume possible being Managing Democracies. The main objectives of the project were as follows:

- to understand the relationship between African parties and the process of democratic consolidation
- to investigate the constitution of the political parties with respect to the major political actors, structures, social background and political culture
- to explore whether African political parties are sustainable – which begs the question of the sustainability of the democratisation process that is underway in the continent.

The volume deals with four interrelated aspects of party systems: representation, democratic consolidation, parliamentary systems, governance and government. These themes are well represented in this volume, and, though a few examples could be described as unique to Africa, the political parties there share many similarities with their Western counterparts. The chapters examine African political parties from the historical point of view as well as considering the socio-economic and political backgrounds within which they have developed.

As OSSREA's Executive Secretary, I take this opportunity to thank Professor Mohamed Salih who coordinated the research which resulted in the publication of this volume and Ms Ria Brouwers for her support at the early stages of the project. OSSREA also extends its gratitude to Professor Hans Opschoor, the Rector of the ISS, who participated in OSSREA's activities from its inception and continues to lend his valued support.

A volume on political parties in Africa is timely and significant. Although there are scores of books on democratisation and multi-party democracy in Africa, there is hardly a single volume on the political parties, their organisation, management, political charters and post-1990 programmes. This volume is a welcome addition to the growing literature on the African democratic leap and OSSREA is proud to be part of it.

Professor Abdel Ghaffar Mohamed Ahmed  
Executive Secretary OSSREA  
Addis Ababa  
Ethiopia  
October 2002

# Introduction

## The Evolution of African Political Parties

*M. A. Mohamed Salih*

This introduction traces African party systems to their colonial origins, explores the variety of ways they have developed during independence, and how they have responded to the current wave of democratisation. A distinction between the substantive and formalist definitions of political parties is used in order to distinguish between universal and specific political party functions. Two developments have been noted: 1) a significant shift from multi- to single-party systems during the 1970s; 2) the demise of political parties founded by military leaders.

In this chapter I attempt to answer the question as to whether the evolution of African political party systems is different from their Western counterparts which informed their existence in the first place. In answering this question, four areas of concern will be explored. First, what are the factors that contributed to the emergence of African political parties? Second, what are the functions of political parties in general, and African political parties in particular? Third, what is the relationship between political party leadership and party operatives? And fourth, what are the consequences of the above factors in the evolution of African political parties and their capacity to be sustainable? However, we must not lose sight of the fact that Africa is a huge continent, with diverse socio-economic arrangements, histories and political cultures, and whatever we contemplate here is to a large extent derived from case studies, though some instances reflect similar developments in other parts of the developing world.

The factors that influenced the emergence of African and Western political parties vary immensely due to differences in the socio-economic circumstances that shaped the histories of each. Not only do Western party systems date back almost two centuries, whereas those of Africa date back only to the beginning of the twentieth century, but both are informed by different historical experiences. In the case of Africa, the pervasive impact of colonialism, abject poverty and political and cultural expediency has informed political dynamics quite different to those in the West.

In the case of Western political parties, Duverger (1954, pp. xxiii–xxiv), argues that, ‘the development of parties seems bound up with that of

democracy, that is to say with the extension of popular suffrage and parliamentary prerogatives'. In Duverger's view, the more political assemblies see their functions and independence grow, the more their members feel the need to group themselves according to what they have in common, so as to act in concert. Hence, he asserts that the rise of parties is thus bound up with the rise of parliamentary groups and electoral committees. In contrast, African political parties originated outside the electoral and parliamentary cycle. They emerged during the colonial rule which was neither democratic nor legitimate. In a sense, African political parties emerged in a non-democratic setting, which to a large extent informed their practice during independence. The post-Second-World-War colonial state could best be described as a reformed state that sought to include Africans in the administration of the colonies. Knowing that Africans' agitation for independence was inevitable, this contention was developed into an opportunity to introduce Africans to Western political institutions, including allowing Africans under strict political surveillance to establish political parties to oversee the development of a legislature. Mazrui and Tidy (1984, p. 85) observed that in the urge to leave behind political institutions similar to their own, the departing colonial governments decided 'to export to Africa their peculiar version of parliamentary government, with several parties and recognised opposition'. In some countries, it took the political elite less than a decade to go from establishing political parties to contesting elections and assuming the role of governing their countries.

In practice, due to the speed with which political development took place, numerous ethnically based parties emerged in opposition to other ethnic parties. Once these political parties were established, they began to assume the structures and functions of Western-styled political parties. After the attainment of independence and the waning of the flare of 'decolonisation nationalism', the political elite has consumed the goal of national unity, the very goal that gave birth to their political ambitions, and fell back to sub-nationalist politics. In some countries (Sudan, Nigeria, Congo, Angola, Mozambique, Uganda, among others) sub-nationalism has flared in civil wars of liberation from what some in the marginalised and ethnic-minority political elite conceived as a form of internal colonialism exacted by the 'the ruling ethnicity'.

If, initially, African political parties emerged to prepare the political elite to assume power when their countries were poised to gain independence, some political parties during independence were created by military rulers (see pages 19–27 this chapter) to bring about development and national integration to what they misconstrued as 'the threat of division' to national integration. In other instances, civilian politicians who inherited power from the colonialists banned all existing political parties and

transformed their states into one-party systems in order to achieve goals similar to those pronounced by military leaders, i.e. development and national integration. As recent history and subsequent events have shown, both goals remained elusive.

In approaching the question whether African political parties are different from others, I distinguish between formalist and substantive definitions of the functions of parties. The formalist definition of political parties allows us to generalise about some universally assumed functions of political parties. The substantive approach allows us to tease out the peculiarity of African political parties as products of the socio-economic and political culture of their respective countries.

From the formalist viewpoint, Weiner (1967, pp. 1–2) reminds us that:

Parties are instruments of collective human action and creatures of political elite – either politicians trying to control governments or government elites trying to control the masses. In competitive systems, parties are organised by politicians to win elections; in authoritarian systems, parties are organised to affect the attitudes and behaviour of the population. In both instances, an organisational structure must be forged, money must be raised, cadres recruited, officers elected or selected, and procedures for internal governing established and agreed upon. In short, party building has a logic of its own.

This definition of political parties is generic and says much both about Western and African political parties. This is particularly true for parties that adopted Western party systems during the last decades of the colonial experience. The same is also true for the current democratisation process underway. Nonetheless, historically, the political parties established by European settlers (South Africa, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe) were neither inclusive nor mass-based and some of them had deliberately excluded the African majority. However, Weiner's contention that political parties are organised for the deliberate purpose of controlling state power and that they have specific organisational structure, procedures, leadership, members, ideology, finance, etc. is true for all political parties, Western and non-Western.

The functions of political parties in the developing countries have already been explicated elsewhere (Randall, 1988, pp. 183–7; Clapham, 1985, pp. 55–9; Smith, 1996, p. 201; Randall and Theobald, 1998, pp. 88–90, among others). I adapted these to the African experience (Mohamed Salih, 2001, pp. 34–5), and I prefer not to ponder on it at length here. The African political parties, which were founded in subsequent waves of democratic transitions, were not different in adopting procedures similar to those of

Western political parties. From a formalist viewpoint, African political parties have been successful in adopting and assimilating the form and not the substantive content of Western political parties. As early as the struggle against colonial rule progressed, African political parties succeeded in cultivating not only nationalist sentiments, but also the human and financial resources necessary to carry out their activities and realise their objectives. Typically, they did what Weiner (1967, p. 7) defined as a successful political party, the party that is 'able to: 1) recruit and train its personnel, thereby perpetuating itself as an organisation; 2) win support (goodwill, money, votes) from the population; and 3) maintain internal cohesion'.

This seemingly essentialist measurement of the success of a political party had a resonance with a more recent conception developed by Hague *et al.* (1998, p. 131). In their view, political parties are permanent organisations, which contest elections, usually because they seek to occupy the decisive positions of authority within state. What is important in Hague *et al.*'s conception is the distinction between interest groups, which seek merely to influence the government, and serious parties who aim to secure the levers of power. Political parties, whether operating in a competitive democratic system or in a one-party system, have the same aim, i.e. the control of state power. Of particular reference to the developing countries, which also says much about Africa, Randall (1988, pp. 183–7) laments, political parties play four major functions:

- They endow regimes with legitimacy by providing ideologies, leadership or opportunities for political participation, or a combination of all three.
- They act as a medium for political recruitment, thus creating opportunities for upward social mobility.
- They provide opportunities for the formation of coalitions of powerful political interests to sustain government (interest aggregation), have major influences on policies as a result of devising programmes, supervise policy implementation, political socialisation or mobilisation of people to undertake self-help activities.
- They provide political stability in societies able to absorb increasing levels of political participation by the new social forces generated by modernisation.

Although the instance of political party formation and release into the political arena seems identical in different societies, the manner in which political parties compete for power or create political leverages to enhance their chances to monopolise power differs substantially. In the same vein, Hague *et al.* (1998, p. 131) emphasised that recruitment, interest

aggregation and influencing government are among the major functions parties fulfil in a democratic competitive political system.

Substantively, political parties are products of historical circumstances that contributed to their emergence. In this sense the substance of political parties mirrors the social, economic and political relations in society, although the forms could be the same. According to Freund (1984, pp. 246–7), during the struggle for independence, African political parties provided an all-purpose appeal. The party has invariably claimed to represent the Africans, but never admitted to speaking for the interests of specific class. After independence, a vaguely articulated ‘African socialism’ was adhered to in an attempt to reconcile the aspirations of the ambitious few with the needs of the majority.

Let us remind ourselves that even in the case of the well-established Western democracies, it is hardly a century since parties in the accepted sense came into being. In 1850 no country in the world (except the United States) knew political parties in the modern sense of the word. Powerful trends of opinion, popular clubs, philosophical societies, and parliamentary groups, but no real parties preceded the emergence of Western democracies (Duverger, 1954, pp. xxiii–xxiv). In 1950, when Africans just began to experiment with the norms of first legislative assemblies and even started contesting the first elections ever in the history of the continent, the political parties were embryonic. This was obviously a diligent African attempt to imitate European party systems, under the influence of political development and particularly the quest of the departing colonial powers to transplant the seeds of political modernisation.

Essentially, while political parties in the West originated in parliamentary groups and electoral committees, clubs and long-established ideological debating societies and religious movements, in Africa, only a few individuals or groups of educated political elite established political parties. Political parties in the African case preceded the creation of parliamentary groups. In most Western democracies, the general mechanism was that the creation of parliamentary groups was followed by the appearance of electoral committees. In Duverger’s (1954, pp. xxiii–xxiv) words, ‘finally the establishment of a permanent connection between these two elements. In practice, there are various departures from this strict theoretical scheme.’

Whereas the emergence of Western parties was contingent on the emergence of parliamentary institutions, the result of suffrage, ideological movements, union, church as well as civil society and social movements, African political parties were in some instances created instantaneously



by a small group of political elite to contest elections in preparation for independence.

This, however, does not mean that once founded and contested elections, African political parties did not assimilate some of the institutional norms and behaviour of their Western counterparts. Likewise, African political parties became instruments or institutional mechanisms for the transition to democracy. In competitive political systems, they have been able to provide, although often muted, the connection between the party system and government on the one hand, and between government and society on the other. They became part of the electoral process, a rallying point for elite competition. Eventually political parties became vehicles for the elite's ambition to capture power and influence and control the legislative and bureaucratic administrative functions of the state through the political executive.

In some respects, African political parties differ from Western political parties, although the differences are not that stark as it may seem on the surface, because the former are, by and large, ethnically based (although parties with a class interest do exist in urban areas), they assume similar functions and some have been able to maintain control over the personnel and policy of government through an elite's claims to represent clearly defined ethnic interests. Ethnic interests are often treated as group interests. Ethnic political parties are formally organised with the explicit and declared purpose of acquiring and/or maintaining legal control over the personnel and policy of government (Coleman and Rosberg, 1964). Ethnic political parties have become vehicles for the expression of the political elite and the interests of the political elite are often misconstrued as the interests of their ethnic groups.

Western political party membership is based on shared ideology (secular or religious) and interests, and accommodates diverse individual and group interests. Nevertheless, one cannot exclude nationalism as a factor in Western party politics such as the case of Northern Ireland, Scotland, Italy's Northern League and the Basque region of Spain. The influence of ethnicity in African political parties became more apparent after independence. Ethnicity became so important that ethnic groups sought to protect their interests through specific political parties, thinking that they are for them and that only these parties are capable of giving them protection and security. Similarly, political parties share ideologies of diverse types often based on a myth of ancestry, collective memory, history and culture, and often reside in a claim of ownership of specific territory.

Another important feature is the strong presence of client-patron relations between party leadership and party operative. Although this is not a peculiarly African characteristic, it could be treated as a feature common to most political parties in the developing countries. Clapham (1985, p. 56) laments,

One common way in which it works is this: political party leaders at the national level look around for local leaders who command appreciable support within their own areas. They offer the local leader (or perhaps one of his close relatives or associates) a place in the party as a candidate in his home constituency. The local leader gets the vote, essentially through contacts and authority, and delivers it to the national party. The national party in turn – assuming that it wins power – delivers benefits to its local representative, in the form either of economic allocations from the centre to the constituency, as a road or a piped water supply, or of a purely personal pay-off, or of central government support in local political conflicts.

In this sense, the client–patron relationship is fundamentally a relationship of exchange in which a superior (or patron) provides security for an inferior (or client), and the client in turn provides support for the patron (Clapham, 1985, p. 53). This relationship according to Clapham (1985, pp. 58–9) has two major drawbacks: 1) it is founded in the premise of inequality between patrons and clients, and the benefits accruing to each of them from the exchange may be very uneven indeed; 2) it may serve to intensify ethnic conflicts, though it is equally capable of adaptation so that each group gets a slice of the cake. This process leads to resource allocations often very different from those that would be produced by ‘universal’ criteria of efficiency and need: the road goes to the ‘wrong’ place, the ‘wrong’ person gets the job.

However, Burnheim (1985) comments on the client–patron relationship and describes it as a relationship that is better than politician–follower relationship. He (1985, p. 98) argues that, ‘People may be better served by those who are looking for clients than by those who are looking for followers.’ However, in reality the leader would sacrifice both for his/her political survival. In both mass and cadre parties, the political and organisational loyalties of activists have deep historical and social roots. Activists usually have considerable influence over the selection of the party’s leadership and electoral labels or coalitions (Dunleavy and Brendan, 1987, p. 30).

The evolution of African political parties has resulted in the dominance of multi-party systems inspired by the Western party systems, with some apparent exceptions, while single-party systems have disappeared. However, single-party systems have been replaced by dominant-party systems and two-party systems (whereby no one party could win the necessary majority) under the guise of the multi-party system, which is the most prevalent system in Africa.

However, as recent elections have revealed, political parties are increasingly influenced by civil society organisations, which lend them electoral

**Table I.1** Longest-serving African political parties

<i>Party or political organisations</i>	<i>Duration</i>
Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), Angola	1975 to date. Adopted multi-party democracy in 1992.
Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), Botswana	Since independence in 1966 to date.
Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM), Cameroon	Since 1960. Returned to multi-party democracy in 1992.
People's Progressive Assembly (RPP), Djibouti	1977 to date. Adopted multi-party democracy in 1992.
Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE)	1974–91.
Kenya African National Union (KANU), Kenya	1963 to date. Returned to multi-party democracy in 1992.
Malawi Congress Party (MCP), Malawi	1964–94.
The Democratic Union of Malawian People (UDMP), Mali	1960–91. A military coup brought about multi-party democracy in 1992.
Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), Mozambique	1975 to date. Adopted multi-party democracy in 1994.
South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO), Namibia	1990 to date.
National Movement for a Developing Society (MNSD), Niger	1960–93. Military coup brought a return to multi-party democracy in 1996.
Socialist Party (PS), Senegal	1964–98. Introduced controlled competitive democracy in 1974.
Seychelles People's Progressive Front (SPPF), Seychelles	1976 to date. Adopted multi-party democracy in 1996.
Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), Sierra Leone	1961 to date. Interruptions by a myriad military coups.
Sudanese Socialist Union (SSU), Sudan	1971–85.
Tanzania African National Union (TANU), United Republic of Tanzania	1961–90. Succeeded by Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM)
Rally for the Togolese Peoples (RPT), Togo	1970 to date.
United National Independence Party (UNIP), Zambia	1964. Returned to multi-party democracy in 1991.
Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF)	1980 to date. Returned to multi-party democracy in 1992.

Sources: Compiled and updated by the author using various sources, particularly, Day and Degenhardt, 1984; Bratton and Van der Walle, 1996; Derksen, 2002.

support or enhance their capacity to oppose disadvantageous government policies. Trade unions, church congregations, professionals and non-governmental organisations are increasingly playing a significant role in providing ethnically and religiously diverse party membership and support.

### HEIRS OF POWER FROM THE COLONIAL RULE

Most African political parties were founded during the colonial rule and some of them are still politically active, having ruled from independence to today. Some of the case studies in this volume deal with some of these political parties: KANU (Kenya African National Union) (Wanjohi); the UNIP (United National Independence Party (Zambia)) (Momba); the BPP (Botswana People's Party) and the BDP (Botswana Democratic Party) (Molomo); the CCM (Chama Cha Mapinduzi (Tanzania)) (Mihyo), among others. For an Africa-wide picture, refer to Table I.1, which lists the longest-serving and current African political parties.

In this section I compare and contrast the experiences in the cases of the SLPP (Sierra Leone People's Party) and the UNP (United National Party (Sierra Leone)), the SPS (Socialist Party of Senegal) and the Rassemblement National Démocratique (Senegal) (see also Doorenspleet's chapter in this volume for Senegal). The main objective here is to offer an insight into how these political parties managed to maintain some measure of continuity, even though some of them were transformed to serve in single-party mode. It should also be noted that these are not the only parties that originated during the colonial period and were able to survive the volatility of post-independence political instability. Many other small parties have either hung in the balance or managed to preserve their existence through long- and short-term alliances, sometimes with the larger and even the ruling political parties.

The SLPP was founded in 1951 in response to the Youth League, formed in 1948 by Wallace Johnson, a member of the Protectorate intelligentsia, and Bankole-Bright's National Council of the Colony of Sierra Leone, an exclusively Creole nationalist party. The chiefs supported Siaka Stevens, the founder of the SLPP, since the Youth League was predominantly Creole. With the support of the chiefs and many prominent figures, the SLPP secured an election victory in Sierra Leone's first national election in 1952, a year after its establishment. The SLPP's nationalistic tendencies were clear in its portrayal of itself as the 'national' party. It won the 1957 election by a margin of one vote. In September 1958, Albert Margai, joined by Siaka Stevens, launched a new party, the PNP (People's National Party). Albert Margai's aim was to press for African's inclusion in the colonial civil service in preparation for independence from British rule (for more on

the history of political party formation and competition in Sierra Leone, see Clapham, 1976; Cartwright, 1970, 1978). However, the PNP had strong support among the young and educated elite, but was less popular than the SLPP among the chiefs. Moreover, the PNP was well connected to professionals, both Creole and indigenous Sierra Leone. During the preparation for independence Siaka Stevens launched yet another new political party, the APC (All People's Congress), supported by ethnic groups of northern Sierra Leone.

During the early 1970s, relations between the opposition and the governing political party (SLPP) were acrimonious, opposition leaders being detained more frequently than during the colonial period. This pattern of political intolerance, as extended to today's Sierra Leone, is part of the colonial heritage of these political parties, as some of their leaders were part of the transition government that oversaw Sierra Leone's progression from colonial rule to independence.

The military coup of March 1967 took place four days after a new parliament was elected. Because the election results assured an SLPP defeat, the military coup was intended to prevent the collapse of the rule of the Mende ethnic group – the social base of SLLP. The military coup was seen by some observers as a conscious decision by the Mende political elite to use the military in order to remain in power. On the other hand, SLPP failure to handle ethnic cleavages contributed to its demise in an electoral system based on 'first past the post' which intensified ethnic conflicts. Smaller political parties such as the APC established a base in the north and acquired an ethnic identity by portraying themselves as the voice of the south and the centre.

In essence, the appetite of Sierra Leone's political elite for power exhibits a similar pattern to that which prevailed in other African countries. Because they failed to live up to the expectations of Western-style democracy, post-independent political parties gradually drifted towards traditional political structures, relying on chiefs to promote their election chances. Although, on the one hand, their strategy was to keep chiefs out of the echelons of modern political power, they found themselves compelled by the realities of African polity to pay homage to the chiefs for securing the votes needed to access power. When the chiefs began to assert themselves, and when the educated elite realised that their chances of governing even within their own ethnic homelands were determined by the majority in government, they began to look for other ways into politics. In a situation where the bullet carried more weight than the ballot box or the logic and rationality of majoritarian democracy, the army was a natural ally. The extension of civilians into military politics and ambitions became the only viable choice for those excluded by the tyranny of an unwieldy majority.

Between 1967 and 1991, Sierra Leone was blighted by 20 military coups, mostly carried out by army officers who felt that their ethnic groups were being politically and economically marginalised. Sierra Leone was ruled by the military, in collaboration with APC, from 1985 until the reinstitution of multi-party democracy in 1991. During this time, it became clear that the influence of the army in politics increased markedly. With the return of Sierra Leone to multi-party democracy, the United Front of Political Movements (UNIFORM) was formed. UNIFORM comprised six political parties: the National Action Party (NAP), the SLPP, the Democratic People's Party (DPP), the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the National Democratic Party (NDP) and the Civic Development Education Movement (CDEM). The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) was also formed in 1991, as an opposition force to UNIFORM and as a radical organisation with historical roots in youth vigilantism (Reno, 1998; Richards, 1996). A military coup in 1992 continued until January 1996, when after five years in power, Strasser was ousted in a palace coup led by his deputy, Julius Maada Bio. Bio proceeded with elections which, in March of the same year brought the SLPP led by Ahmed Tejan Kabbah to power. He won 59.5 per cent of the vote, while John Karefa-Smart of the United National People's Party received 40.5 per cent of the vote (Kandeh, 1996; Musah, 2000; Zack-Williams, 1999).

Senegal political parties represent a sharp contrast to the political anarchy that swept Sierra Leone following the political elite failure to build consensus on national issues and their lack of response to internal and external calls for political accommodation. Ironically, Senegalese relative political stability could be attributed to the dominance of the Socialist Party (PS), initially inspired by a tendency towards creating a one-party state. The PS cashed on the urge to unite the Senegalese in order to achieve the cherished goals of unity and development. Their vocal suspicions of PS unity-cum-development ideology prompted the opposition parties to describe it as a totalitarian project aiming to stifle its effort to contest for power (Fatton, 1985; Vengroff and Creevey, 1997).

In contrast, during the 1980s and early 1990s, the major Senegalese opposition parties, particularly the Parti Rassemblement Africain (PRA) and the African Independent Party (PAI) resisted PS dominance and its attempt to carry out its national unity and development ideology. As a result of the stiff resistance launched by the opposition, the PAI was dissolved and many of its members arrested, with its leadership accused of plotting to undermined the authority of the government both internally and externally (Fatton, 1986). However, in the 1963 elections, PRA-Senegal, the Coalition of Senegalese Masses, the Senegalese National Front (SNF) and the Senegalese People's Party (SPP) were united under the banner 'democracy

and unity for Senegal'. On the other hand, in 1966, a united socialist party, in the form of the PS was formed forcing those who refused the call for unity to go underground. From here on, Senegal was under the rule of a dominant one-party system, which dealt the opposition heavy-handed treatment (Diaw and Diouf, 1998):

The necessity of defusing the crisis arising from the failure of the political management strategies of the single party, a crisis which neither the repressive politics of the regime nor the attempt to impose state control on the unions proved able to contain, brought about change of the personnel in the ruling party, the decentralisation of power with the amendment of the constitution in 1970, and above all, a democratic opening in 1974.

The amendment of the constitution in 1976 was premised in reducing the political parties in Senegal from over three dozen to just three. This constitutional ruling was called 'law of the three trends', meaning that only three political parties (social democrats, liberals and Marxist) would be allowed to operate and contest elections.

The PS gave Senegal two of its most prominent world-renowned leaders, the late Leopold Sedar Senghor (voluntarily left office) and Abdou Diouf, still politically active. The PS also saw Senegal through the process of developing from a one-party (1964–74) to dominant party system (1975–91) to what one might call working multi-party democracy (since 1996) with freely competing political parties. Unlike other political parties, the PS appointed ministers from the opposition in its government under the first Enlarged Presidential Majority in 1991. The Enlarged Presidential Majority could easily be perceived by the opposition as Abdou Diouf's strategy to create a government of 'national unity' to confront growing international demand for political liberalisation (Beck, 1999). In addition to external pressures there was an impending economic crisis that fuelled political instability and was worsened by the conflicts with Mauritania and the Gambia. The conflict with Democratic Forces of the Casamance Movement (MFDC), an armed separatist opposition group demanding the independence of the Casamance region in southern Senegal had also intensified (Amnesty International, 1998).

Sierra Leone and Senegal portray two different party systems, with the main difference being that Senegal was never ruled by the military as was the case in the majority of African countries. While both have experienced civil wars, Senegal MFDC and Sierra Leone's war against the RUF, the destruction of human life and the economic infrastructure in the case of Sierra Leone is of enormous magnitude. Senegal also showed the way to

many African leaders with the peaceful transfer of power from President Abdou Diouf to Abdoulaye Wade, unlike in Sierra Leone, where the political elite used the army as an extension of civilian rule, engineered military coups and established pacts and alliances with the men in the uniform. Paradoxically, the prevalence of multi-party democracy in Sierra Leone, with its 'first past the post' system has produced more upheavals than the controlled dominant-party democracy of Senegal.

At a higher level, Sierra Leone and Senegal are unique and probably offer an invaluable insight into the diversity of African party systems and their capacity to transcend long-held blueprints and definitions. The other chapters in this volume will no doubt also illustrate some other unique party systems, which should alert us to the complexity and variety of evolutionary processes they represented have undergone since their emergence during the colonial era. In essence, not all heirs of the reign of power from the colonial rule took different routes to one-party system and divergent multi-party systems.

#### FROM LIBERATION MOVEMENTS TO POLITICAL PARTIES

A number of African liberation movements declared themselves political parties on the eve of independence from colonial rule. These political parties occupy a special place in the sentiments of the people with whom they struggled for liberation. Although this special affinity could be a cause for celebration, it could also signal complacency on the part of revolutionary leaders who may find it difficult to adjust their political ambitions to the accountability and transparency democratic rule entails. The question as to how guerrilla commanders perform as civilian leaders is beyond the scope of this chapter; what is relevant though is what is common to the political behaviour of parties they have instituted after they have gained independence or liberated their countries from oppressive regimes.

Among these is the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, with its political wing, the Party of Labour (MPLA-PT) led by José Eduardo dos Santos since its creation in 1975. The MPLA-PT, or MPLA as it is commonly known, was one of three liberation movements in the struggle for independence. The other two liberation movements were the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), lead by the late Jonas Savimbi and the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA). The MPLA and UNITA were interlocked in a civil war which, due to ideological, regional and ethnic cleavages, continues unabated from 1975 until today. With steady Cuban support, the MPLA was able to keep its hold on power even after the limited liberalisation of Angola's political system (Birmingham, 1992).



The MPLA and UNITA continue to dominate the political landscape. The first presidential and parliamentary elections were held in September 1992. President José Eduardo dos Santos (MPLA) won 49.5 per cent of the vote, while Jonas Malheiro Savimbi (UNITA) won 40 per cent of the votes, with the MPLA winning 53.7 per cent and 129 of the 200 parliamentary seats. About ten smaller political parties won the remaining 14 seats, including the FNLA ([www.electionworld.org/election/Senegal.htm](http://www.electionworld.org/election/Senegal.htm)). However, Savimbi rejected the election results, which he dubbed rigged and fraudulent. Savimbi returned to the bush and resumed fighting against the government until he died. There are signs that the death of Jonas Savimbi might pave the way for his aggrieved, demoralised and hungry fighters to accept some form of a political settlement.

Mozambique and Angola were under the Protégés colonial rule and either because of that or despite of it they exhibited a similar pattern of political parties evolution. FRELIMO was founded in 1962 and led by the late Samora Moises Mechel. In 1964 it was united with two other liberation fronts and waged the struggle against Protégés rule until Mozambique gained independence in 1975. In its third congress in 1977, FRELIMO was structured as a political party (Kurks, 1987; Manning, 1998).

In 1977 Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO) was formed, with the support of Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia). When Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980, South Africa became RENAMO's main backer as part of its destabilisation policies. In October 1986 President Samora Machel was killed in a plane crash, and was succeeded by Joaquim Chissano, the current president of Mozambique. The October 1992 general peace agreement signed in Rome between President Chissano and RENAMO leader Afonso Dhalkama paved the way for multi-party elections, with the two liberation movements reinventing themselves as political parties. In the 1994 presidential elections, Joaquim Chissano (FRELIMO) won 53.3 per cent of the votes, while Afonso Dhalkama (RENAMO) captured 33.7 per cent of the votes ([www.electionworld.org/election/Mozambique.htm](http://www.electionworld.org/election/Mozambique.htm)).

In the 1999 elections the results from the eleven provinces show that Chissano won 52.22 per cent while his main rival, Afonso Dhalkama, was close behind with 47.78 per cent of the votes. In the parliamentary elections, FRELIMO was leading with 48.88 per cent of the votes while the opposition coalition RENAMO-Electoral Union trailed behind with 38.55 per cent ([www.electionworld.org/election/Mozambique.htm](http://www.electionworld.org/election/Mozambique.htm)). The remaining votes were split among nine small parties which failed to garner enough support to secure any seats in the National Assembly. According to Mozambique's proportional representation system a party must obtain a minimum of 5 per cent of the total national vote to enter parliament.

After the First World War in 1918, the League of Nations – the forerunner of the United Nations (UN) – put Namibia, a former German territory, under the trusteeship of South Africa. SWAPO, evolved from the Ovamboland People's Organisation (OPO), founded in 1957 and gradually gained the support of a number of smaller parties (Dobell and Leys, 1998). In 1960 SWAPO was founded, with an external wing operating from Zambia since 1966 under the leadership of Sam Njoma. South Africa refused to cede administrative power over Namibia to the UN despite a Security Council Resolution (1967) to terminate its mandate, and SWAPO refused to participate in South Africa elections; about ten years later it waged the armed struggle against South Africa. In 1974, the UN General Assembly and the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) recognised SWAPO as 'the sole legitimate representative of the peoples of Namibia'. SWAPO's military wing, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia, led the liberation struggle that saw Namibia independent in 1990.

SWAPO won all three multi-party elections since independence (1990, 1994 and 1999). In fact SWAPO even improved its electoral performance in 1999 elections and raised its seats in the National Assembly to 55 from 53 in the 1994 elections. It won 408,174 votes, representing 77 per cent of the ballot. Ironically, SWAPO was rivalled only by the Congress of Democrats (CoD), formed in May 1999 by ex-SWAPO members, which came second, and the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), also a pre-independence party, which came third, losing its position as the official parliamentary opposition ([www.electionworld.org/election/Namibia.htm](http://www.electionworld.org/election/Namibia.htm)).

Some SWAPO critics (Bauer, 1999, p. 436) argue that, 'trade unions, the student movement, and women's groups have all been immobilised by the continuing legacy of past divisions, the nagging issue of political party affiliation, the loss of qualified cadres, and inadequate material and organisational resources'. Bauer continues, 'Like all ruling parties, SWAPO profits from the prerequisites of incumbency. These include access to state resources and, according to opposition parties, a pro-SWAPO bias in the government-controlled media. As noted, the Directorate of Elections is located in the Office of the Prime Minister, which affords SWAPO yet another advantage' (see also Bauer, 2001; Bratton and Posner, 1999; Simon, 1995). Despite its critics, Namibia seems to portray a semblance of political predictability, still playing the tunes of nationalist politics, which brought it to power. In the circumstances, the arrogance of power and its illusions seem to have culminated in a political triumph that seems unstoppable in the short run. Like most revolutionary developments, SWAPO seems most capable of educating the masses in the body politics of resistance, whetting their appetite for more political engagement and this, in my view, is a political given, a price that liberation movements have to pay.

The history of the African National Congress (ANC), the majority governing political organisation in South Africa, is long and complex and few even among its supporters would agree as to what the initial aim of its formation was, let alone its struggle and outcome. However, less controversial is that the ANC was founded in 1912, when a broad base of people's representatives, chiefs, educated elite and professionals, opinion leaders, clergy and chiefs convened a meeting at Mangaung in Bloemfontein and formed the South African Native National Congress (SANNC). The main objective behind the formation of the SANNC was to bolster the struggle of oppressed South Africans for freedom and civil rights. In 1923 the SANNC changed its name to the African National Congress (ANC) to make an all-embracing mass movement (see Beck, 2000; Meli, 1989).

Despite a long and bitter struggle, defiance campaigns and civil disobedience, it took the ANC just under 30 years to be transformed into a mass movement. The process began with the formation of the Congress Alliance, which brought the ANC together with Indian, 'coloured' and white organisations, founded the Congress of the People (CoP), which adopted the Freedom Charter at Kliptown on 26 June 1955. The Sharpeville massacre of March 1960, the subsequent banning of the ANC and the Pan-African Congress and the impossibility of peaceful resistance helped transform the ANC into a liberation movement operating from the neighbouring countries, known as the frontline states. The rest of the ANC history is long and daunting, rife with both heroism and discontent, as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has revealed (Beck, 2000; Meli, 1989).

The ANC has come long way since the first multi-racial elections in 1994. I argue elsewhere (Mohamed Salih, 2001) that the political processes currently underway in South Africa indicate that the higher echelons of South African society have begun to find ways of accommodating each other, to the neglect of the very masses who sustained the anti-apartheid struggle and brought about democracy. In short, the problem in South Africa is not so much one of racial, political or administrative integration, but rather of economic integration, and that is where South Africa's resilience will be tested in the not too distant future. Harbeson (1999) sees the challenge to South Africa's resilience in the socialisation of its civil society to oppositional politics during the struggle against apartheid:

The ANC and other political parties that collaborated with it to end apartheid were impeded by the nature of the struggle itself from nurturing polyarchical practices within their own ranks. However, in comparison with the situation elsewhere in Africa, threats to the viability of the South African polity have been somewhat subdued ... Nevertheless, one can argue that both immediate and long-term crisis-generating issues have been addressed within the newly minted democratic framework precisely

because broadly constituted rules of the game have been established and recognised as legitimate.

In my view, the broadness of the pact that brought about the transition from apartheid to multi-racial political dispensation is far less important than the economic potential of South Africa. The latter promises a future in which even the poor seem to have a stake in the political stability and the wholeness that pluralism contrives to provide.

South Africa has adopted a system of proportional representation with a two-chamber parliament, whereby the seats of the National Council of Provinces and the National Assembly are distributed according to the total votes obtained by each political party. In this system, the National Council of Provinces forms the Upper House of Parliament and ensures that provincial interests are taken into account in the national government. It replaces the former Senate as the upper house. The Council consists of ten-member delegations from each of the nine provinces, each delegation comprising four special members, including the provincial premier, and six permanent members. Each delegation casts a single ballot on most votes. The National Assembly is the Lower House of Parliament and is elected for a five-year term through proportional representation.

The ANC won South Africa's first (1994) and second (1999) multi-racial, multi-party election, with Thabo Mbeki succeeding Nelson Mandela as president. The party won about two-thirds of the votes and the remaining votes were won by twelve other parties, the best performers, besides the ANC, were the Democratic Party, the Inkatha Freedom Party, the New National Party and the United Democratic Movement ([www.election-world.org/election/South Africa.htm](http://www.election-world.org/election/South%20Africa.htm)).

While the ANC monopoly over power is reduced by constitutional arrangement, the African disease of 'president for life' and political aggrandisement has to die before a truly democratic multi-racial society emerges. The record of the ANC is commendable by timescale; the undercurrents of myopic politics leave much to be desired. It is a case in which there are more political cards to spare than political will to circumvent.

The role of ZANU-PF in the current political turmoil in Zimbabwe is thoroughly elaborated by Venter in this volume. As a liberation front and heir of power from the colonial rule, ZAPU was founded in 1963 as a breakaway group from Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) then led by Joshua Nkomo on the initiative of Robert Mugabe and other former ZANU central committee members. The Patriotic Front was engaged in the war of liberation which saw Zimbabwe in a constitutional process from 1974 until independence in 1980. ZANU-PF won its first election in 1980, and two years later transformed Zimbabwe into a one-party state in 1982 (Bond, 1999; Mazoe, 1977). Although Zimbabwe returned to multi-party

democracy in 1990, ZANU-PF continued to win every presidential and House of Assembly election (1990, 1995/96 and the presidential elections in 2002) until today, using extra-constitutional means, intimidation and violence to stifle the efforts of its major political opponent, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). In effect, under the leadership of Robert Mugabe, ZANU-PF has ruled Zimbabwe single-handedly from 1980 to date. Among the major political parties that survived from the colonial era and continued to play some role in Zimbabwean political developments is ZANU-Ndonga. The two White political parties: Republican Front (Ian Smith) and National Unifying Force (Muriel Rosin) have disappeared, with the white minority staking its fortunes on the MDC.

The problem of transforming liberation movements and guerrilla fighters into mass movements or democratic political parties proved difficult in most of Africa, even though some have proclaimed themselves democratic and eventually subscribed to the new ethos of democratisation and good governance. Movement political parties are by and large populist, nationalist and based on the ethos of the liberation ideology. While initially, they have clear structures and organisation, with regular contacts with their electoral base, these contacts are often dramatically reduced after civilian politics is formalised. However, contacts between the masses that began during the intensity of the flare of nationalism, tended to die down as the charisma that hailed the leadership faded. Contacts among the party leaders are dense, particularly within the cadres that have been transformed into political party activists, while the contacts with the masses subside. The leadership controls not only the state, but also exerts immense influence over party management. With a few exceptions, most movement-party system leaders ended up enriching themselves at the expense of the masses in whose name they seized power. The denial of ethnicity as a common principle of political organisation took away from African ethnic groups the possibility of developing local accountable and democratic governance.

Unfortunately, liberation movements, which transformed themselves into political parties, behaved like one-party systems, often blurring the distinction between party and the state. They continue to be an embodiment of nationalist/populist politics in which the person of the president and the liberation struggle are constant reminders for voters to stay the course. This has in many instances created a situation whereby the opposition forces, the media and even genuine critics were either silenced or forced to defect to the opposition. Because most African liberation movements grow out of sub-nationalism, these movements are often not without an ethnic base, a nationalism whose symbols and political culture creeps in to inform the dominant ideology and nation-state formation, or its mutation.

## POLITICAL PARTIES CREATED BY MILITARY RULERS

Some African military opted for creating their own political parties with the sole purpose of legitimising and hence consolidating their grip on power. These parties are often founded a few years after the military ruler has lost his aura, the popularity that they had enjoyed after overthrowing a corrupt civilian government. Military governments themselves become unpopular a result of their failure to deliver on their promises, indulgence in corruption capitalising on the lack of checks and balances of their authority. When the initial popular support wanes, they impose oppressive measures in order to tighten the grip on the media, punish dissent and prohibit the freedom of speech and organisation. The parties created by military leaders were elite-based, dominating the political space and leaving no avenues for political expression. They accomplished their oppressive regimes' weakening of the legislature, sanctioning corruption and lack of transparency.

In this respect, I introduce three cases where African military rulers opted for creating their own single- or multi-party arrangements to displace the sectarian and more established political parties. These cases are the SSU, the WPE and Nigeria's (Babangida) creation of government-sponsored political parties. In the Sudan, Colonel Jaafar Nimeiri, the leader of the leftist-inclined Free Officers Movement, led the 25 May 1969 military coup. Given the ideological orientation of the coup leaders and its Arab socialist orientation, the support of leftist political parties to the coup was immediate. The Sudanese Communist Party (SCP) was heavily implicated in the coup because four out of the ten members of the Revolutionary Command Council were communists. While all political parties were banned and their leaders arrested, Abdel Ghaliq Mahjoub, the Secretary General of the SCP, not only remained free, he was also allowed to address political rallies in support of the government. However, the honeymoon – or rather, the reluctant partnership between Nimeiri and the SCP – was shattered by a failed military coup on 19 July 1971 engineered by officers loyal to the SCP (see also Niblock, 1987; Warburg, 1978).

After the failure of the Communist coup, Nimeiri's economic policies were largely influenced by the brand of Arab socialism developed by Jamal Abdel Nasir, with its strong emphasis on central planning and state ownership of the means of production. Politically, Nimeiri's aim was to eliminate the influence of the sectarian political parties in Sudanese political life and to create a secular socialist state. To achieve this goal, Nimeiri chose to create a one-party state under the political guidance of the SSU, a union of the working peoples (farmers, workers, professionals, intellectuals and the army). The structures of the SSU and those put in place by the

newly instituted People's Local Government Act of 1971 were identical. Among the main objectives of the SSU was the creation of a secular socialist national identity. Linked to this was the aim of bringing government closer to the people by stripping the sectarian parties of their tribal base which was inherent in the Native Administration System (1921) established during colonial rule.

For their part, the sectarian political parties (Umma and Democratic Nationalist Union) and the Muslim Brotherhood did not stand idly by and wait for their political fortunes to be dismantled by the SSU. They organised themselves under the umbrella of the National Front (NF), a marriage of convenience, with the overthrow of the Nimeiri regime as its main objective. The NF was able to organise several demonstrations and stage a series of military coups, all of which ended in failure. The most serious of these was the 1976 coup attempt, supported by a 3,000-strong invading NF force from military bases in Libya.

Following the 1976 coup attempt, Nimeiri and his opponents adopted more conciliatory policies. In early 1977, government officials met with the NF and a coalition of opposition parties, in London, and arranged for a conference between Nimeiri and Al Sadig Al Mahdi in Port Sudan. In what became known as the 'national reconciliation', the two leaders signed an eight-point agreement that readmitted the opposition to political life in return for the dissolution of the NF. The agreement also included the restoration of civil liberties, the freeing of political prisoners, reaffirmation of Sudan's non-aligned foreign policy, and a promise to reform local government. The SSU also admitted former leaders of the NF to its ranks, including Al Sadig Al Mahdi and Hassan Al Turabi. Al Turabi became the Attorney General under whose advice Nimeiri introduced Islamic *sharia* laws in September 1983, while Al Sadig, whose government was ousted by General Nimeiri, became a member of the Central Committee of the SSU.

Prominent members of the dissolved NF contested the 1978 National Assembly elections as independent candidates and between them won 140 of the 304 seats. In observing those elections, it became clear that the SSU was, for the first time, divided between conservatives, in support of the continuity of its socialist tradition, and radicals, whose intention was to steer it away from its socialist orientation. Others, particularly the sectarian parties and the Muslim Brothers, saw these developments as an opportunity to enhance their own political interests, to weaken the SSU from inside in a bid to take over power when the time was ripe. Many SSU veterans felt that the SSU had lost its ideological, political and social purpose, with the inclusion of the very forces that had fought for its demise.

Nimeiri's move away from socialism, or socialist rhetoric, towards Islam came in September 1983, when he announced the introduction of the *sharia*

law, better known as 'September laws'. Hassan Al Turabi, at the time Nimeiri's Attorney General, presided over the reform of the judicial system and its harmonisation with the principles of Islamic law. In the south, full-scale civil war erupted again as a reaction to the introduction of Islamic laws by the northern-dominated government and the division of the south into three regions (which undermined the Addis Ababa Agreement) in a typical 'divide and rule' policy. The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and its political wing Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) were established in 1983, perceived by their leaders as an all-Sudanese national movement. The combination of the redivision of the south, the introduction of the *sharia* law, the renewed civil war, and growing economic problems eventually contributed to the demise of the SSU.

By early 1985, public anger and disappointment with Nimeiri's regime reached uncontrollable proportions. Political unrest was characterised by sporadic strikes and protests over pay, while high prices for consumer goods, a deteriorating situation in the health service, regular power cuts and petrol shortages, an inadequate supply of drinking water, and high unemployment all fuelled public anger. Sudan's usual answer to political stalemate struck again.

On 6 April 1985, a group of military officers, led by Lieutenant General Abd Al Rahman Siwar Al Dahab, overthrew Nimeiri while he was on a visit to the USA (he later took refuge in Egypt). A Transitional Military Council (TMC) came to power with a pledge to return Sudan to democratic rule. Like all military governments, the TMC suspended the constitution, dissolved the SSU, the secret police, and the parliament and regional assemblies, dismissed regional governors and their ministers, and released hundreds of political prisoners. Sudan's multi-party general elections after 18 years of rule under Nimeiri took place in April 1986, and 40 political parties contested the elections. Regional parties such as the Nuba Mountains General Union, Sudan National Party, and the Beja Congress also surfaced and played their role in the political process.

On 30 June 1989, Al Sadig Al Mahdi's elected government was overthrown by a National Islamic Front (NIF)-instigated military coup when his government was preparing to enter into discussions with the SPLA/SPLM. Colonel (later Lieutenant General) Omar Hassan Ahmad Al Bashir headed a 15-member Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) for National Salvation; the Constitution and the National Assembly were suspended, political parties were banned and freedom of organisation, and speech and the press were curbed.

The fact that the NIF leadership was behind the 1989 military coup became obvious, with Hassan Al Turabi and the NIF political brass playing a significant role as ministers, political advisers and ideologues. It is under



the NIF leadership that a new constitution was promulgated, the National Congress Party was founded and the Political Organisation Act (1999) was enacted.

While many thought that the SSU had disappeared from the Sudan political scene, it was resurrected in 1999 as a result of the 1997 Constitution which provided for the creation of 'political organisations'. On 24 November 1998, the NIF-military dominated National Assembly passed the Political Associations law in accordance with the provisions of the 1997 Constitution, an Act allowing the organisation of political associations, called *tawali* in Arabic (meaning 'association').

A number of political exiles of the conventional political parties returned to the country. The SSU, which governed Sudan between 1972 and 1985, registered under the Alliance of the Forces of Working Peoples; it is headed by ex-President Nimeiri who returned to Sudan in 1999, receiving a hero's welcome from high government representatives. Abul Gassim Mohamed Ibrahim, Nimeiri's ex-aide and the then Secretary of the SSU is currently the Minister of Health. The SSU contested the 2000 elections to no avail, but only history can tell what future it may still play in Sudanese political life.

Ahmed and El Nagar in this volume introduce the failing of Sudan's political parties and their negative contribution to non-democratic sustainability in the Sudan. Their contribution very much laments the current political turmoil in the Sudan as well as the political and socio-economic environment within which opposition political parties disparately struggle to oust the incumbent Islam-oriented government. Ahmed and El Nagar were keen to reveal the contribution of the Umma (National), Democratic Unionist and the Communist Party in the democratic conundrum in the Sudan and its aftermath.

In Ethiopia, the demise of the Imperial Regime of Emperor Haile Sellasie was also heralded by the military. Initially, Mengistu Haile Mariam, leader of the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC); also known as the Derg (1974–1991) saw no wisdom in establishing a political party, and put his efforts into creating a socialist state based on the principles of Marxism–Leninism. However, two years later, he began to encounter problems with his political allies, with the near collapse of the regime under pressure from armed opposition, and under encouragement from the Soviet Union to establish a vanguard party. Other factors also played a prominent role in changing Mengistu's attitude towards creating a party: to gain legitimacy and exert direct control over sectors of the populations and activities that could not easily be monitored by the regular security forces (see Keller, 1988; Markakis and Waller, 1986).

In December 1979 Mengistu announced the creation of the Commission to Organise the Party of the Workers of Ethiopia (COPWE). Mass organ-

isations such as All-Ethiopia Trade Union, the All-Ethiopia Urban Dwellers' Association, and the All-Ethiopia Peasants' Association were established. The Revolutionary Ethiopia Youth Association, the Revolutionary Ethiopia Women's Association, the Working People's Control Committees, and various professional associations supported these mass organisations. Essentially, the socialist idea of creating mass organisations along the lines of defined class interests was not different from other countries that opted for Marxism–Leninism. Like the SSU, these mass organisations constitute the basic units of political activity, protect the revolution and provide the ideological and political consciousness ideals of a socialist political society. A new Constitution promulgated in 1987 and the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia was born, with National Shengo (National Assembly) as the highest organ of political power, although in reality, power centred in the hands of Mengistu Haile Mariam, President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces.

The first congress held in 1980 'elected' the membership of the COPWE Central Committee and the Secretariat. Regional branches under the direction of military officers in each region were established in order to complement the Central Committee. In 1983 the COPWE structures were completed, extending from the national centre to the 14 regions and from there to the sub-regional level, to peasant associations and urban dwellers' associations, *Kebeles*, and down to the party cells.

Once COPWE was in place, the Derg projected itself into the most important sectors of the central bureaucracy. Derg members served as the administrators of 12 of the 14 regions. An additional 30 Derg members took up influential posts in sub-regional administration and in central ministries. After 1978 the presence of military personnel in the bureaucracy expanded so greatly that not only members of the Derg but also other trusted military men served in such roles.

It is revealing that 79 of the 123 members of the Central Committee were army or police officers. There were at least 20 Derg members in this group, and others held important regional posts in the bureaucracy as well as in COPWE. At the time of COPWE's demise, military personnel represented more than 50 per cent of the congress that established the vanguard party.

From its inception, the civilian left was optimistic since the avenues for open political debate were kept open. Without a clear ideological orientation and no mass support, the Derg was in the business of winning the support of the intellectual left. Ethiopia *Tikdem* was a slogan for unity by appealing to communists and nationalists to work together. However, once the Derg decided to create a vanguard political party, it was not difficult for the civilian left to anticipate that the ultimate goal was to replace them. The

most vigorous critique came from the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP), which infiltrated the Derg mass organisations in order to undermine them from within. It then became known that the EPRP had also infiltrated the Provisional Office for Mass Organisational Affairs (POMOA), the precursor to the Yekatit 66 Ideological School, and a political advisory body called the Politburo (not to be confused with the Political Bureau of the WPE). The All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement (whose Amharic acronym was MEISON) took rather a different position and EPRP-MEISON debate on whether to opt for a genuine 'people's democracy' or to operate within 'controlled democracy' had occupied the hearts and minds of party ideologues as well as the rank and file.

COPWE had a bloody history, marred with terror, political disappearances and gruesome abuse of human rights. Unlike the SSU, its cadres are reputable for taking up the role of paramilitary militia acting as the 'third eye' of government. Not surprisingly, the political party, its organisation, structures and membership had vanished from the landscape, but its legacy still haunts its cadre and enemies alike and will probably haunt them for decades to come.

Berhanu in this volume traces the role of the newly founded political parties (I prefer to call them political organisations) following the collapse of the Mengistu regime. This is an interesting chapter, particularly the author's closer look into the success and failure of the form of democracy based on ethnic federalism cemented by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF).

In the case of the Nigerian military, the failure of Buhari's (1983-5) military government to implement its programme on 'War Against Indiscipline' (see Nwokedi, 1995), and hardship coupled with corruption and the tightening of the political space were expected. The economic situation was so desperate that many Nigerians associate Buhari's regime most strongly with the end of Nigeria's oil boom and the beginning of an unprecedented decline in the standard of living. In fact most Nigerians attributed the palace military coup that brought General Babangida to power in August 1985, and his adherence to the World-Bank-sponsored Structural Adjustment Programmes, to the steep decline in the Nigerian economy. Ihonvbere (1994; see also Jega, 2000; Olukoshi, 1993) sums up the association between the pains and cost of failed adjustment and political contradictions in Nigeria. He argues that, 'economic underdevelopment, foreign domination and exploitation, rural decay and urban dislocation, unemployment, inflation, poverty, inequality, institutional fragility, and other manifestations of backwardness in oil-rich Nigeria are prerequisites of political contradictions and inequalities in the distribution of political power in the country' (Ihonvbere, 1994, p. 212). The economic crisis

created a sense of unity between democrats and human rights activists who felt that the non-democratic management of the country's affairs had denied them the right to participate in the making of their own destiny. As we will see in the following section, General Babangida responded by initiating a programme for transition to democratic rule in the face of an increasingly militant political activism that swept through Nigeria. Ironically, Babangida's programme for transition to democracy was so flawed with inconsistency and contradictions that it gave rise to the Abacha era (1993–7), which was brutally authoritarian.

Under considerable internal and external pressure, General Babangida embarked on an elaborate democratic transition programme, which was aimed at restructuring Nigeria's civilian political establishment and parties. The ultimate goal of the transition programme was a return to democracy under newly established political structures capable of cleansing the country from the political mismanagement and corruption that had characterised earlier civilian governments.

The first step towards realising such a programme was taken in 1987 when the military government established a Political Bureau responsible directly to the President Babangida. The Political Bureau's main task was to furnish the president with proposals delineating the future political development of the country, including a timetable for the end of military rule and the return to multi-party democracy.

After reviewing Nigeria's past political experiences with multi-party democracy, the Political Bureau recommended that the government should abolish all existing political parties and create instead a set of completely new ones. The new political parties were supposed to break the link with ethnic politics and with parties associated with the old political establishment, and to favour secular over religious or ethnic affiliation. The banning of individuals described as corrupt leaders of conventional political parties, opened the door for a 'new breed' of politicians. The government also banned organisations and individuals known for particular ideological positions ('leftists' critical of the Structural Adjustment Programme) and Muslim and Christian religious extremists.

The activities of the Political Bureau were supported by a number of institutions for research and political education, such as the Directorate for Mass Mobilisation for Social Justice and Recovery and the Centre for Democratic Studies. Both these institutions received substantial government funding and were expected to support the work of the Political Bureau through research and political campaigns to explain the government's transition to democracy programme to the public. Three operative institutions were created to bluster the government policy and present them in an

acceptable fashion: the 'Hidden Persuaders', the 'Committee of Patriots' and the 'Third Eye' (see Nwokedi, 1995).

The transition to democracy programme and the setting up of the Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC) in the same year (1987) were structurally connected. The Political Bureau was created and intended to work on the political front as an agent for political mobilisation, while the CDC was to develop the legal framework within which the transition to democracy programme could be implemented. The CDC had completed its tasks by 1988, when the Constituent Assembly was created to debate, and duly approve the new constitution. Transitional Tribunals and Monitoring Committees supported the Constituent Assembly with the prime objective of ensuring that the transition programme was understood and adhered to at the federal and local government levels.

Among the most controversial recommendations of the Political Bureau was the establishment of two new government-funded political parties to replace the old ones. The first was the Social Democratic Party (SDP), ideologically committed to the social democratic tradition. The second was the National Republican Convention (NRC), in the right-of-centre tradition. The Political Bureau had even drafted the constitutions that were supposed to govern the ideological and political commitments of the two parties.

The Babangida government held the simplistic view that the establishment of two secular parties, with secular ideological orientation, would be a step forward towards political modernisation. Nigerians, the government thought, would support political parties that were neither religious nor ethnic, thus putting a lid on the complex problems that these two powerful tendencies had generated since Nigerian independence.

The failure of the government's transition to democracy programme did not come as a surprise. It represented an attempt at political engineering whose fate could be anticipated well in advance. The old political establishment rallied its supporters and resisted every move towards legitimising the new system. Civil society organisations, trade unions, youth and women's organisations, and the religious establishment had not been consulted and hence felt alienated. The new parties were not the parties of the people and as such they became the parties of the rich and powerful, gradually falling under the control of the very wealthy politicians Babangida had pledged to remove from the political scene. Those Babangida labelled the 'new breed politicians' quickly learned the twists and turns of the 'old breed politicians' and even surpassed them in their corruption and disrespect for the ethics of political office.

The Nigerian case illustrates the primacy of ethnicity, regional divide and religion in the operations of political parties. The situation was particularly grave during the 1993 elections, when the south (Yoruba/Igbo) voted for the SDP, while the north (Hausa/Fulani) voted for the NRC. The

constellation of ethnic cooperation and rivalries was reflected in the Nigerian armed forces; most of the personnel recruited from the north came from the middle-belt of the northern region and were opposed to the NPC (Northern Peoples Congress, mainly Hausa and Fulani) and to Hausa/Fulani dominance. Igbo from the eastern region formed the majority of the officer corps, which provoked intense distrust from other ethnic groups (Kalu, 1996). The foregoing contention permits an insight into the fierceness with which the 'new breed politicians' fought both state-governorship primaries and elections.

In my earlier work (Mohamed Salih, 2001) I argued that a change in political culture, which Babangida's voluntary democratisation sought to affect could best be considered as a change in the conception of politics and political representation process that prevailed in the country before the onset of this particular democratisation. Thus, given the large purse controlled by state governments, many of the governorship primaries organised by the NRC and the SDP at the various state centres were marred by intra-party wrangles and violence, by vote-buying and by acrimonious accusations of corruption of wrong-doing. There was also vote-rigging sponsored by the 'new breed politicians' and by those normally prohibited from partisan politics but furtively active in trying to influence the outcome of these electoral contests (Nwokedi, 1995, p. 161).

The early demise of Nigeria's 'new breed politicians' and the failure of General Babangida's effort to create government-sponsored political parties also revealed that real political power was outside formal politics and that political parties were created to serve these powerful interests rather than to control the government. Lipow (1996, p. 51) echoed the failure of state financed parties by arguing that: 'If the classical liberal model of the political party as private, voluntary association independent of the state is undermined by state funding then we have moved toward an illiberal and undemocratic political order. In this subdued political order, society – or civil society – is permeated by the state, and the state becomes the master and not the servant of society.' In the case of Nigeria, this has been proved right as the 'new breed politicians' succumb to the 'old ways' of doing politics.

In short, the evolution of African political parties is neither linear nor homogeneous. African states have not only adopted different political-party systems, as Doorenspleet and van Cranenburgh explain in this volume, but they have also developed unique African party systems.

## STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The chapters making up this book are divided into three parts dealing with (1) the evolution of African political parties, (2) their institutionalisation and

sustainability and (3) the governance quality of African political parties. However, when we look in more detail into the texts, it is safe to argue that the chapters are developed into sub-themes which collectively inform the evolving party systems in Africa, political parties and government, political parties and governance, and the institutionalisation and sustainability of African political parties. Below, I take these sub-themes in turn.

Mohamed Salih's chapter traces African political parties to their colonial origins and post-1990s developments, exploring the variety of contributions they have made to stifle or cement democratic values. Doorenspleet and van Cranenburgh (Chapters 6 and 7 respectively) subject African party systems to the rigour of Western political analysis. All three chapters are consistent with the view that African party systems are unique, but do not completely defy the functions commonly associated with their contribution to enhance competitive democratic politics, or at least to meet some of the requirements of such an endeavour.

In this volume, the contributions of Momba (Zambia), Mihyo (Tanzania) and Berhanu (Ethiopia), relate to the larger synthesis drawn by Kopecký and Mair who deal with the relationship between political parties and government. Kopecký and Mair's contribution is particularly interesting for African scholarship as well as political party functionaries. They draw on comparative democracy with a regional perspective exploring the commonalities as well as the differences between the relationship between political parties and government in western Europe, eastern European countries in transition and Africa. This is a very rewarding exercise in which the authors conclude:

New democracies require new institutions, and those parties that reach office can easily learn to devise institutions that suit their particular partisan purpose. Winners win twice, as it were, in that winning elections affords opportunities to win again. In this sense also, elections in such settings tend to be much more competitive – there is much more at stake. In sub-Saharan Africa, finally, the logic goes even further. There, office tends to be everything, and exclusion from government often pushes parties in a downward spiral from which there is little hope of recovery. The state becomes an instrument of partisan politics, and power generates its own momentum. Political power in Africa may no longer come out of the barrel of a gun, but it does often derive from the machinery of the state. Here, winning is everything.

Also in this volume Momba (Zambia), Mihyo (Tanzania), Berhanu (Ethiopia) and Venter (southern Africa) introduce individual and comparative country studies. Their chapters reveal that the relationship between the political parties (UNIP, CCM, EPRDF and ZANU-PF, respec-