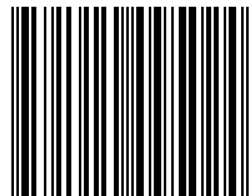


MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY AND ELECTIONS IN NAMIBIA



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Debie LeBeau
Edith Dima

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BY
DEBIE LEBEAU
EDITH DIMA



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P O Box 740
Auckland Park
2006
South Africa
Tel: 27 11 482 5495
Fax: 27 11 482 6163
Email: eisa@eisa.org.za
www.eisa.org.za

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EISA is a non-partisan organisation which seeks to promote democratic principles, free and fair elections, a strong civil society and good governance at all levels of Southern African society.



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CONTENTS

List of acronyms	viii
Acknowledgements	x
Preface	xi
1. Background to multiparty democracy in Namibia	1
Historical background	1
The electoral system and its impact on gender	2
The 'characters' of the multiparty system	5
2. Election administration	8
Critical analysis of the ECN and its independence	8
Administrative capacity, provision and training of ECN staff	9
Assessment of voter registration	12
Assessment of the ECN's voter education programme	17
3. Political parties	21
The political parties in 2004/05 in Namibia	21
Party manifestos and policy proposals	24
Congress of Democrats (CoD)	25
<i>The COD's policy proposals</i>	25
Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA)	27
<i>The DTA's policy proposals</i>	28
Monitor Action Group (MAG)	30
<i>The MAG's policy proposals</i>	30
Namibia Democratic Movement for Change (NDMC)	31
National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO)	31
<i>NUDO's policy proposals</i>	32
Republican Party (RP)	34
<i>The RP's policy proposals</i>	35
South West Africa National Union (SWANU)	36
<i>SWANU'S policy proposals</i>	37
South West Africa Peoples' Organisation (SWAPO Party)	38
<i>The SWAPO Party's policy proposals</i>	39
United Democratic Front (UDF)	41
<i>The UDF's policy proposals</i>	42

Conflict management and codes of conduct	43
Funding and party expenditure	44
Members' dues	45
Government and foreign funding	45
Other sources of party funding	45
Voter turnout	47
4. Conflict and elections	52
Conflict over the electoral system	52
Party lists	52
PR and 'largest remainder'	53
Gender	55
Conflict within political parties	56
Transition of SWAPO Party leadership	56
Splits within the DTA	59
Conflict between political parties	60
Conflict surrounding campaigns	61
Publication of lists	61
The media and conflict	62
Conflict surrounding elections	65
Interpersonal politically related conflict	69
5. Gender and youth representation	70
Marginalisation from the democratic process	70
Women and the democratic process	72
Youth and the democratic process	76
Women and youth as participants in political parties	81
Women's targets not reached	84
6. Democratic assistance	87
General development assistance	87
Government assistance to the ECN	87
External funding of political parties	91
Government funding of political parties	91
Foreign funding of political parties	94
The Electoral Support Consortium (ESC)	96
External support for consolidation of democracy	98

Bilateral donor support	98
Civil society support	99
The need for support in the consolidation of democracy	104
7. Democratic consolidation in Namibia	106
Issues around the 2004 elections	106
Attitudes about democracy	107
Do all democrats want democracy?	107
Were the 2004 elections free and fair?	109
The future of democracy in Namibia	111
Notes	114
References	129
About the Authors	135
About EISA	136

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Political party representation in the 2004 elections	21
Table 2: Voter turnout at elections from 1989 to 2004	48
Table 3: Allocation of National Assembly seats using PR and ‘largest remainder’ method	54
Table 4: SWAPO Party Extraordinary Congress vote	58
Table 5: Members of the executive of political parties, 2001	82
Table 6: Women in regional councils, 2004	85
Table 7: ECN administrative expenditures 2003/04	88
Table 8: ECN Election operations expenditures 2003/04	89
Table 9: Government 2004/2005 expenditure on the 2004 elections	90
Table 10: Funding to political parties 2002/03 – 2003/04	92
Table 11: NGOs, CBOs and CSOs in Namibia	100
Table 12: Preference for democracy	109

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACN	Action Christian National
AU	African Union
CBO	Community-based organisation
CoD	Congress of Democrats
CSO	Civil society organisation
DBU	Democracy Building Unit
DMH	Democratic Media Holdings
DTA	Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
DWA	Department of Women Affairs in the Office of the President
ECN	Electoral Commission of Namibia
ESC	Electoral Support Consortium
FCN	Federal Convention of Namibia
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
FPTP	First-past-the-post
GDP	Gross domestic product
GRN	Government of the Republic of Namibia
HCC	Herero Chiefs' Council
IPPR	Institute for Public Policy Research
LAC	Legal Assistance Centre
MAG	Monitor Action Group
MAWRD	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development
MIB	Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
MoHSS	Ministry of Health and Social Services
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MP	Member of parliament
MRLG&H	Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing
MWACW	Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare
NBC	Namibian Broadcasting Corporation
NDI	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
NDI	National Institute for Democracy
NDMC	Namibia Democratic Movement for Change
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NHE	National Housing Enterprise

NID	Namibian Institute for Democracy
NNF	Namibia National Front
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPF	National Patriotic Front
NSHR	National Society for Human Rights
NUDO	National Unity Democratic Organisation
ODA	Official development assistance
PR	Proportional representation
RP	Republican Party
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SME	Small- and medium-sized enterprises
SPWC	SWAPO Party Women's Council
SWANU	South West African National Union
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation
UDF	United Democratic Front of Namibia
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNTAG	UN Transitional Assistance Group
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAD	Women's Action for Development
WCI	Women's Campaign International
WRP	Workers' Revolutionary Party

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PREFACE

EISA has undertaken various initiatives, which have been aimed at facilitating the nurturing and consolidation of democratic governance in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. One such initiative is the first phase of the democratic consolidation research programme. Covering almost all the SADC countries, this research programme focused on the following key issues:

- Elections;
- Gender and democracy;
- Electoral systems;
- Electoral administration;
- Political parties;
- Conflict and elections; and
- Democratic assistance.

This first phase of the project has generated an enormous stock of knowledge on the dynamics of democratic governance in the region over and above the intricacies of elections *per se*. It has demonstrated beyond any shadow of a doubt that indeed there is more to democratic governance than just elections and electioneering. In a word, with hindsight, it is abundantly clear to us today that an election, in and of itself, does not necessarily amount to democratic culture and practice. Put somewhat differently, an election is not tantamount to a democracy, in the strictest sense of the term. Various other determinants are critical too including, *inter alia*, multipartyism, constitutional engineering and the rule of law, gender inclusivity in the governance process, electoral system designs and reforms, transparent and accountable management of national affairs including elections themselves, responsive and responsible conduct by political parties, constructive management of various types of conflict and the form and content of external assistance for democracy.

All these issues are explored in a fairly rigorous and refreshing fashion in the monographs to come out of this programme, although a deliberate focus is given to electoral engineering in the form of reviews and reforms required in the SADC region in order for the selected countries to achieve the difficult goal of democratic consolidation. This monograph will be followed in due

course by various others that are country-specific, exploring a broad array of challenges for democratic consolidation in the SADC region.

I would like, on behalf of EISA, to acknowledge with gratitude the invaluable financial support that EISA received from the Norwegian Embassy through NORAD and the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) for this first phase of the programme and without which this monograph and subsequent others would not have been possible. I would also like to thank the authors for their enormous contributions to this project. All said and done, the views and opinions expressed in this and subsequent monographs do not necessarily represent an official position of EISA. Any possible factual, methodological or analytic errors in this and subsequent monographs therefore rest squarely on the shoulders of the authors in their own capacities as responsible academics and researchers.

Denis Kadima
Executive Director, EISA
Johannesburg

BACKGROUND TO MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY IN NAMIBIA

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Namibia, which was called South West Africa until independence in 1990, was colonised by Germany in 1884. German colonial rule lasted until 1915 when Germany was defeated by the Union of South Africa army during the First World War. In 1920, the League of Nations assigned Namibia to South Africa as a Class C mandate.¹ In 1945 the United Nations (UN) succeeded the League of Nations and the organisation requested that South Africa place Namibia under UN trusteeship. South Africa refused and instead introduced its apartheid policy in Namibia as well. As in South Africa, the basis of apartheid policy was the appropriation of blacks' land for white settlers through forced removals and the confinement of blacks to small reserves commonly called 'homelands'. In addition, blacks were denied political rights while professional employment opportunities were reserved mainly for white people.

The national liberation movement emerged in the early 1960s and petitioned the UN and other international agencies to end South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia.² In 1966, the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) began a liberation war and escalated its lobbying efforts to achieve internationally sanctioned independence for the country. An intensive diplomatic campaign in 1987 convinced the UN Security Council to initiate negotiations between SWAPO and South Africa to end South Africa's occupation of Namibia. On 29 September 1988, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 435, which established a UN Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) to supervise a ceasefire and monitor the decolonisation of Namibia. On 21 March 1990, after the implementation of Resolution 435 which was supervised by UNTAG and other international observers, Namibia became an independent country after more than 100 years of colonisation.

At independence, Namibia adopted a constitution as the fundamental law of the country. The constitution characterised the country as a republic that is 'a sovereign, secular, democratic and unitary State founded upon the

principles of democracy, the rule of law and justice for all'. It further states that: 'All power shall be vested in the people of Namibia who shall exercise their sovereignty through the democratic institutions of the State.'³ To date there has been one amendment to the Namibian Constitution: in 1999, article 29(3) was amended to allow President Sam Nujoma to run for a third term of office.

The constitution also sets out the three main organs of the state, namely, the executive, the legislature and the judiciary.⁴ Executive power is vested in the president who is the head of state and government, as well as commander-in-chief of the Namibian Defence Force, assisted by the cabinet.⁵ The president is elected by 'direct, universal and equal suffrage and can serve for a maximum of two five-year terms'.⁶ The legislature consists of the National Assembly with 72 members elected for a five-year term,⁷ and the National Council made up of two representatives drawn from each of the 13 geographical regions of the country who are elected for a six-year term from among the various regional council members. The National Assembly is vested with the power to pass laws based on a two-thirds majority vote.⁸ Judicial power is vested in the courts of Namibia, which consist of a Supreme Court, a High Court and all lower courts such as magistrates' courts and district courts. All courts are independent bodies and subject only to the constitution.⁹

THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND ITS IMPACT ON GENDER

The Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) supervises national, regional and local elections including the registration of voters and political parties, implementing a code of conduct and assuring equality for all political parties.¹⁰ The Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing (MRLG&H) supports political parties and trains candidates for local elections. The Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare (MWACW) is responsible for promoting women in the election process, while the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB), primarily through the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), facilitates the election process by disseminating information on election and constituent rights, providing information through its regional offices and assisting in voter registration.¹¹ In addition to government initiatives to promote information dissemination on elections and voter education, the Electoral Support Consortium (ESC)

provides voter education through multi-media campaigns. As will be discussed later, the ESC consists of government and several non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and is funded by international donors. The ESC was established to encourage voters to participate in the elections and to help voters make informed voting decisions.¹²

Following the UN-supervised elections in 1989 that elected the Constitutional Assembly and the adoption of the constitution on 9 February 1990, Namibia has held regular national, regional and local elections, in which several political parties have participated. Although occasional problems and reports of intimidation have occurred, the elections have so far been regarded as free, fair and well organised.¹³ The Constitutional Assembly determined the basis of the Namibian state and its institutional structures.

Presidential elections are based on simple majority rule whereby the candidate with the most votes wins, as long as that candidate has over 50% support.¹⁴ If no candidate receives a 50% majority, further balloting will be held until one candidate gets a 50% majority.¹⁵

A proportional electoral system is used to elect members of local authorities and the National Assembly.¹⁶ With proportional representation (PR), political parties put forth a closed party list of candidates, and party leaders determine the ranking of nominations on the list. Voters do not vote for candidates, but for the party of their choice and each party then receives a percentage of seats equal to the percentage of votes received.¹⁷ The PR system benefits small parties – many of which are ethnically based – because seats are divided up according to the proportion of votes, with small parties having the possibility of getting one seat even if they did not win a full quota of votes for such a seat.¹⁸

This system could be beneficial for women who appear on their party's list because voters do not perceive that they are voting for a woman versus a man, since they are voting for a party. Some political parties in Namibia use a zebra-style list, which means that women on the list assume a higher percentage of the party's allocated seats.¹⁹ Indeed, the local authority elections of 2004 yielded a 43.4% women's representation. However, women did not fair as well in the National Assembly elections because a zebra-style list was

not used and although women were on the lists, their names were too far down to ensure them seats.

However, as will be discussed later, there are several shortcomings with the party list and PR system as it is practised in Namibia; for example, elected officials' allegiance is to their party and not to their constituency because the constituency did not directly vote for them. Officials are therefore more likely to carry out the wishes of the party than to be concerned with the wishes of their constituents.²⁰ Also, women who are placed on party lists are just as likely as their male counterparts to vote according to party lines, whether or not such actions benefit women's issues. More importantly, the PR system leads to fewer women in the National Assembly because the top leaders of political parties are men; and smaller political parties that are awarded only one seat or which have won only a few seats are unlikely to select women to occupy those seats. As will be discussed later, only SWAPO, the Congress of Democrats (CoD) and the United Democratic Front of Namibia (UDF) have women representatives in the National Assembly. While the smaller parties such the Monitor Action Group (MAG) (which was awarded its seat through the 'largest remainder' rule) and the Republican Party (RP), which both have only one seat, will have no women representatives. In addition, the National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO) and the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), which each have only three or four seats, are seen as staunchly sexist and will not appoint women to those positions. Therefore, the party list and PR system only benefit women if party members place men and women on the list in 'zebra style' (man, woman, man, woman, etc).

The plurality (first-past-the-post – FPTP) electoral system is used to elect members of the regional councils and indirectly elect National Council representatives.²¹ In this system, political parties put forth individual candidates to be elected in designated constituencies. It is less likely that women will be elected under this system because:

- parties are less likely to put forward women for election; and
- the constituency is less likely to specifically vote for a woman.²²

As was expected, women did not fair well in the regional elections given that only 27.3% of 2004 regional councillors elected are women. In this system,

because constituency members vote for a specific candidate, candidates' allegiance is a little more likely to be with the voters; however, allegiances to the party are still strong given that candidates' names are selected by party officials.²³ Although National Council members are more likely than National Assembly members to represent their regions' interests, given the current government structures, the National Council has little power to influence law reform efforts or to be considered a valid check against the National Assembly because the National Council has no formal law-making function and its power to review laws is limited and can be overruled by the National Assembly.²⁴

THE 'CHARACTERS' OF THE MULTIPARTY SYSTEM

In 1989 there were over 40 active political parties in Namibia. While many of the parties were tribal- or ethnic-based – having been sponsored by South Africa in an attempt to create an internal settlement to sideline SWAPO – others were set up specifically to participate in the 1989 elections.²⁵ However, registration requirements in 1989 reduced the number to six alliances and four parties; and out of these only seven made it to the Constitutional Assembly that subsequently served as the first National Assembly.²⁶ These were the Action Christian National (ACN), the DTA, the Federal Convention of Namibia (FCN), the Namibia National Front (NNF), the National Patriotic Front (NPF), SWAPO, and the UDF. Currently in 2004/05, 11 parties are registered with the ECN,²⁷ namely: the CoD, DTA, FCN, MAG, the Namibia Democratic Movement for Change (NDMC), NUDO, RP, the South West Africa National Union (SWANU), SWAPO, UDF and the Workers' Revolutionary Party (WRP). However, since the FCN and WRP appear to be 'dormant', only nine parties participated in the 2004 elections.²⁸

In addition to political parties, residents' associations emerged in the 1992 local authority elections, with separate groups seeking seats in Mariental, Swakopmund, Windhoek and Walvis Bay.²⁹ These organisations rejected party politics but managed to win only 1.2% of the vote with one candidate elected from the Swakopmund Residents' Association. The associations' performance improved in 1998 and they took control of eight towns with 8.2% and 16 seats, but their performance dropped to 4.5% in the 2004 local authority elections, with seven independent candidates elected in five towns.³⁰

According to the Electoral Act of 1992, the ECN is to supervise and control the registration of political parties, and have the parties sign a Code of Conduct.³¹ The allocation of seats to parties is guided by the electoral system adopted by Namibia. The multiparty system in Namibian politics functions under and is supported by the constitution; but as with any other country, difficulties emerge between the ruling party and opposition parties in exercising their legislative roles. Although many parties are free to participate, the ruling SWAPO Party has dominated the country's politics for the past 15 years, since independence. SWAPO attained a two-thirds majority as from 1994 and holds the majority of government and parliamentary positions; it is therefore able to pass its programmes through the National Assembly with ease. Furthermore, the selection of cabinet ministers from SWAPO sometimes makes it difficult to separate the ruling party from government.³²

The opposition parties complain that their role in the National Assembly is neglected and their input rejected by SWAPO members. For example, the CoD has complained that questions and motions put forward by its members of parliament (MPs) have often met with hostile reception from SWAPO Party members. Unlike other strong opposition parties in some countries that have good chances of implementing their policies, Namibian opposition parties do not appear to be near this point.³³ Although opposition parties tend to criticise the SWAPO government on some issues, their policies and priorities tend to be largely similar to those of SWAPO. Furthermore, opposition parties suggest new ideas but with no analysis of how to raise the additional funds required. Some of the suggestions from opposition parties include declaring HIV/AIDS a national emergency, the creation of a drought relief fund or the provision of homes for all Namibians.³⁴ In some cases, as Hopwood³⁵ points out, party manifestos get relegated to the back burner, with 'personality' politics and liberation credentials become the deciding factor.

It can, however, be said that fairness between political parties is exercised through the allocation of seats in the National Assembly as well as through the funding of political parties in Namibia. As previously mentioned, the PR system using closed party lists benefits the smaller parties because through the formula used, small parties with limited support (such as a few thousand votes) can still obtain representation in the National Assembly.³⁶ The

advantage of the party list system is that every vote has the same value and the number of seats a party wins reflects its share of the vote. Parties are free to order their lists as they choose. This boosts multiparty participation, providing a chance for a variety of views in the National Assembly.

The second house of parliament, the National Council, consists of 26 members from the regional councils – two from each of the 13 regions.³⁷ If one party controls the regional councils, representatives to the National Council would normally be from that party. If, however, no overall party controls the regional councils, then councillors from different parties can be sent to the National Council upon agreement; for example, the Omaheke Region's National Council was represented by the DTA and SWAPO in 1999 and 2004.³⁸ Members of the National Council coming from the regions are the only MPs elected to represent constituencies and are expected to back or raise regional concerns during legislative debates.³⁹ Though it seldom happens, opposition political parties act as 'bell-ringers' on key issues, and it is in this vain that in 2003 a new member of the CoD urged opposition parties to unite against SWAPO.⁴⁰

An important question, however – and one that is dealt with later in the section on political parties – is why opposition parties do not make more of an effort to differentiate their policy proposals from that of the ruling party or to provide a deeper analysis of alternatives that would make a difference to the lives of Namibians.

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ECN AND ITS INDEPENDENCE

Namibia, like most Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, has an independent election management body: the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN). The ECN was established in 1992 as the highest independent electoral body in the country and is answerable only to parliament. The commission was administered as part of the Prime Minister's Office from 1992 to 2000, but concerns over its independence under that Office led to the ECN being established as an independent body with its own budget in 2000.⁴¹ The Directorate of Elections is the administrative arm of the commission. The ECN is guided by the Electoral Act 24 of 1992 and is responsible for the registration of voters and the registration of political parties, as well as to supervise, direct and control elections.⁴² The ECN also oversees civic and voter education even though this task is not mandated through any electoral act; this responsibility falls within the SADC principles for electoral bodies to coordinate voter education for consistency and quality control.⁴³

To achieve its objectives, the electoral body should operate independently, have clear mandates and adequate resources. SADC principles indicate that controversies may arise with respect to appointment procedures and tenure of members, which undermine the legitimacy and credibility of the electoral process.⁴⁴ Prior to 2000, the president appointed electoral commissioners, but after 2000 recruitment became competitive through advertisements in two local newspapers (excluding the *Namibian*, which is banned from government advertising). All interested persons apply and participate in the selection process. Short-listed candidates are then interviewed by a selection committee composed of a staff member from the Supreme or High Court, a legal practitioner nominated by the Law Society and a staff member from the Ombudsman's Office.⁴⁵ After the interviews, the selection committee recommends eight applicants to the president, who then chooses five as members of the Electoral Commission. The current director, Pillemon Kanime, is the second director to be confirmed by the president through this process. This process was used to select the five commission members in 2000 and is still in force. However, when one commission member died in 2001, the president appointed a replacement; thus it appears that the selection

process is not followed in the case of replacement members.⁴⁶ Important to note is that the selection of only one female on the five-member commission does not reflect a gender balance and fails to meet the SADC recommendation of 30% women in positions of power sharing.

Even though the selection and appointment processes for the ECN are open and thus supposed to contribute to the commission's independence, there is a tendency for candidates to be from the ruling SWAPO Party. These members do not consistently display the impartiality expected of the ECN – as observed on the television talk show following complaints over the delay in announcing the 2004 National Assembly and presidential election results. An ECN member on the panel was challenged by a UDF party member to explain whether or not the ECN and SWAPO Party were in fact one and the same, given the fact that the former had answered questions regarding the delay by defending SWAPO. In addition, some ECN members had appeared in SWAPO Party regalia at a number of polling stations, hence putting the ECN's independence from political affiliation into question.⁴⁷ In an earlier television talk show on 18 November, the quality of the training of election officials who counted the ballots came into question and the Director of Elections responded that unemployed people had been recruited and were under the supervision of civil servants, and therefore he requested patience from the nation. It can be argued, therefore, that training of election officials to ensure delivery of correct and timely results was not only inadequate, but that the independence of the ECN in its activities is likely to be compromised by the dominance of the ruling SWAPO Party. It has also been argued that unemployed (and unskilled) people were selected as a ploy to make it appear that the government (and hence SWAPO Party) was adequately addressing the unemployment problem in Namibia. Data shows that with any government – which of necessity is run by politicians – it is sometimes difficult to distinguish political party allegiances from government commitment. Indeed, political parties are elected on the basis that the electorate feel that their party (or their candidate) will uphold party policies once in office and thus the electorate come to expect that the government will act in a manner that is consistent with party mandates.

ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY, PROVISION AND TRAINING OF ECN STAFF

The structure of the ECN is comprised of the Electoral Commission Secretariat

as the highest office, with two main divisions: the Directorate of Operations; and Division of Finance and Administration, both of which have various subdivisions and sections that fall under them.⁴⁸ The overall administration of activities of the ECN Secretariat on a day-to-day basis falls under the director of elections supported by other personnel. All three established posts on the secretariat were filled as of 2004, but the activities and responsibilities of the office have stimulated demand for increased staffing. In particular, the secretariat requires the services of a public relations officer who will be charged with, among others, the responsibility of keeping a positive image of the ECN by providing professional responses to public queries on activities; disseminating election results; and linking the media to the ECN through press briefings with the director.⁴⁹ The secretariat cooperates and liaises with other organisations and civil society for support of the election process.

To boost its capacity-building programme, the ECN has sponsored some staff in attending specific upgrading courses locally and abroad, as well as the attachment of operations staff members to other election management staff for educational purposes during the elections.⁵⁰ In addition, the ECN requested that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) send a special mission from New York to undertake a 'needs assessment' to provide assistance and international guidance for its work in the coming years. However, as the ECN so rightly recognises, benefits from short upgrading courses depend on staff members' educational background, and thus the educational levels of staff need to be uplifted.⁵¹

The Directorate of Electoral Operations – one of the two main divisions of the ECN – spearheads the organising, planning, managing and running of electoral affairs in the country. The ECN is tasked with informing all citizens 18 years and older of their democratic rights, as well as registering them to vote.⁵² However, the ECN has acknowledged its own need for capacity building to meet this obligation. The Directorate of Electoral Operations is severely understaffed with only three permanent staff, two of whom manage and control operational activities while only one staff member is available for civic and voter education.⁵³ Four other established posts are not filled, and the head of the Democracy Building Unit (DBU) is on temporary appointment.⁵⁴ Given its mandate, the directorate does not have the capacity to cope with the increased volume of work involved with planning and

preparing for voter registration, post-registration work, the election period and the immediate two- to three-week post-election period.⁵⁵ This staff shortage has compelled the ECN to appoint some professional staff on secondment from other government ministries and temporary (mostly unemployed) staff to assist the head office during the time period before, in the run-up to and immediately following elections.⁵⁶ Given that the ECN operates with a skeleton staff between elections, this means that the ECN must find and appoint new temporary staff for each election. Such temporary appointments present other challenges in terms of training needs, impartiality in actions, obligations and commitment to the ECN. In addition, unemployed people recruited by the ECN will require more training and may present potential challenges in the electoral activity processes if required skills are not grasped within the limited time available for training and job performance. Training programmes also cover those in the following positions: election officials such as regional coordinators, area managers, constituency supervisors, and team leaders; registration officers for the 2003 general voters' roll; and field staff such as presiding officials, returning officers and other logistical support staff for the elections. The general voters' roll registration of July/August 2003, a supplementary registration exercise in April and September 2004, civic and voter education activities, and finally the organisation of several elections during 2004 are demanding responsibilities that require support from adequate and competent finance management staff. The programme implementation activities were overwhelming for available administrative and financial staff capacity.⁵⁷

The Division of Finance and Administration – the second of the two main divisions of the ECN – has 13 established posts, four of which remain vacant, including that of a programmer. The division is headed by a deputy director and is tasked with providing general support services in staff administration and financial matters. These services include budgets for planned activities, staff salaries and other financial obligations such as payments to voter registration officials and for civic and voter education programmes.⁵⁸ This division provides the ECN with logistic support such as the acquisition of office supplies, utilities, transportation and security services as well as support services for the procurement of supplies and materials for voter registration. This division also facilitates capacity building among ECN staff by providing them with information and support for relevant training

programmes.⁵⁹ In addition to its normally assigned tasks, the Division of Finance and Administration manages donor funding for civic and voter education (to be discussed in detail later) and has to meet different donor-reporting requirements. An assessment of the financial accounting and bookkeeping for the ESC shows several management challenges such as: the need to transfer funds to a commercial bank account so as to earn interest on the large sums of money provided by donors; not having arranged for expenditures for the ESC through the ECN to be VAT (value added tax) free, which resulted in the ECN having to pay VAT and claim it back from the Treasury; the administration of funds by different donors through one account rather than having separate accounts for separate donors; and inconsistencies between proposed and actual expenditure.⁶⁰ The 2004 evaluation concludes that the staffing levels of the overall division were inadequate for the volume of work and level of competency required in the division. Acceptable reporting to donors could not be fulfilled, hence additional staff was needed in this division to help meet ECN and donor needs.⁶¹

ASSESSMENT OF VOTER REGISTRATION

The law requires the ECN to re-register all eligible voters in a general voters' roll or voters' registration roll every 10 years, as well as to declare occasional supplementary registration periods. In addition to the general voters' roll, the ECN must also keep a voters' registration roll for local authority elections while the general voters' roll is for regional, national and presidential elections. Previously, the general voters' roll only contained the voter's name, address and registration number; however, as of the 2003 registration, the general voters' roll now also contains the voter's picture, thumbprint, sex and age. This general voters' roll allows citizens to vote for local authority council, presidential, National Assembly and regional council elections – all of which took place in 2004.⁶² Eligible voters in Namibia are citizens who attain the age of 18 years and older; and for local authority elections, an individual who has lived in the local authority area for at least one year before voting. Various methods have been used to verify biographical data for registration, such as the use of a birth certificate or sworn statement by a parent or guardian as proof of age.⁶³

The general voters' roll is a key part of the democratic process because it is the official list of citizens eligible to vote in elections, and inclusion in the

general voters' roll is a prerequisite for voting – meaning that exclusion from the list is exclusion from the democratic process.⁶⁴ Keulder et al⁶⁵ report that there are two ways that voters are excluded from the general voters' roll: legally and/or administratively.

There are certain legal requirements to be able to vote. In Namibia these requirements include being 18 years of age, a citizen of Namibia, a residency requirement for local (and to a limited degree regional) elections, and mental competence.⁶⁶ Administrative errors can also interfere with the inclusion of people on the list who have a legal right to be registered. These administrative issues can include administrative registration errors, inadequate public notification of registration deadlines, citizens living abroad, voters not bothering to register, and/or voters failing to provide correct documentation.⁶⁷ Given the importance of the general voters' roll in providing people with their democratic right to vote, it is considered the government's responsibility to maintain accurate lists.

Voter registration can be achieved through three methods: compiling a periodic list; maintaining a continuous list; or using a civil registry.⁶⁸ Of these three methods, the periodic re-registering of voters is the most expensive, but most accurate, in a country like Namibia where the population experiences shifts such as high levels of migration and high death rates. Although a continuous list would be cheaper to maintain, it would require a high degree of cooperation between government departments (to continuously obtain citizens' details) and administrative vigilance over the registration of newly eligible voters as well as the deregistration of ineligible voters.⁶⁹ Namibia has used a combination method of periodic registering of voters, as well as maintaining a fixed registration place where voters come to register or re-register. A civil registry is a list of all citizens whether or not they are eligible to vote: the general voters' roll is then generated from this list. Although the cheapest method of obtaining a general voters' roll, it could be considered a violation of privacy because the government then maintains a list with biographical data on all of its citizens – which could fall into the wrong hands.

The Namibian general voters' roll process was undertaken in 1992 and again in 2003, after a delay of a year caused by the Delimitation Commission's delay in completing the demarcation of constituency boundaries.⁷⁰ Such

delays and changes of programme dates had an impact on the ECN's planning and preparedness for its own programmes – and ultimately on the elections. In addition, 'the re-registration of voters on a national basis requires a substantial commitment of resources in terms of time, financing, material input, and human endeavour'.⁷¹ Continuous registration of voters had been adopted in Namibia but was abandoned due to a number of challenges, including officials who were registering the same person repeatedly and registering people in constituencies other than where they lived, as well as errors such as listing people in incorrect constituencies or not removing voters' names after they had died (thought to be of particular importance given the high death rate due to AIDS).

These are some of the reasons why the 1999 voters' register was regarded as unreliable; given that it reflected that over 90% of the voting age population had registered to vote (879,222 registered voters). Keulder et al⁷² found that recurring problems with the 1999 voter registration list (obtained through the continuous registration process) not only contained several errors as mentioned above, but introduced a variety of others as well. The most glaring error found with the list was the occurrence of duplicate or multiple entries of the same individual, primarily because people registered and then re-registered either in a different constituency or with newly acquired identification documents, while not bothering to have their names removed from the list.⁷³ Other errors found through this research included: inadequate biographical data which could have enabled officials to identify duplicate entries; incomplete entries, such as no full names or residential addresses; inaccurate data, where the name of the person or address was badly misspelled as well as where the identification number or age was entered incorrectly; and 'ghost voters', that is, people who were registered to vote but who were either deceased or had in some other way become ineligible to vote.⁷⁴ In addition, 32% of voters who registered for the 1999 National Assembly elections did so via sworn statements, raising concern about the integrity of the voting process and opening up greater possibility for fraud.⁷⁵ Keulder et al⁷⁶ state that this is more of an indication of voters' inability to obtain identification documents than an indictment against the ECN.

An examination of the 1999 general voters' roll produced incomplete results due to the limited number of data fields collected, and thus the lack of

available fields for integrity checks. Therefore, only 'method of registration' and age could be analysed – with no way of conducting a gender analysis.⁷⁷ The analysis shows that people in rural areas (as opposed to urban areas) are more likely to register via sworn statements, and thus less likely to have identification documents or birth certificates.⁷⁸ The analysis of age shows that 40% of registered voters are between 18 and 34 years old, and that there is a significant variation in age by region when it comes to the registration of voters. This data indicates that the youth may not be as disenfranchised as previously purported.⁷⁹ Examining age by registration method shows that about 80% of those between 18 and 34 years old register via sworn statements.⁸⁰

The voter registration process had begun in 2001 but was postponed due to the various challenges affecting the continuous registration effort.⁸¹ To address these challenges, the ECN instituted a number of reforms to the registration process for the 2003 national voter re-registrations. A new registration form was designed with additional data-entry fields to obtain more information about registered voters. For example, for the first time, the addition of the sex of the voter on the new registration form now allows for the analysis of gender patterns with regard to registrations.⁸² With support from the ESC, new technology was used to enable the ECN to take digital photographs and scan information from forms. In addition, double-sided cards were used to register voters for local (on one side of the card) as well as regional and national elections (on the other side) so that voters only have one card for all elections (instead of the two cards previously required). The cards were also laminated for greater protection against wear.⁸³ These measures were employed to speed up the registration process as well as to improve the integrity of the general voters' roll.

An opportunity for a first attempt to analyse some data contained in the 2003 general voters' roll was presented through a by-election in the Windhoek West Constituency. The root causes of inaccuracies found are similar to those discovered in the 1999 general voters' roll – stemming mainly from the data-recording process at registration points, and not necessarily from the data-entry process. Hence a clean-up of the general voters' roll would enhance its integrity.⁸⁴ Furthermore, there is need to continue strengthening connections between the general voters' roll and gender issues, disability

sensitivity as well as the impact of increased numbers of AIDS deaths. Increased numbers of deaths call for the timely removal of names from the general voters' roll to safeguard against fraud during an election. Hence, the ECN needs to have a mechanism in place for the regular updating of the general voters' roll using death notices; which means that the ECN will need to cooperate with other national and local government agencies to gather and share this information. The capacity of the ECN and these other entities to gather and share such information therefore needs to be assessed.

After the 2003 general voters' roll registrations, supplementary registration exercises targeting those who turned 18 years old in the interim were held in March and September 2004, aimed at covering the local authority elections and by-elections in May 2004, as well as the National Assembly and presidential elections in November 2004.⁸⁵ The registration of voters was also undertaken at all of Namibia's foreign missions, but some people still seem to have fallen through the registration net.

According to the ECN,⁸⁶ 2,800 temporary registration officers were hired to work on compiling the general voters' roll. Supplementary registration for the local authority elections and by-elections involved 51 supervisors (33 men and 18 women): of these, 42 were government officials and nine were unemployed citizens. Another nine government officials were appointed as constituency supervisors (five women and four men). In addition, 1,295 registration officials were recruited and trained: of these, 127 were government officials and 1,168 were unemployed citizens, of which 731 were women and 564 men. A total of 43 verification officers were appointed at the ECN headquarters to assist with registration (and later election) materials. The registration officials and constituency supervisors received two days' training to prepare them for the work. Whereas this training appears to have been adequate for government officials, it seems to have been inadequate for unemployed people who lack experience in official activities, given that they had difficulty carrying out their assigned tasks.

To identify a voter, a variety of documents were used such as a national identity card, passport, birth certificate or driver's license. In the absence of any of these documents, a sworn statement from two people – who are eligible voters – was used to verify a voter's identity. All registered voters were issued

with registration cards; and lost or damaged registration cards were replaced with duplicates upon application and provision of satisfactory identification to the registration official. As previously mentioned, Keulder et al's⁸⁷ analysis of the 1999 general voters' roll shows that 33.1% of all Namibian voters registered using sworn statements, with rural people and youths being the most likely to use this method of identification. The same analysis for the Windhoek West 2003 registration roll shows that only 19% of voters registered using sworn statements, with similar trends observed for younger voters. Keulder and Wiese⁸⁸ found that 89% of those who used sworn statements are between 18 and 35 years old; and of these voters, 82% came of voting age after independence.⁸⁹ The use of sworn statements has raised concern, primarily because it means that many citizens do not have valid identification documents.⁹⁰ The RP raised similar concerns during the 2004 National Assembly and presidential elections.⁹¹

On the whole, the ECN's voter registration exercise was completed in a satisfactory manner;⁹² acquisition of modern equipment contributed to this success. The ECN estimated that between 85 and 90% of eligible people were registered to vote and political party representatives expressed general satisfaction with the process.⁹³ Although inconsistencies are still to be found in the general voters' roll, the proportion of these errors compared to the volume of the list (over 900,000 people) is probably insignificant. In addition, the enormity of the task – to register all eligible voters nationwide with a total population density of 2.1 persons per km (2001 Census) – says more about the ECN's successes in the registration exercise, than speaking to its failures. However, the challenge for the ECN will be to continuously maintain valid data on these lists for future elections and to avoid the vast outlay of time and money that accompanies such exercises.

ASSESSMENT OF THE ECN'S VOTER EDUCATION PROGRAMME⁹⁴

As has been mentioned previously, the ECN is part of a larger ESC which includes the ECN, donors and NGOs. The civic and voter education programme focuses on creating voter awareness and ensuring the active participation of community members in the democratic process. Although the election laws do not specifically task the ECN with civic and voter education, given Namibia's history of disenfranchisement of the majority of the population, the ECN has determined that civic and voter education is

essential for creating public awareness about the political process as well as for educating voters about how to participate in this process – especially in the light of the rising tide of voter apathy.⁹⁵

The ECN began its voter education programme in 1992 and established a Democracy Building Unit (DBU) in 2001, which is responsible for civic and voter education as well as for the dissemination of electoral information.⁹⁶ In an effort to promote civic and voter education, the DBU has trained one regional voter educational officer for each of the country's 13 administrative regions.⁹⁷ The work of these officers is to organise regional training workshops and meetings and to assist in the dissemination of voter education material produced by the DBU. The DBU also promotes voter education materials through national radio and television programmes.⁹⁸

Each voter educational officer held regional level public meetings on voter education throughout the country from August 2003 to June 2004. Prior to this, in 2003, workshops were held for voter educational officers to teach them operational strategies and to encourage them to reach as many voters as possible. A refresher workshop was held for the 13 officers in March 2004 with the aim of preparing them for the forthcoming elections and to motivate them. A follow-up workshop was held for the officers in June 2004 to identify information gaps and to solicit suggestions for changes to voter educational material production, design and dissemination.⁹⁹ A third workshop was held in June 2004 to revise the voter reference manual, and included participants from various government ministries involved in the election process as well as NGO members of the ESC. This workshop aimed at determining gaps and identifying additional information to be included in the voter reference manual.¹⁰⁰ Many additional definitions of terms were added (such as defining 'elections', 'democracy', 'good governance', etc.), as well as information on the benefits of voting, the function of political officers, how political parties get seats, and how names come to be excluded from the general voters' roll.¹⁰¹

The voter education campaign was divided into two phases. Phase one was to educate community members about the supplementary registration drive and local authority elections. The information messages included: defining supplementary registration; who should register during supplementary registration; where to register; the date and location of registration points;

and requirements and procedures for registration. Phase two was an additional series of voter education campaigns for prospective voters in the local authority elections and included: defining local authorities; explaining why local authority elections are held; who should vote; voting procedures; the role of voters in elections; the responsibilities of local authority councils; and what to do and not do at polling stations.¹⁰²

The development and design stage of voter education material for the supplementary registration exercise and elections was done in early 2004 and the material was distributed shortly thereafter. Members of the ESC undertook voter education, with the content of the messages divided into two sections and provided through different media. These information media included: the previously mentioned public meetings in all 13 regions; radio jingles; television talk shows, programmes and adverts; posters/brochures/leaflets; and newspaper inserts designed by the ESC. Local authority material was designed by Prime Time Media, while Namprint, Printec and John Meinert did printed media, and television and radio material was aired on NBC.¹⁰³

The ECN voter educational officers noted some challenges within the regions. These included the following:

- In some regions the officers had overlapping duties which impeded the execution of their civic and voter education duties.
- Many officers did not have adequate transportation and accommodation.
- Officers sometimes felt that political parties were better informed than themselves about ECN-related issues, leading to rivalry between some party activists and officers. The officers felt that this situation impeded voter education and set the stage for the possibility of 'unhealthy rivalry'.¹⁰⁴

In addition to challenges to the ECN's voter education programmes identified by officers, ESC assessments identified further challenges for the ECN.¹⁰⁵ These include that: ECN material did not mainstream issues for marginalised voters, such as gender and disability issues; tactile ballots could be introduced for visually impaired voters; and ECN material disproportionately focused

on voter registration and voter education but could also address civic education.

On a positive note, Pitkanen¹⁰⁶ felt that the ECN's voter registration component had been satisfactorily completed and that voter educational officers were doing their jobs well and took their assigned tasks seriously. The ECN confirmed that the vast majority of these officers had performed to expectation. The Pitkanen¹⁰⁷ report gives the example of the Omusati officer who held 19 meetings under trees and in schools in one week, as well as estimating that up to 37,000 community members had been reached throughout the country. The report notes further that as of its writing many ECN targets (such as the production of material in various languages, newspaper inserts, videos, radio programmes and billboards) had been reached in timely fashion.¹⁰⁸

POLITICAL PARTIES

THE POLITICAL PARTIES IN 2004/05 IN NAMIBIA

As already mentioned, there are currently 11 political parties registered with the ECN.¹⁰⁹ The large number of parties in a population of only 977,742 registered voters is high. One possible explanation for so many political parties is the desire of individuals for power. In addition, the ethnic base of most parties promotes a tendency among parties to view the country's leadership as being under the control of a particular ethnic group – this factor can negate democratic growth. Table 1 shows the number of seats won by political parties in the 2004 elections.

Table 1: Political party representation in the 2004 elections

Party	National Assembly	Regional Council	Local Authority
CoD	5	0	32
DTA	4	2	31
MAG	1	*	*
NDMC	0	0	2
NUDO	3	3	9
RP	1	0	7
SWANU	0	1	*
SWAPO	55	96	168
UDF	3	5	25
Local associations	*	*	7
Total	72	107	281

Places denoted with an * indicate that these parties did not participate in that particular election.

Sources: ECN, Annual Report 2003-2004, ECN, Windhoek, 2004, p 14; The Namibian, 23 November 2004; New Era, 3 December 2004; New Era, 14 December 2004.

Most political parties are organised in relatively the same manner. All political parties have a constitution that defines their guiding principles, identifies

the party's aims and objectives, defines who can and cannot be a member of the party, lays out the organisational structures of the party (such as the executive committee, regional committees or other sub-committees), defines the rights and responsibilities of party and committee members, defines the task for national and regional office bearers, addresses financial administration matters, and sets out parameters for the annual national conference and the criteria for extraordinary congresses. Some of the political parties (such as SWAPO and the CoD) also outline aspects of social composition of the party such as gender, youth and affirmative action policies within party ranks. All political parties have a highest decision-making body such as a national congress or executive committee with party office bearers, with the president of the party usually being the person who runs for his or her party in the Namibian presidential race.

In addition to a constitution and other official documents, all political parties are supposed to have a code of conduct that details ethical and moral behaviour of party members, as well as a party manifesto which outlines each party's underlying ideology and policy proposals if the party is elected to national office. However, some political parties (such as the DTA, MAG, NDMC, RP, SWANU and UDF) did not have their codes of conduct available at the time of writing, while other parties did not have their party manifestos available.

The following sections examine in detail the major political parties' manifestos and proposed policies for Namibia. To summarise the 2004 election manifestos: the major issues of focus were economic growth, poverty, unemployment, land reform, agriculture, infrastructure, corruption eradication, education, health care, social welfare, gender equality, good governance, moral values and HIV/AIDS. NUDO considered instituting a government of national unity, while MAG had no interest in forming a government. However, most political parties did not summarise and articulate the issues clearly to make them easily understood across the spectrum of voters. The most notable aspect of the election manifestos is that there were no significant differences in ideology and policy issues presented by the majority of parties, implying that voters were presented with limited choices. The trend depicted is that opposition parties fail to present realistic alternative approaches to policy issues under consideration.

There are some interesting (if not amusing) slight differences in some party manifestos. For example, the RP did not do its homework before writing its manifesto because it contains at least two factual errors (about abortion and same-sex relationships); and the DTA wants to utilise the environment to the fullest, while applying environmentally friendly conservation. Several other parties based their manifestos on ideologies such as socialism (SWANU) or religion (RP and MAG). Otherwise, the voters had little to go on when making choices between parties. This view is supported by Keulder and Soiri's¹¹⁰ survey of the 2004 local authority election candidates, where there were minimal differences between party candidates' views.

Given the similarities in ideological and social policy issues, voters use other aspects to differentiate between parties and decide which party to vote for: such as ethnicity, liberation struggle credentials and individual personalities. Most notably, voters often vote in what Keulder¹¹¹ terms ritual partisans (where voters vote for a particular party out of almost a ritualistic habit) and cognitive partisans (where voters vote for the same party out of choice, but with high cognitive awareness of what they are doing and why).

If there are no political issues for voters to vote on, then they have to use a different basis such as morals (MAG), ethnicity, liberation struggle credentials or personalities. In most cases ethnic and liberation struggle factors within and between parties play a role in decision making. This means there is no advancement of policies and all parties have similar policies and focus on these aspects. Eventually parties have to mature or they will lose their voter base (as with the CoD which is non-ethnic based) or they have to have some other method of consolidating power (as with Mugabe in Zimbabwe). Therefore, in the absence of viable policy alternatives, ethnicity, liberation struggle credentials and individual personalities within and between parties play a role in voting decisions.

What emerges from the 2004 regional council elections is a hint of sustained ethnic voting patterns, with the SWAPO Party's decisive wins in the Oshiwambo-speaking northern regions and an extension of its influence to the Kavango and Caprivi regions. (SWAPO's influence in Kavango and Caprivi could possibly be due to the absence of other strong contending ethnic political formations in these two regions.) Both NUDO and SWANU

won in traditional Otjiherero-speaking areas and the UDF won in its home of traditionally Damara-speaking areas. The parties without an ethnic constituency – or ‘national parties’ (such as the CoD) – failed to win any seat in the regional council elections; the assertion that an ethnic aspect is used by voters when selecting which party to vote for therefore seems reasonable.

Despite people’s expectations for a new cabinet and perhaps new participants in the democratic process, President-elect Pohamba has stated that he will not form a new cabinet while there is tribalism and disunity in the party.¹¹² Events of the post-SWAPO Party extraordinary congress that put forward three presidential candidates are seen as origins of tribalism and disunity in SWAPO Party ranks. This reflects what has been termed ‘ethnic entrepreneurs at work in a hegemonic formation’ – meaning that an ethnic voter base tends to keep politics of race alive;¹¹³ therefore, ethnic-based political parties are not healthy for democracy building in the country.

Indeed, the lack of any meaningful policies and programme issues in party manifestos leads to sustained voting patterns based on ethnicity and liberation struggle credentials because voters have no other means to differentiate one party from another. As voters become more educated and exposed to global trends (as well as a new generation of voters born after independence and thus having no affinity with struggle credentials), they will begin to demand that parties provide more sophisticated party platforms. If current parties do not provide meaningful manifestos, the way could be open for new parties to lure away voters, leaving older parties having to entrench their hold on power through non-democratic means (as has occurred in Zimbabwe for example).

PARTY MANIFESTOS AND POLICY PROPOSALS

Political parties present their manifestos seeking a mandate from the electorate to form a government of the Republic of Namibia that they feel would move the country forward for the next five years. Party ideologies make it clear that the identities and political beliefs of these parties are shaped by the liberation struggle for independence. However, since independence the parties have differed in their proposed policies and ideas, some stemming from the far left – as demonstrated by the new aims and goals identified in some of the 2004 party manifestos.¹¹⁴ Party platforms of the main political

parties – CoD, DTA, NUDO, SWAPO Party and UDF – do not reflect significant divergences; and their policy proposals and programmes are more alike than they are different. Boer¹¹⁵ argues that policy proposals and political positions continue to be based on ‘the legacy of the liberation struggle and politics of the personal’. These manifestos present party programme priorities, proposed solutions to national problems and ideas as to how the country can best move forward.

In the following sections a brief history of each party is given, followed by policy proposals from parties that made them available. It should be noted, however, that many political parties were on heightened alert prior to and just after elections and thus refused to give out party information for fear that the researchers were spies for an opposition party, while some parties – being new and/or very small – did not have such material to distribute.

CONGRESS OF DEMOCRATS (COD)

The CoD was formed in 1999 by a former SWAPO Party high-profile member and Robben Island political prisoner, Ben Ulenga.¹¹⁶ Ulenga resigned from his post as High Commissioner in the United Kingdom (UK) in 1998, citing his disillusionment with the SWAPO Party government on several issues, such as President Nujoma’s plan to run for a third term, Namibia’s involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo war and the government’s response to the plight of former combatants.¹¹⁷ The SWAPO Party saw the CoD as an electoral threat, and the president warned of the ‘euphoria’ among the youth; but it was the DTA that most strongly felt the impact of the CoD’s competition when the CoD won seven seats in the National Assembly in 1999. In 2004 the CoD had over 30 candidates elected in almost as many towns and was second to the SWAPO Party.¹¹⁸ Despite not winning a single seat in the regional council elections, the CoD secured the highest overall percentage (5.6%) from among the opposition parties, and received 7.3% of the National Assembly votes.¹¹⁹ The CoD had aimed to form an alternative government but its leader only managed to capture 7.1% of the presidential vote.¹²⁰

The COD’s policy proposals

Under the slogan ‘Towards equal opportunities, welfare and prosperity for all Namibians’, the CoD’s programme for Namibia prioritises ownership

and management of natural resources, poverty reduction, the land policy, gender equality, advancing the youth, good governance, the fight against corruption and other social problems.¹²¹ To deal with the problems of poverty, inequality and unemployment, low quality health care, the high cost of education, corruption and self-enrichment by elites, the CoD would restructure the ownership and management of Namibia's natural resources, which it sees as currently benefiting multinational companies at the expense of local Namibians.¹²² This would include setting up community trusts and cooperatives through which local people could have shares in multinational companies that utilise the country's natural resources.¹²³

The CoD said it would eradicate poverty through, among others, support for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), labour intensive programmes, agricultural investment, and equal access to global markets by dismantling the colonial veterinary cordon fence. In addition, the CoD would increase old age social pensions and institute a basic income grant.¹²⁴ On the issue of land, the CoD said it would fast-track land reform, extend commercial farming to communal areas, prioritise land resettlement and redistribution on the basis of lost ancestral land claims (particularly the San and current farm workers), and support local farmers with skills training and borehole wells.¹²⁵

The CoD said it also planned to address other social services such as changing the current education system through the amalgamation of the education ministries; increasing the budget for education; allowing the repeat of Grade 10 and Grade 12 learners who fail; improving teachers' skills and terms of service; and providing free education from primary level up through to first degree/diploma.¹²⁶ In addition, the CoD planned to improve health care facilities by establishing a SADC Faculty of Medicine to train Namibian health care professionals, improving medical facilities and personnel working conditions; and declaring AIDS a national emergency and locating the campaign within the President's Office.¹²⁷

The CoD also indicated that it would: provide affordable housing through the public and private sector; provide municipalities with land and/or houses to be sold at affordable prices; lower the salaries of municipal executives to the standards of the people they serve; use alternative materials and technologies to build housing; eliminate squatter settlements; and ensure no

houses are repossessed.¹²⁸ The CoD also said it would: provide potable water to all Namibians by building more dams; have a national drought fund; require environmental impact assessments for industries; produce more boreholes in rural areas; provide basic free water to every household; regulate water prices; find an alternative means of generating energy; and provide affordable electricity and water to 95% of households.¹²⁹

Based on its party gender record of over 40% women in leadership and 43% of people on the party list being women, the CoD said it was committed to a gender balance in government and promoting women's socio-economic empowerment in employment and business ownership.¹³⁰ The CoD outlined some of its gender policies as having all senior government posts gender balanced; changing stereotyped perceptions of women; instituting full maternity and paternity leave; making gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment in the work place illegal; and having employment incentives for businesses that place women in top management positions.¹³¹ The CoD said it would work towards securing the future of the youth by creating a ministry for youth as well as reforming the National Youth Council and National Youth Service to be non-partisan and streamlined to address youth issues.¹³²

Furthermore, the CoD planned to eliminate corruption by revising the current Anti-Corruption Act, as well as prosecuting and barring offenders from holding public office; while those guilty of corruption would be forced to pay back the money.¹³³ The CoD claimed that it would set up an anti-corruption institution within 100 days of taking office.¹³⁴ The CoD also said it would entrench good governance through the appointment of qualified people irrespective of ethnic origin or political affiliation. The CoD said it would use the savings accrued from anti-corruption and good governance to increase pensions and services to the poor.¹³⁵ However, these alleged 'savings' aside, the CoD failed to identify viable sources of funding for many of the policies it identified, while many of the proposed programmes have already been initiated by the current government.

DEMOCRATIC TURNHALLE ALLIANCE (DTA)

The DTA was formed in 1977 as an alliance of 11 ethnic-based parties, including NUDO and the RP, which had walked out of the Turnhalle

constitutional talks after South Africa's National Party had demanded the retention of some apartheid legislation.¹³⁶ Promoted by South Africa, the DTA was formed as an internal multiracial party to sideline SWAPO, and still carries the legacy of having collaborated with the South African apartheid government.¹³⁷ The DTA became a single party in 1991 but continued to cooperate with NUDO and the RP until these two parties broke from the alliance in 2003. The DTA won 21 out of 72 seats in the 1989 Constitutional Assembly elections and has been the official opposition party since independence, although it has constantly lost voter support over the years.¹³⁸ The DTA won just seven National Assembly seats in 1999, and only retained its official opposition status by forming a coalition with the UDF.¹³⁹ The formation and success of the CoD in the 1999 National Assembly elections undermined the DTA's support base.¹⁴⁰ The DTA did poorly in the 2004 elections, winning 31 of 281 seats (11%) in the local authority elections, dropping to 3 of 72 seats in the National Assembly (5.1% of votes),¹⁴¹ losing 14 seats in the regional council elections (winning only two) and capturing only 5% of votes in the presidential race.¹⁴²

The DTA's policy proposals

The DTA's manifesto carried the theme of 'You deserve better'.¹⁴³ The manifesto addressed peace and social tranquillity, freedom and democracy, HIV/AIDS, education and training, land reform, agriculture, foreign policy, housing, decentralisation, and health and social services.¹⁴⁴ The party sees peace and tranquillity as preconditions for sustainable economic growth. To the DTA, poverty and crime resulting from unemployment are major threats to peace and social tranquillity, while economic growth is a remedy for poverty.¹⁴⁵ The DTA said it would stimulate economic growth through five strategies, namely:

- the stoppage of state interference in the economy;
- downsizing the government to one-third its current size;
- eliminating corruption and nepotism in all sectors;
- introducing alternative measures to raise capital; and
- reducing unemployment by securing foreign investments that have job creation potential.¹⁴⁶

The DTA said it would promote the common market of Southern African states and support peacekeeping efforts through the African Union (AU) and UN, but would not support unilateral action.¹⁴⁷

The DTA also said it would make AIDS a national priority by: pursuing preventive methods; providing treatment through available drugs; setting up centres to assist sick people; and providing care for orphans through foster parenthood and family support plans.¹⁴⁸ However, the DTA offered no new options from what is currently in place in the fight against AIDS. The DTA also said it would decentralise health care and the social system through, among others: upgrading hospitals and clinics; ensuring supplies of drugs and medicines; combating malaria and other infectious diseases; and prioritising research to find preventable measures against disease.¹⁴⁹ The DTA also said it would adjust the social pension grant to reflect inflation.¹⁵⁰

The DTA said it planned to, among others: adjust and modernise the syllabi for higher education; set up appropriate education and vocational training to build skills; provide vocational training options for learners who fail their last two years of schooling; require trade unions to contribute towards the education and training of young people; and intensify teachers' skills training through in-service training.¹⁵¹

The DTA said it would: develop agriculture by utilising all natural resources in the country to their fullest, without damaging the environment; prosecute Ramatex for polluting the environment; support irrigation and agricultural projects for previously disadvantaged farmers and resettled persons; and re-introduce stock breeding stations.¹⁵² The DTA noted that land reform is sensitive but should be transparent and predictable.¹⁵³ The DTA said farm workers should be assisted with alternative employment or resettled on government farms. The DTA said it would enhance decentralisation through the devolution of funds to the regions to allow communities to take responsibility for their development, institutions and services.¹⁵⁴ Finally, the DTA espoused a policy of support for public and private sector institutions to deliver housing to people through micro financing, and flat rates of 4% interest for first-time home owners not to exceed N\$150,000.¹⁵⁵ In addition, the DTA believes that job creation is a means to allow people access to affordable housing and to maintain property ownership.¹⁵⁶

However, the DTA did not clarify how it would achieve all of the above-stated goals. As with so many other party proposals, the DTA offers no discussion of how many of the programmes it proposes would be funded,

but more importantly how it would achieve such lofty goals as utilising the environment to the fullest, while at the same time being environmentally friendly.

MONITOR ACTION GROUP (MAG)

The MAG is a religious-based (mainly Christian) party formed in 1991, with the stated focus of shaping opinion rather than having 'conflict politics'.¹⁵⁷ MAG's immediate antecedent was the ACN, which was an alliance between the National Party and German conservatives expressly set up to take part in the independence elections.¹⁵⁸ The ACN won three seats in the 1989 Constitutional Assembly elections.¹⁵⁹ Unlike other political parties, MAG does not aspire to form a government in Namibia, to recruit members or to attain votes through political campaigns, but focuses instead on the principle of 'persuasive politics'.¹⁶⁰ The leader of MAG would rather highlight issues and ideas deemed important to parliament and get people to support them, but not as a party.¹⁶¹ MAG received one seat in the National Assembly after the 1994 and 1999 elections, gained via the Namibian system of allocating seats through the provision of 'largest remainder'. This seat has been held by its chairperson, Kosie Pretorius, whose theme is that 'even one makes a difference'.¹⁶² MAG has never contested the regional council and local authority elections, but has managed to retain its one seat (0.8% of votes) in the National Assembly and captured 1.1% of the vote for the presidential race.¹⁶³ MAG is one of those political parties that, as previously discussed, would not exist if it were not for the unique Namibian system of 'largest remainder' (it was given a seat in the National Assembly because after all seats had been allocated based on the 'quota of votes' for a seat, there were five remaining seats and MAG ranked fourth out of those parties with a large remainder of votes not allocated to seats); and government funding of political parties that have seats in the National Assembly.

The MAG's policy proposals

The MAG differs from all other parties because it did not have a conventional political manifesto for the 2004 elections – its campaign material was a pamphlet distributed through post office boxes. The media have referred to the MAG group as having maintained 'pole position as the eccentrics of Namibian political parties'.¹⁶⁴ In its pamphlet, the party pointed out important issues on the political platform such as ownership of private property, and

land reform and resettlement – although it does not elaborate on these.¹⁶⁵ MAG advocates rights and responsibilities, respect for authority, inculcation of a sense of discipline and morality in society; and contrasts every party's vision of a unified Namibia by seeking unity within diversity of interdependent multicultural and self-ruling communities.¹⁶⁶ MAG is the only party that does not recognise a secular constitution of the Republic of Namibia and believes that Christianity should have a place in Namibia's political outlook by removing secularism from the Namibian constitution, using the 10 commandments as the chapter of responsibilities, supporting Christian principles and committing itself to the voluntary and non-compulsory application of Christian philosophies in life.¹⁶⁷

NAMIBIA DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE (NDMC)

The NDMC was registered in early 2004, led by a former DTA regional councillor, with the aim of targeting the rural population in eastern Namibia. The party's leader is a traditional leader of the Gobanin Damara community.¹⁶⁸ The NDMC participated in the 2004 local authority election at the eastern town of Witvlei and captured two seats, but had earlier failed to register its candidates in two other towns in the Omaheke Region before the deadline set by the ECN.¹⁶⁹ The NDMC participated in its first National Assembly and regional council elections in 2004 but failed to capture any seat in either of them, with only 0.5% of votes for the National Assembly.¹⁷⁰ At the time of writing, the NDMC's political manifesto had not been made available and is therefore not analysed here. The fact that the NDMC did not put forth a party manifesto in time for elections shows that votes for the NDMC were not based on their policy position and programme reforms: the NDMC is an example of a political party that has been formed only because of the type of PR electoral model that Namibia uses, which encourages smaller parties with a primarily ethnic voter base.

NATIONAL UNITY DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATION (NUDO)

As will be discussed in detail later, NUDO broke away from the DTA in 2003 and registered as an independent party with the ECN, accusing the DTA of having lost its vision and failing to 'identify with changing conditions in the country'.¹⁷¹ The party has its roots in the Herero community, having been formed by the Herero Chiefs' Council (HCC) in 1964 after falling out with SWANU over the latter's radical activities.¹⁷² NUDO became one of the

members of the DTA in 1977 and its policy positions and ideologies prior to 2003 were similar to that of the DTA;¹⁷³ however, the DTA blames SWAPO Party for having orchestrated NUDO's break from them in what the DTA says is a bid by SWAPO to weaken the opposition.¹⁷⁴ In its first participation in elections as an independent party, NUDO won nine seats in the 2004 local authority elections, three seats in the National Assembly (4.3% of votes)¹⁷⁵ and its leader scored about 4.2% in the presidential race.¹⁷⁶ However, as with many political parties in Namibia, NUDO has a substantial ethnic base – as demonstrated by the fact that its president is a Herero chief – with little attention paid to policy and programme reforms.

NUDO's policy proposals

NUDO launched its manifesto in 2004 under the theme 'Vote NUDO for a better life for all' and presented its proposals covering the government, foreign policy, economic growth, unemployment, poverty, corruption eradication, land reform, agriculture, women's participation in power sharing, health care and social welfare.¹⁷⁷ A key issue on NUDO's agenda is the institution of a government of national unity in which all parties that wish to participate would be represented.¹⁷⁸ In this regard the party issued a policy paper during 2004 entitled 'Federalism or unitarism'.¹⁷⁹ In terms of foreign policy, NUDO believes in collaborative partnerships with other democratic countries, and stresses globalisation and active relations with SADC, the AU and the African Parliament as well as supporting the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative.¹⁸⁰

NUDO plans to reduce unemployment through industrialisation, a focus on SMEs, development of the informal sector and support for the export processing zone.¹⁸¹ NUDO proposed a 10-point plan to advance the Namibian economy through: the privatisation of parastatals; black economic empowerment; reducing inflation and taxation; promoting Namibian exports; investing in infrastructure; developing an industrial base for future global trends; protecting existing jobs; promoting labour efficiency; promoting SMEs; and developing the informal sector.¹⁸² NUDO also said that to end corruption it would: put in place anti-corruption legislation; implement anti-corruption measures; strengthen protections for 'whistle blowers'; black list corrupt businesses; and upgrade the Commercial Investigative Unit to the status of Independent Anti-Corruption Commission.¹⁸³

NUDO presented an 11-point development plan to eradicate poverty through a participatory approach between government, local communities, NGOs and the private sector, while prioritising food production and household food security.¹⁸⁴ The party said it would contribute to infrastructure development; involve local taxis in the identification of new road networks; provide water and sanitation to every household; train communities to form cooperatives; fund the purchase of agricultural equipment and seeds; encourage adult basic education; promote tourism; reverse urbanisation through rural development, rural sports and recreation and rural electrification; and accelerate housing provision through the National Housing Enterprise (NHE) and Build Together programmes.¹⁸⁵

NUDO said its plans for agricultural development included support to purchase farms, ensuring security of land tenure and the rights of farm workers.¹⁸⁶ NUDO promised to: supply water to all Namibians; strengthen agricultural extensions; reform AgriBank; create a drought relief fund; and transport water from border rivers through pipelines to areas lacking underground water reserves.¹⁸⁷ As with other parties, NUDO also planned to: fast-track land reform; acquire commercial farms and develop virgin land in communal areas using the willing-buyer–willing-seller principle; give resettled farmers training, credit and access to markets; and guarantee women rights to land.¹⁸⁸ Similar to the RP, NUDO did not indicate how it would deal with the constraints encountered by the current government in pursuing the willing-buyer–willing-seller principle. It also did not address overcoming cultural practices that prohibit women from access to land in the first place.

NUDO said it would effect women's participation in decision-making through gender policy development and by establishing regional councils, gender desks and gender budgeting.¹⁸⁹ NUDO said it would ensure that all regional councils use gender analysis to develop gender policies, as well as monitor and evaluate gender advancement. NUDO reaffirmed its commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action¹⁹⁰ and also claimed it would improve the status of women through several pre-existing structures, as well as implementing 30% women's representation in all cabinets and ministries.¹⁹¹

On the topic of education, NUDO said it would: 'reform' the education system by improving educational infrastructure, as well as improving teachers'

conditions of service; introduce compulsory but free education for 12 years to all children; allow the repeating of Grade 10 and 12; do away with automatic promotions; provide national bursaries; focus on providing pre-school educare; establish vocational training centres in the 13 regions; focus on teaching science and technology; and ensure that higher education curricula account for work experience and prior learning.¹⁹²

The aim of NUDO's health and social welfare policy would be to provide affordable health care for all and focus on preventative measures.¹⁹³ NUDO health policies would focus on: equipping and stocking medicines at health care facilities; providing major resources directed at tuberculosis, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS; promoting safe motherhood; making medicine affordable; providing ambulance services; building more clinics in remote rural areas; subsidising chronic illnesses; and reviving the use of traditional medicine.¹⁹⁴ NUDO said it planned to use a two-pronged approach to the HIV/AIDS pandemic: prevention and care.¹⁹⁵ Preventive methods would cover: acknowledgement of HIV and AIDS; promotion of abstinence; reduction of stigma through education; counselling and wider testing; and the provision of antiretroviral treatment to infected people. Caring for the infected would involve establishing care centres that offer various services including legal, dietary and social grants to both adults and vulnerable children.¹⁹⁶ The HIV/AIDS programmes NUDO presented are not much different from those already in place and NUDO did not present any new approaches. In terms of social welfare, NUDO said it would provide jobs to people living with disabilities and reform the current method of grant distribution.¹⁹⁷

REPUBLICAN PARTY (RP)

The RP was formed in 1977 when Dirk Mudge walked out of the Turnhalle Constitutional Conference over a disagreement with the National Party's desire to retain some apartheid policies in Namibia.¹⁹⁸ The RP joined the DTA—which had similar political programmes and economic policies—in November 1977 but when the DTA reconstituted itself as a single party in 1991, the RP became dormant and encouraged its members to join the DTA on an individual basis.¹⁹⁹ However in early 2003, former members (mostly whites) reactivated the party to operate independently and registered it with the ECN.²⁰⁰ The RP accused the DTA of failing to promote reconciliation and of

lacking credibility as an opposition party. The RP won seven of the nine local councils in which it contested the 2004 local authority elections, and won one seat in the National Assembly (2.0% of votes).²⁰¹ It failed to win a seat in the regional council polls, and captured 1.9% of the votes for the presidential race.²⁰² The RP is one of the smaller Namibian parties that primarily owes its existence to Namibia's unique form of PR which does not have a legal threshold vote of 5%, as has been suggested by some political analysts.²⁰³

The RP's policy proposals

The RP's 2004 election manifesto presented four issues that it said a future government should tackle: land reform; poverty and unemployment; crime and corruption; and HIV/AIDS.²⁰⁴ Furthermore, the RP said that it promotes sound family functioning, integrity, freedom, justice, and love as pillars of Namibian democracy.²⁰⁵

The RP said it would fight crime and corruption by: ensuring that appropriate laws were in place; providing more courts and prosecutors; having a well trained and better remunerated police force; and stiffer punishments for certain crimes – such as hard labour, and the death penalty for murder and rape.²⁰⁶ The RP also stated that although it advocates restorative justice, it would institute stiffer sentences, stop paroles, limit bail, and require prisoners to pay for their own food and lodging through prison labour.²⁰⁷

Concerning unemployment, the RP said it would introduce incentives for companies to invest locally as well as to compete against importers. Such measures would include: entrepreneurship training; support for small business development; encouraging privatisation and labour intensive initiatives; black economic empowerment; and the restoration of consumer confidence and investment security.²⁰⁸ The RP said it respects property ownership and would extend this right to as many people as possible.²⁰⁹ It also said it would provide housing through employment and poverty alleviation schemes. The RP said it supports land reform for the landless, but that existing standards had to be maintained to promote sustainable food security and that it would advocate the willing-buyer-willing-seller principle, but with the right to arbitration for settling disputes. The RP believes that land should not be expropriated but underutilised state-owned land should be redistributed to the landless.²¹⁰ However, as with NUDO, the RP also did

not acknowledge problems encountered by the current government in pursuing the willing-buyer–willing-seller principle or whether there is enough underutilised state land to distribute to all the landless. The RP said it would fund its programmes through a broad-base flat-rate tax that is the same for everyone.²¹¹

The RP asserted that current educational programmes on HIV/AIDS give confusing messages on sex and celibacy; therefore, it would provide factual public awareness campaigns and encourage celibacy based on Christian morality. Furthermore, the RP would discard all programmes relating to HIV prevention and AIDS care, but did not specify new approaches. The RP stated that it would: introduce morality-based life skills programmes; provide anti-retroviral drugs; give sound nutritional advice; make AIDS (most probably HIV infection) a notifiable disease; and introduce home-based care.²¹² In terms of health care services, the RP said it would make well equipped and well staffed health care facilities a priority and would encourage health care professionals to stay in the country by providing them with better salaries and terms of service.²¹³ The RP explicitly stated that it is against legal abortion, legal rights for same-sex partners, explicit sex education at school and access to contraceptives. The RP also stated that in the education sector it would be committed to quality education with parents having a central role, that education would be based on moral values, that it would allow freedom of religion in schools as well as educational discipline, but that it would not allow drugs and gangsters in schools. The RP would also do away with life skills classes because it feels that such classes promote abortion, sexual promiscuity and deviant lifestyles.²¹⁴

The RP's election manifesto has several inaccuracies which are misleading, such as the allegation that the current government pays for abortions (which is illegal in Namibia except in extreme cases) or that the constitution has a sexual orientation clause (which it does not).²¹⁵ Indeed, the RP's manifesto seems to have been written with South African laws, not Namibian laws, in mind.

SOUTH WEST AFRICA NATIONAL UNION (SWANU)

With the backing of the Herero chiefs, SWANU was formed as the country's first national liberation party in 1959. Although dominated by the Herero,

SWANU was founded as a national political movement.²¹⁶ SWANU opposed imperialism and apartheid from the outset and its aims were similar to SWAPO, but SWANU emphasised self-reliance while SWAPO saw the path to independence as going through official UN channels.²¹⁷ SWANU advocates a socialist ideology and argues that striving for political freedom on its own without this ideology leads to corruption.²¹⁸ SWANU participated in the 1989 elections under the Namibia National Front (NNF), which had one seat in the Constitutional Assembly. SWANU President, Vekuii Rukoro, took the seat but was co-opted into the SWAPO government in 1990 and later joined the SWAPO Party. Despite being the first national liberation movement, SWANU has never won a seat in the National Assembly and its leaders, although once popular personalities, are not well known in contemporary politics.²¹⁹ The party performed poorly in the 1992 local authority elections, capturing only 1.5% of the votes; this was to be its best performance to date and its votes dropped to 0.23% in the 1998 local authority elections.²²⁰ SWANU formed an alliance with the WRP in August 1999 but the alliance failed to capture a seat in parliament. SWANU did not contest the 2004 local authority elections, failed to capture a seat in the National Assembly (with only 0.4% of the vote), but sprang a surprise by winning representation of one constituency formerly held by the SWAPO Party and the DTA in the regional council polls.²²¹ This is the first political success SWANU has attained since independence. As with so many other political parties in Namibia, SWANU has primarily an ethnic voter base (the Herero) but this voter base is split between SWANU and NUDO, which could account for the poor showing of both parties in elections relative to the number of Herero voters.

SWANU'S policy proposals

Like all other parties, SWANU's manifesto addresses its guiding ideological and political principles including issues regarding, foreign policy, land reform, devolution of powers to the regions, corruption, an excessively large government, and the need for social amenities such as water and electricity. SWANU's guiding ideological and political principles are outlined as socialism and revolution, with these forming the basis of unity in nationalist and leftist political forces so as to fight the 'evils and legacy left behind by colonial apartheid, and a post-independence decade of greed and corruption'.²²² The SWANU leadership is determinately anti-capitalist and anti-free market, claiming that crime is caused by rampant capitalism. The

foreign policy of SWANU's government would be informed by the principles of Pan Africanism, African nationalism and international solidarity of the working class against capitalism and imperialism. SWANU's manifesto expressed support for NEPAD (which advocates market-oriented economic reforms) but this presents a contradiction due to SWANU's socialist political and ideological outlook.²²³

On the land question, SWANU advocated repossession of what was illegally taken from the people, with those who repossess land being supported to make it productive. The party proposed an approach that would ensure that beneficiaries get sufficient land, necessary service institutions, equipment and implements to work the land.²²⁴

SWANU's vision for Namibia is expressed in its commitment to the devolution of powers to regional and local structures as well as its pledge to recognise traditional authorities. The party said it would provide affordable and adequate social amenities to Namibians, such as water, electricity and sewerage services. Furthermore, SWANU is concerned about the size of the executive branch of government, asserting that the executive erodes the demarcation of responsibilities between the legislature and the executive because the latter overcrowds the jurisdiction of the former. Hence, SWANU would have a smaller cabinet of at most 15 ministers. However, SWANU does not articulate what actions would be necessary to bring about the desired change and its proposals remain ideological.

SOUTH WEST AFRICA PEOPLES' ORGANISATION (SWAPO PARTY)

SWAPO was founded in 1960, transforming from its forerunners – the Ovambo People's Organisation and the Ovamboland People's Congress. After 1960 SWAPO campaigned at international level for the independence of Namibia.²²⁵ In 1961 SWAPO outlined its political programme with three basic aims, namely, to: establish a free, democratic government in South West Africa; unify all people into a national political organisation, irrespective of race, ethnic origin, religion or creed; and reconstruct the economic, educational and social foundations of African independence.²²⁶ Despite shifts in its position over the years, the SWAPO Party has remained Afro-nationalist in its ideology. Under UN Resolution 435 and the UN-supervised Constitutional Assembly elections in 1989, SWAPO won the elections with

41 of the 72 seats in the Constitutional Assembly and has led the country since independence.

The SWAPO Party has dominated Namibian politics in the local authorities, regional councils and National Assembly since independence. The party attained a two-thirds majority with 53 seats in parliament in 1994 and re-election of its president, Sam Nujoma. SWAPO increased its National Assembly majority to 55 seats in the 1999 National Assembly elections and re-election of President Nujoma for a third term.²²⁷ President Nujoma's choice of his successor, Hifikepunye Pohamba, was endorsed by the party as a presidential candidate for the 2004 elections.²²⁸ The party took 60% of the 2004 local authority election votes, holding 168 of the 281 seats; 96 of 107 seats in the regional council; and maintained its 55 seats (75.8% of votes) in the National Assembly.²²⁹ The SWAPO Party candidate, Hifikepunye Pohamba, defeated other party contenders with 75.1% of the votes in the presidential race.²³⁰

The SWAPO Party's policy proposals

In the introduction to the 2004 SWAPO Party manifesto, the president presents a summary of the key achievements of his party's government, stating that SWAPO would continue such work if re-elected as government.²³¹ The main part of the SWAPO Party manifesto outlines the government's current programmes, successes and challenges, then charts the vision and commitments of the party for the next five years. The party addressed peace, democracy and good governance, building a just society, education, infrastructure, building a vibrant economy and prudent fiscal management of productive sectors.²³² SWAPO Party's social programmes focused on expanding opportunities in areas such as: land reform; gender equality; opportunities to work; housing; education; health services; security; adequate infrastructure (such as water, electricity, telecommunications and roads); and support for senior citizens and Namibians with disabilities.

The SWAPO Party's manifesto acknowledges that the issue of land reform is highly charged and indicates that the willing-buyer-willing-seller principle had not succeeded.²³³ Its land reform programmes are to benefit resettled persons through training and capacity building. These objectives are to be achieved through land valuation and taxation regulations to help increase

land availability, especially under-productive land. The SWAPO Party plans to accelerate land reform by doubling the land acquisition fund and would consider the expropriation of 192 farms belonging to foreign absentee landlords.²³⁴

To advance gender equality the SWAPO Party would direct the MWACW to establish a fund to support orphans and vulnerable children as well as early childhood development.²³⁵ The party said it would address shortcomings in the number of women parliamentarians by increasing women in the National Council and as governors, but would also continue to address barriers experienced by women in accessing resources and would build capacity to mainstream gender equality in the workplace.²³⁶

The SWAPO Party said it was committed to reducing crime and strengthening law and order agencies in the next five years.²³⁷ The Ministry of Justice would be directed to ensure that stiffer sentences are handed down for murder, rape and armed robbery, including theft of state property. A new Criminal Procedure Bill has been tabled in parliament and provides for life imprisonment for serious crimes and courts would be required to award compensation to victims of crime.²³⁸

The SWAPO Party aims to remove disparities in the housing sector between rural and urban areas as well as between population groups and would provide opportunities for home ownership to all Namibians. The party said that in the next five years it would give momentum to low-cost housing, the provision of serviced plots and would speed up the decentralisation programme.²³⁹

The SWAPO Party said that to counter the AIDS pandemic, it would campaign for prevention and control of all sexually transmitted diseases, stress social values and support for the infected, counter alcohol abuse and support initiatives aimed at reducing poverty.²⁴⁰ The SWAPO Party plans to make HIV a notifiable disease, and its roll-out aims to have one public sector hospital in each region providing full HIV/AIDS services, prevention of mother-to-child transmission and antiretroviral treatment. Other planned health programmes are directed at children and women, with an integrated strategy to reduce poverty.²⁴¹

The SWAPO Party manifesto states that in the next five years emphasis would be placed on the promotion of skills and managerial competence to equip young people with marketable skills in order to secure them productive employment or that they become entrepreneurs: the Party commits to initiating a project to restructure the education system to meet this endeavour. Human resource development would be emphasised, with particular support given to science programmes and top students from primary level through to tertiary institutions.²⁴²

A number of capital projects are proposed in the SWAPO Party's manifesto for the provision of water, electricity, transport and communication.²⁴³ It also addresses the necessity of building the economy, promoting fiscal management, maintaining good labour relations, and strengthening the productive sector of the economy. Priorities of the party over the next five years are the promotion of economic growth and job creation.²⁴⁴ The party said it would reduce the budget deficit from the current 5%, to 3% over the next five years, while maintaining investment in the social sector, as well as aiming to achieve a debt reduction ratio from 30% to below 25% of gross domestic product (GDP).²⁴⁵

UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT (UDF)

The UDF was founded as an alliance between eight parties in 1989 as a centrist liberation movement, drawing most of its voters from the Damara community.²⁴⁶ It transformed into a political party in 1989 under the leadership of Chief Justus Garoeb. The party advocated for the autonomy of local authorities, a mixed economy with private property ownership rights, and for the state to play a regulatory role only. The UDF won four seats in the 1989 Constitutional Assembly elections, its support being drawn mainly from the Erongo and Kunene regions.²⁴⁷ The party's representation declined to only two seats in the 1994 and 1999 National Assembly elections.²⁴⁸ The UDF's performance in the local authority elections started at 5.8% in 1992; increased to 6.6% in 1998; but dropped slightly to 6.3% in 2004. The regional councillor results indicate a low performance by the UDF of 2% in 1992; an increase to 4.5% in 1998 with four seats; but the UDF came out surprisingly strong in 2004, gaining an additional seat and taking control of five constituencies.²⁴⁹ For the first time the UDF leader contested the 1999 presidential elections but gained only 3% of the vote. The UDF entered into

a parliamentary coalition with the DTA in 2000 in order for the latter to maintain its role as the official opposition in parliament.²⁵⁰ Independent from the DTA for the 2004 elections, the UDF won three seats (3.7% of votes) in the 2004 National Assembly elections²⁵¹ with the UDF leader receiving about 3.8% of the votes in the presidential poll.²⁵²

The UDF's policy proposals

The UDF featured its 2004 election manifesto under the theme, 'Society back to people – People back to society'. Key issues presented in the manifesto focused on: land reform, job creation and fund raising through heavy taxation.²⁵³ Challenges within the country were highlighted as: inequalities; youth in crisis; women under threat; and the persistence of colonialism; as well as some messages on HIV/AIDS. The party said it would uphold family values by fighting drug abuse, alcohol abuse and sexual misbehaviour.²⁵⁴ The party did not elaborate on its strategies that differ from those of the current SWAPO Party government nor did it define terminology, such as 'sexual misbehaviour'.

The UDF said it would address land reform by introducing contractual agreements between farmers and their farm workers to have one-third of each white-owned farm redistributed to generational families of farm workers.²⁵⁵ The farmers would in turn pay a reduced tax and utilise labour from workers, and in return the workers would use the farmer's equipment at a cost. Legislation would be introduced to cover a loan scheme to blacks who wished to utilise the land for other types of business.²⁵⁶

The UDF said it would create 100,000 jobs for low wage people through a four-year plan that would be facilitated by a government payment of half the workers' salaries for two years, but would require reciprocal obligations by employers to guarantee the workers' jobs for at least five years. The party did not state what would happen after two years of state-subsidised salaries.²⁵⁷ The UDF would raise N\$1.2 billion for the job scheme through heavy taxation of the rich, increased alcohol tax, taxing environmentally unfriendly industries, and dividends from parastatals.²⁵⁸ The party expected that a four-year fundraising plan would recover N\$300 million from income tax, N\$300 million from alcohol tax, N\$300 million from environmentally unfriendly industries, and N\$150 million from state-owned enterprises.²⁵⁹

However, the manifesto did not elaborate on what the plan would entail and how it would be implemented.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND CODES OF CONDUCT

One of the functions of the ECN as stipulated by the Electoral Act of 1992 is to supervise and control the registration of political parties.²⁶⁰ The ECN draws up a Code of Conduct to be adhered to by all parties in conducting their affairs, as well as throughout the election period;²⁶¹ but, each party also draws up its own code of conduct or some form of disciplinary guidelines and mode of conflict management for their own members within the party.

According to article 4(1) of the CoD constitution, membership in the party is open to all Namibian citizens and permanent residents aged 15 years and over who subscribe to the principles, policies, programmes and code of conduct of the CoD.²⁶² Members are obliged to, among others, abide by the constitution of the CoD, undertake duties expected of them, and observe discipline within the party. Any member who violates a code of conduct is subject to disciplinary action, as stipulated in the party's code of conduct. The CoD revised its code of conduct at its 2004 convention but declined to provide a copy of the revised version to the researchers because it was still in draft form.

NUDO has a disciplinary code to ensure effective conflict management within the party. The code provides a chance for a member to defend him or herself, and the freedom to appeal against a sentence within 14 days. Disciplinary proceedings are confined to violations of the NUDO constitution and the disciplinary code of the party. The code does not apply to private conflicts between members unless the problems impinge upon the party's constitution. The code enumerates serious offences for which any member can be charged following disciplinary proceedings.²⁶³ Serious offences include, among others, prejudices on the integrity or repute of the party, corruption, and any form of women or child abuse. The procedure followed for disciplinary proceedings has a 'bottom-up' character because it is initiated at the level where the allegations are raised – at branch, regional or national level. Penalties range from light to severe: reprimand, compensation payment and/or performance of tasks, to suspension or expulsion.

The SWAPO Party also has a code of conduct which deals with political campaigning. It specifically states that all duly elected or authorised party members have a right to participate in and vote during SWAPO Party proceedings; SWAPO Party members have a right to canvass support for elections and raise concerns or objections through appropriate structures.²⁶⁴ However, the code of conduct also stipulates that party members cannot participate in or cause acts that are 'unworthy' of the SWAPO Party name: such acts include personal attacks or character assassinations; ill treatment of opposition party members; or threats, harassment or bribes to people in order to win votes. A selected SWAPO Party organ will hear all complaints and if the member is found to have violated the SWAPO Party code of conduct, he or she could face any action from a formal reprimand to expulsion, depending on the seriousness of the violation.

In addition to formal codes of conduct, there are also internal party politics that are often far more influential than their codes of conduct or their structural organisation. As will be discussed later in the section on conflict within political parties, some political parties have a relatively intolerant stance vis-à-vis dissention and deal severely with party members who do not uphold party policies. In addition, some political parties only have the rhetoric of gender equality, but do not practise gender equality within party structures.

FUNDING AND PARTY EXPENDITURE

Political parties are important for democracy; they shape visions of how the country can best move forward. Party activities prepare candidates for office, motivate people to vote, help develop policy options and provide support to members holding seats in parliament.²⁶⁵ To be able to achieve these, political parties not only require a supportive government but also need financial capacity. If there is no funding, only a few parties can participate in democracy, which would mean less choice for voters, fewer ideas on how to move the country forward and weaker mechanisms to support elected officials.²⁶⁶ The role of money in politics has been controversial and subject to debate internationally, but the bottom line remains – nothing comes for free and a multiparty democracy is expensive. Sources of political party funding in Namibia are limited. Political parties can raise funding in various ways, such as membership dues, government support, foreign support and

other sources such as fundraisers, interest on investments and donations. The following section addresses the main sources of political party funding.

Although political parties were not keen to divulge their funding or funding sources (especially since it is not required by law), some political parties did indicate how much they spent on election-related activities. SWAPO set aside N\$6.2 million, the COD spent at least N\$3 million, the DTA said it needed at least N\$3.9 million. While the MAG said it only had the money given to it by government (N\$250,000), the UDF said it would spend N\$200,000, and SWANU claimed to have only N\$5,000 available for elections.²⁶⁷

Members' dues

Most political parties require their members to pay membership fees and subscriptions to help the party meet its expenses.²⁶⁸ It appears that most political parties do not keep registers or payment records. For example, at its congress in 1997, the SWAPO Party acknowledged that it did not have a register of party members; and five years later in 2002 a resolution was passed at the SWAPO Party congress to put in place an effective mechanism for the collection of membership fees.²⁶⁹

In a study on party financing undertaken by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), political parties were asked questions regarding membership, party funding and expenditures. Most political parties refused to participate in the study: only the DTA and RP responded to the questions.²⁷⁰ However, the CoD records show that it charges a party member a subscription fee at registration, as well as a monthly or annual membership contribution payable from time to time. The DTA charges a membership fee of N\$32, and receives an annual amount of approximately N\$10,000 a year in dues.²⁷¹ All other political parties declined to state how much their dues are and how many members are paid up.

Government and foreign funding

Government and foreign funding of political parties will be discussed in detail later.

Other sources of party funding

Although political parties are not forthcoming about their sources of income it appears these sources are limited. Other sources of funding for political

parties include fundraising events, donations and interest income. In addition to public funding and private donation sources, parties also raise funds through business ventures; for example, SWAPO owns companies such as Kalahari Holdings and Zebra Holdings, which pay dividends into party coffers.²⁷² Parties also raise money through the recruitment of new members who pay membership fees as well as organisation fundraising. The DTA, which availed its accounts to the IPPR, revealed that 99% of its income is from government funding, while a combination of other sources such as hire and rental income, miscellaneous income and interest, accounts for less than 1% of its revenue.²⁷³ No other party has made any disclosures of their sources of funding.

Since political parties are an essential ingredient for democracy, it is important that they be funded adequately to conduct their activities and meet their financial obligations in a professional manner.²⁷⁴ Research suggests that the government should institute mechanisms to compel political parties to account for the public funds they receive. The auditor-general should therefore be given the power to enforce this requirement. Given the fact that government support is too little to make a meaningful difference, political parties should strive to have a mixture of sources for funding in order to discourage too much support from either the private or public sector.²⁷⁵ Paid-up membership should be pursued in political parties to increase their self-reliance. Political parties could also consolidate membership by encouraging regional branches to raise more funds and retain most of the amounts raised in the regions, with the regions sending only a small percentage to their headquarters. Public support should continue to be given to political parties represented in parliament only in order to discourage corrupt entrepreneurs who might otherwise seek to form parties just so that they qualify for government funding.²⁷⁶ Given that the activities of political parties is a public interest issue, political parties should be required to submit their records for public inspection and large donations (regardless of their source) should be reported in a timely manner.²⁷⁷

Government funding of those parties represented in the National Assembly only holds potential to raise questions on equality for all in a democratic process, and given the ethnic base of most of the parties, sentiments of favouritism of certain ethnic groups may arise.

VOTER TURNOUT

When multiparty democratic elections in Namibia started with the UN-supervised Constitutional Assembly elections in 1989, one of the highest levels of voluntary voter turnout (97%) in the world was recorded.²⁷⁸ This level of voter turnout was expected given that the election was a signifier for the end of the liberation war and the attainment of independence.

Table 2 (over page) shows voter turnout since independence. In the 1994 National Assembly and presidential elections, voter turnout was still high: 76% (497,508) of the 654,189 registered voters cast their ballots in the presidential and National Assembly elections, but with 1% (7,863) of National Assembly votes and 2% (12,213) of presidential votes spoilt.²⁷⁹ However, the accuracy of the voters' roll and the system of tendered balloting were questioned when some northern constituencies recorded more than 100% turnout. Although the DTA challenged the results in the respective constituencies in court, the case 'fizzled' out some months after the election. Two opposition parties, the CoD and the RP, challenged the validity of the 2004 National Assembly elections. The court found that the voting process was upheld but that there were sufficient irregularities to order a recount of votes cast. However, this recount did not change the status quo, given the large margin SWAPO Party won in these elections. The implication here is a likelihood of increasing voter apathy due to a loss of trust in the integrity of the ECN to conduct free and fair elections. Even if more civic and voter education is done, a loss of faith in the system would have a negative impact on democracy building in Namibia. For example, Table 2 shows that voter turnout in the 1999 National Assembly and presidential elections declined to 61% of registered voters, despite a lively election campaign.

In 1992 Namibia organised its first regional council and local authority elections that took place simultaneously in the 13 regions and 48 local authorities.²⁸⁰ A new voters' roll contained 534,437 registered voters and an over 80% turnout was recorded for both ballots.²⁸¹ The ECN reports that regional and local elections have been hardest hit by voter apathy, especially in the urban areas.²⁸² There was a sizeable drop in voter turnout in the second regional council and local authority elections in 1998, with 40% turnout for the regional elections out of 534,278 registered voters (excluding uncontested seats), and 34% turnout for the local elections out of a possible 188,302

Table 2: Voter turnout at elections from 1989 to 2004

Year	Registered voters	Votes cast	Turnout %*
National Assembly**			
1989	701 483	680 787	97
1994	654 189	497 508	76
1999	879 222	541 114	61
2004	977 742	829 269	85
Presidential			
1994	654 189	497 508	76
1999	879 222	545 465	61
2004	977 742	833 165	85
Regional Council			
1992	470 006 ***	381 041	81
1998	534 278	213 789	40
2004	977 742	523 746	54
Local Authority			
1992	156 663	128 973	82
1998	188 302	63 545	34
2004	363 548	163 999	45

* Voter turnout is calculated here as a percentage of those people who registered to vote. This figure is slightly deceptive because there is a percentage of people who were eligible to vote, but who did not register. Thus a more accurate reflection of voter turnout would be to calculate the percentage of people who voted against the total number of people who were eligible to vote. This method would yield a smaller voter turnout percentage but would more accurately reflect the percentage of Namibian citizens who voted. However, these figures were not available to the authors at the time of writing.

** The 'National Assembly' votes of 1989 were in fact for the Constitutional Assembly.

*** Excludes registered voters in uncontested constituencies and local authorities.

Source: G Hopwood, Guide to Namibian Politics, NID/IPPR, Windhoek, 2004, p 38; ECN, Annual Report 2003-2004, ECN, Windhoek, 2004, p 11; The Namibian, 3 December 2004; New Era, 14 December 2004.

registered voters.²⁸³ The drop in voter turnout was ascribed to various causes such as lack of party mobilisation for support, voter dissatisfaction with the parties on offer, registration card confusion and people failing to register after moving to new towns.²⁸⁴ This low voter turnout did not deter the SWAPO Party from dominating, winning almost 60% of the votes in the local authority elections and 69% of the votes in the regional council elections. However, residents' associations gained control of Rehoboth and Otavi.²⁸⁵

In a bid to drastically reduce voter apathy, the ECN embarked upon a voter education programme from 2001. However, the comment by the secretary general of the National Youth Council that 'young people are marginalised and marginalised people don't vote', combined with the feeling among the youth that they are excluded from mainstream decision-making in Namibian politics should encourage political parties, government and the ECN to embark upon programmes aimed at the youth. These findings correspond with Somach et al²⁸⁶ who suggest that people who are marginalised from the democratic process include the disaffected youth. Furthermore, in the wake of 2004 elections a group of eight youths expressed concern that there are no statistics for registered youths, yet many youths continue to die from AIDS.²⁸⁷ (Women and youth participation in the political process is discussed later.)

The 2004 local authority elections were organised separately from the regional council elections and took place in May, while the regional council elections were held on 29 and 30 November, after the National Assembly and presidential polls. A figure of 359,152 (excluding registered voters in uncontested areas) registered voters was recorded, with only 45% voter turnout.²⁸⁸ Voter apathy persisted even after the ECN voter education programmes for 2003, although this was slightly higher than the 1998 local authority elections turnout of 34% of registered voters.²⁸⁹ Although there was a national average voter turnout of 45% for the 2004 local authority elections, voter apathy was more serious in larger urban local authorities such as Walvis Bay (30.3%), Windhoek (34.5%) and Otjiwarongo (42.1%); while smaller local authorities recorded higher rates of voter turnout: Witvlei (80%), Henties Bay (79.4%) and Tses (70%).²⁹⁰

A new voters' roll was used for the 2004 National Assembly and presidential elections, reflecting 977,742 registered voters. The results indicate an

improvement in voter turnout for the presidential elections of 85% (833,165 votes cast with 14,770 spoilt leaving 818,395 valid votes), while the recount of the 2004 National Assembly elections showed 85% voter turnout with 829,269 votes cast, 10,830 spoilt ballots and resulting in 818,439 valid votes.²⁹¹ However, the delay in counting and announcing the results for the National Assembly and presidential polls caused concern over the possible erosion of fairness, and called into question the ability of election officials and the quality of their training.²⁹² Voter turnout for the 2004 regional council elections was 53.5%: an increase of 13.5% from the 1998 voter turnout rates.

Keulder²⁹³ found that women and men take part equally in the voting process. This hypothesis is borne out partly by the fact that 52% of all registered voters for 2004 are women – although this does not mean that all of these women turned up to vote.²⁹⁴ However, women tend to be influenced by husbands, boyfriends and relatives as to how they should vote. Keulder's research indicates that both men and women believe it is their duty to vote and express the feeling that it is wrong for people not to vote, no matter where they live. This general feeling of responsibility ensures that women also take part in the voting process, but they are less likely to run for or be elected to public office. Indeed, a recent IPPR national survey on women and politics determined that an overwhelming majority of respondents, both men and women, believe it is important to vote during elections.²⁹⁵ However, these feelings of ideal obligation are weighed down by the realities of life – poverty, unemployment, long distances, etc. – and result in voters not taking part in the voting process. Maintaining a high voter turnout calls for a concerted effort on the part of the ECN in voter education, supported by political parties through training and mobilising of their constituencies. Voter registration and education should be targeted towards the removal of obstacles that marginalise some groups of Namibians from the democratic process – to make the democratic process in Namibia all-inclusive and thereby enhance the chances of voting by all eligible citizens.

In line with international trends, the most recent figures on voter turnout show that turnout for local authority and regional council elections are lower than for National Assembly and presidential elections. This apathy is disconcerting given that most people in Namibia have only been able to vote for 15 years. In 2004, the local authority elections were held in May,

while the regional council elections were held in mid-December, only after the National Assembly and presidential elections. Very low levels of voter turnout were observed for the regional council elections. There are various theories as to why lower levels of government see lower levels of voter turnout, including that the regional council elections – being held as they were after the national elections – meant that voters may have believed that their job was done and therefore felt no obligation to vote in the regional elections; although this theory would not hold for the local authority elections, which were held first. However, the answer may be found in the perceptions that national and presidential elections are more important than regional and local elections. Regional councils are largely undefined and local authorities are seen as not wielding any power. Interviews with community members also show that some communities have experienced less development and thus people do not see the need to vote because they feel it would have no effect on development. Other community members believe that polling stations are too far away or they do not have time to go back to their home constituencies to vote. Some people also explain that elections are sometimes held at month-end (which is when the majority of Namibians get paid); this means that people have other tasks to attend to and thus do not have time to vote.²⁹⁶

CONFLICT AND ELECTIONS

In any given society there is conflict that surrounds power and political decision-making. Democracy, by the very nature of its system, entails a certain level of development built up through conflict. In 2004, conflict surrounding the democratic process not only occurred in African countries; and the controversy surrounding the American elections both in 2000 and 2004 illustrates the competitive nature of democracy: as well it should, for competition creates situations for improved service provision in an effort to maintain one's voter base. Namibia also witnessed its share of competition and conflict around the 2004 local, regional and national elections. Indeed, with the 2004 elections being the first elections to be held with a newly proposed presidential candidate from the official ruling SWAPO Party, this election was the liveliest since independence.

CONFLICT OVER THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM

There are still some contested domains within the area of the electoral system itself, whereby some political analysts believe that the time for change to the electoral system might be ripe. One long and considerably drawn-out dispute is the use of party lists which advantage older, more established party members while holding back disadvantaged groups (such as women and the disabled) as well as making it more difficult for younger politicians to move up the political ladder, or to advance only through the 'grace' of older, entrenched party members.

PARTY LISTS

One of the longstanding areas of contention is the party list system. As previously mentioned, in this system parties put forward their list of candidates for the National Assembly and local authority elections. From these lists, candidates are selected and rank ordered by their parties. People do not vote for a particular candidate but for a party. As discussed earlier, there have been several shortcomings identified with this system, including the fact that strong political officials are the ones who choose the top people to be listed. For example, in 1999 the president chose the first 30 names for the SWAPO Party list, while the party members chose the remaining names.²⁹⁷ In 1999, the CoD youth wing accused senior party members of having

'doctored' its party list by putting their own names first, thereby ensuring that they stayed in their positions of power, while younger and less senior members of the party were effectively barred from greater political advancement.²⁹⁸ Another example of conflict surrounding party lists occurred after the 2004 local authority election when SWAPO Party changed its list of candidates after voting had taken place because of a dispute over how names for the original list had been chosen. The aggrieved party members took the issue to court, but the courts ruled that SWAPO Party had a right to choose whom it wanted on its list. Hopwood²⁹⁹ says that this example illustrates the power of political parties to draw up and change their lists.

Although it has been argued that the list system is preferred because the number of seats a party gets is a direct reflection of the number of votes it wins, and that the list system is a simple, straight-forward election method for voters who only have to choose their political party, several shortcomings of the list system have also been noted. These include issues previously mentioned about candidates being loyal to parties instead of their constituencies and that lists give too much power to senior members of a party and serve to entrench those already in power, or can be used as a system of reward and punishment for those who do not toe the party line.³⁰⁰ A possible example of this is the recent disagreement within SWAPO Party over who was to succeed the president; those SWAPO Party members who backed Hamutenya did not end up on the party list or were so far down on the list that there was no possibility of them obtaining seats in the National Assembly.

PR AND 'LARGEST REMAINDER'

Table 3 (over page) shows how National Assembly seats were allocated after the 2004 elections recount. First the total number of valid votes (818,439) was divided by the number of National Assembly seats (72) indicating that for every 11,367 votes a party received, it won one seat. This meant that 67 seats were allocated with five seats not being divided evenly by 11,367. Then, using the 'largest remainder', the five political parties with the most number of unallocated votes received the unallocated five seats. Note that the MAG did not have a full quota of votes to win a seat but was nevertheless awarded one seat because it was fourth in the largest remainder of votes unallocated to a seat.

Table 3: Allocation of National Assembly seats using PR and ‘largest remainder’ method

Party	Total NA votes	Seats for every 11 367 votes	Votes not allocated to a seat	Seats to 5 parties with largest remainder	Total no of seats
CoD	59 464	5	2 629	–	5
DTA	42 070	3	7 969	1	4
MAG	6 950	0	6 950	1	1
NDMC	4 380	0	4 380	–	0
NUDO	34 814	3	713	–	3
RP	16 187	1	4 820	–	1
SWANU	3 610	0	3 610	–	0
SWAPO	620 609	54	6 791	1	55
UDF	30 355	2	7 621	1	3
Total valid votes	818 439	68	–	4	72

Source: New Era, 17 March 2005; The Namibian, 17 March 2005

There are several shortcomings with the party list and PR system as it is practised in Namibia; for example, elected officials’ allegiance is to their party and not to their constituency because the constituency did not vote directly for them. Officials are therefore more likely to carry out the wishes of the party than to be concerned with the wishes of their constituents.³⁰¹ In addition, parties often manipulate the ranking of names on the list due to favouritism. In fact, the PR system encourages small political parties and favouritism because even small parties without a substantial constituency base have a chance of getting a seat in the National Assembly, and personalities wishing to sit in the National Assembly can break away from political parties, form their own party and stand a chance of winning a seat. As will be discussed later, the government funds political parties according to their number of seats in parliament. Thus, once a small party has a seat, it has the ability to advance itself through government funding. This is true because, unlike many other countries, Namibia does not have a legal ‘threshold’ (suggested

as 5%) for representation whereby parties must have a minimum level of support in order to have a seat in parliament. Indeed, the threshold is lower for parties at the National Assembly level (1.39% of votes) because of the number of seats (72) available.³⁰² This lack of legal threshold can be seen to encourage ethnic differentiation in political parties because parties only need a small voter base of only a few thousand people – and thus parties only seek support from their core base rather than attracting members outside of their core area of support.³⁰³

As exemplified in the section on political parties, because the PR system encourages small political parties with an ethnic base, it discourages true multiparty competition in the form of addressing policy-based issues because parties can rely on their ethnic base. This system also discourages competition because it rewards small parties and thus discourages alliances of smaller parties into larger coalitions, which could then have an effective showing against the largest majority party: SWAPO Party. In addition, the Namibian PR system leads to fewer women in the National Assembly because top leaders of political parties are men, and small political parties that are awarded only one seat or win only a few seats are not as likely to appoint a woman into those seats.

GENDER

Although Namibia has made significant strides in formal legal reforms in the area of gender equality, much of this formal progress has not translated into action when it comes to women in the democratic process. One area where law reform has been proposed but not accepted is with the 50/50 campaign and its resultant 50/50 Bill, which had been presented before parliament. The 50/50 campaign was an NGO effort spearheaded by Sister Namibia, in collaboration with stakeholders and the Women's Manifesto Network. The 50/50 campaign in Namibia began in 1999, but is a global effort aimed at achieving gender equality in political representation. Slogans from the campaign include '50-50 in government, get the balance right' and 'The hand that stirs the pot can also run the country'. The 50/50 campaign advocates that half of the candidates put forward for elections on party lists should be women. The method advocated by the 50/50 campaign is 'zebra' style lists whereby political parties have lists that alternate women and men candidates for all elections.³⁰⁴ The Women's Manifesto developed in 1999-

2000 in collaboration with stakeholders has created the Namibian Women's Manifesto Network which identified amendments to the Namibian electoral acts (currently referred to as the 50/50 Bill) that were supposed to ensure a gender balance in political power structures.³⁰⁵ The 50/50 Bill went before parliament and was referred to a standing committee for review. Despite intense lobbying efforts and popular support by NGOs and women's groups in Namibia, the standing committee rejected the bill and ruled that a procedural mistake had been made because all other avenues for submission of a bill had not been exhausted and therefore the bill had not been presented to parliament through the proper channels for introducing bills.

Some women's organisations have also argued that the government is not being held accountable to women but that due to the structure of the parties and the method of party lists (without the 50/50 regulation) government officials are accountable to their political parties and not to their constituents. The government (made up of political party members) has ratified the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development which specifies 30% women's representation by 2005, and has also developed several national level instruments such as the National Gender Policy and Programme of Action; however, the very same government showed its lack of commitment to these instruments by not having party lists that would have ensured 30% women's representation. Only the local authorities have reached adequate levels of female representation, primarily because local level government is considered unimportant.³⁰⁶

CONFLICT WITHIN POLITICAL PARTIES

Two significant conflicts arose within political parties in the run-up to the 2004 elections and centred on power sharing within the parties: the first conflict was related to the SWAPO Party's delegation of a new candidate for president; and the other conflict resulted in a split within the DTA. Although such inter-party reorganisations are not new to politics, the flurry of attention and the results – especially for the DTA which lost considerable power – will shape the Namibian political landscape for years to come.

TRANSITION OF SWAPO PARTY LEADERSHIP

Probably the most publicised political party conflict occurred within the SWAPO Party concerning the choosing of a successor to President Sam

Nujoma as the party's candidate for president. Once President Nujoma announced that he would not be running for an additional term, the question became who would be the SWAPO Party's next presidential candidate – a person who would then be all but guaranteed to be the next president of Namibia. Speculation ran rife throughout all sectors of the country. In April 2004, the SWAPO Party's Central Committee met and three names were put forward as candidates for the party's presidential nominations: Hidipo Hamutenya, the Minister of Foreign Affairs; Nahas Angula, the Minister of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation; and Hifikepunye Pohamba, the Minister of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation. Delegates to the SWAPO Party's Extraordinary Congress would then choose which of the nominees would run for the SWAPO Party in Namibia's next presidential race.

Until the late May SWAPO Party Congress, each candidate and his supporters lobbied quietly in an effort to sway party members to support their bid for the presidency. The run-ups to the congress did not see high-profile public campaigning because the delegates to the congress were the electorate in this case and all three candidates were well known to them.³⁰⁷ In addition, campaigning is seen as against the SWAPO Party culture and as undesirable by the president.³⁰⁸ Minister Pohamba was favoured by the president who described him as a trusted friend. Pohamba was considered to be the closest in political outlook to the president and least likely to effect change under his own government. Minister Angula enjoyed support among the younger, more educated crowd, while Hamutenya – although not backed by the president – enjoyed a large following among many top SWAPO Party officials. However, the president dismissed Hamutenya as Minister for Foreign Affairs (as well as Hamutenya's deputy minister) four days before the congress.³⁰⁹ Hamutenya, although being the most controversial of those nominated, was not actually accused of a crime. The president's explanation for the dismissal was that Hamutenya was spreading disunity in the party and interfering with SWAPO Party politics in the Omaheke Region.³¹⁰ Although Hamutenya was dismissed in his government capacity, he refused to step down from the SWAPO Party Congress elections. In the first round of voting Hamutenya took second to Pohamba, but with no clear majority. A run-off vote saw Angula step down and throw his backing behind Pohamba who won the vote 341 to Hamutenya's 167.³¹¹ Table 4 shows the results of the SWAPO

Party Congress elections, indicating that most of Angula's supporters threw their weight behind Pohamba once Angula had stepped down. Rumours concerning the shift have remained, with many speculating that Angula agreed to support Pohamba or that the threat of the example made of Hamutenya was enough to cause them to support Pohamba.³¹²

Table 4: SWAPO Party Extraordinary Congress vote

Candidate	Round 1	Round 2
Angula	137	–
Hamutenya	166	167
Pohamba	213	341
Spoilt/discarded	0	5
Total	516	513

Source: R Sherbourne, *After the Dust has Settled: Continuity or Stagnation?*, IPPR Opinion No 16, IPPR, Windhoek, 2004, p 2.

However, this conflict has continued for some time: several Hamutenya supporters have lost their jobs or other positions since the congress amid allegations that Hamutenya supporters are being targeted. At a SWAPO Party meeting held in October 2004 to elect the party's National Assembly candidates, a list containing the names of 35 people who had supported Hamutenya's bid for the presidency was circulated. The president said the list was not sanctioned and was the work of 'reactionaries' who wanted to divide the party. Regardless of the origin of the list, most of those on the list lost votes for the National Assembly candidate party list and thus were not in positions to receive seats in the National Assembly.³¹³

Although there appears to have been several incidents of Hamutenya supporters having lost their positions, a few examples will serve for discussion purposes. For example, a recent NBC television report and local newspapers noted that the Nampower board of directors had been replaced.³¹⁴ Again, speculation in the media has been that this was a political move aimed at Hamutenya supporters. In another example, one top Windhoek municipality worker resigned his post amid rumours that he had

become increasingly isolated because of his previous support for Hamutenya.³¹⁵ In addition to several people losing posts in the aftermath of the transition, other SWAPO Party members whose positions have been compromised have chosen to withdraw from their posts. One such high-ranking official was the Minister of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development (MAWRD) who on 7 December 2004 resigned his position stating that he felt it was morally wrong to stay in the National Assembly when he did not have the support of his comrades.³¹⁶ The minister's resignation was sparked by the SWAPO Party candidates' list which ranked the minister 47th: too low to be given a ministerial post for the coming parliament. In an interview with *New Era*, the minister said he felt a grave injustice had been done to him and other senior SWAPO Party cadres during the Electoral Congress where the SWAPO Party list for the National Assembly was drawn up. He stated that he did not blame the SWAPO Party but rather some individuals for the injustices done to him and his colleagues.³¹⁷

SPLITS WITHIN THE DTA

Major conflicts have also occurred within the DTA ranks for some time now. In 1998 the DTA ousted its president who was suspected of planning a coup plot in the Caprivi region: in 1999 he and a handful of followers made an abortive coup attempt, and in its wake many Caprivi region DTA supporters stopped voting or turned to the SWAPO Party.³¹⁸ A further blow to the DTA support base came when the party's administrative secretary resigned. The final blow occurred in 2003 when NUDO and RP party members split from the DTA alliance. The centre of contention seems to have come from the RP, which claimed that the DTA had not promoted national reconciliation and that it now lacked credibility with voters; while NUDO members claimed that the DTA had been 'riding' on the Herero vote.³¹⁹ The viability of the DTA, RP and NUDO are now in question. Within the DTA there are also sites of contention with some former NUDO members given that some of these party members were not in favour of the split and claimed that Chief Riruako did not have the legal right to split from the DTA and call the party NUDO. The DTA took NUDO to court, but NUDO won its court challenge and has been allowed to register with the ECN and take part in elections. Such splits exemplify the contention that the PR system encourages small political parties of individuals with personal ambitions, especially in a situation where voters are used to voting along ethnic lines, when in fact

a split due to ideological differences relating to proposed policies and programmes could be more beneficial to Namibian citizens.

Indeed, the DTA had an exceptionally poor showing in the 2004 elections, losing seats in all areas: in the local authority elections, the DTA lost 14 of its 16 seats; in the National Assembly it dropped from seven to four seats; and only scored two seats in the regional councils. Of the two parties that split from the DTA, NUDO was most successful, out-performing the DTA in some elections. This data means that the DTA has now lost its status as the official opposition party and may even be set to lose further ground in subsequent elections.³²⁰

CONFLICT BETWEEN POLITICAL PARTIES

With the run-up to the 2004 elections and post-election manoeuvring, a few points of contention arose between political parties. In general these issues were more related to opposition parties confusing the government with the ruling SWAPO Party. When irregularities occurred within the process, political parties would sometimes attribute these to the SWAPO Party rather than to government officials.

During the campaign phase of the election there were instances of party members deliberately interfering with other political party rallies, sometimes with violence erupting. For example, at a CoD rally held in Swakopmund, SWAPO Party supporters were accused of holding their own rally within 500 meters, which is the specified limit parties are supposed to respect when other parties hold rallies. This incident resulted in physical altercations between party members.

In addition, after the National Assembly and presidential elections there was the 'discovery' of valid, filled-in ballots dumped on the roadside under the Swakop River Bridge near Okahandja. Although the ECN (as a branch of government) was in charge of the elections and was thus ultimately responsible for this possible irregularity, some opposition parties accused the SWAPO Party of having orchestrated the disposal of opposition votes. On 3 December 2004 the SWAPO Party took out a full-page advertisement in the *New Era* (as well as publishing the advert in its own newspaper – *Namibia Today*) defending itself against these accusations. The article said

there was no proof linking the SWAPO Party to ballot dumping and that the SWAPO Party was not affiliated with the ECN and thus could not have been responsible for any election irregularities that might have occurred.³²¹ The matter has yet to be resolved even after months of discussions, media reports, accusations (and counter-accusations) as well as a police investigation. The ECN alleges it has evidence that opposition party members planted those ballots in an effort to discredit the election results, while opposition party members claim that the ECN manufactured the allegation to defend itself against a pending court case requesting that there be an external audit of the election results or that the results be set aside and new election take place – the investigation is still being conducted.

CONFLICT SURROUNDING CAMPAIGNS

Conflict has also arisen at various levels concerning political party campaigns. As a general point of contention many have noted that the election campaigns – and most disconcerting vis-à-vis national elections – featured almost no discussion of policies and programmes.³²² As was discussed under political party manifestos, most election campaigns centred on personalities and party support, with little or no discussion of how each party might advance development in Namibia. In addition, controversy surrounding campaigns was sometimes generated and covered by the media.

PUBLICATION OF LISTS

One area that has caused repeated conflict was with the timing of the publication of voter registration lists from the ECN and the release of candidate lists by political parties. The Electoral Act of 1992 dictates that the general registration of voters should occur at least every 10 years, but the president can order supplementary registration whereby voters can register within 20 days of the president's proclamation of the date of elections.³²³ The continuous general voters' roll is to be made available to the public and published on the 15th of each month for inspection, but can be revised in seven days. The ECN must then compile a final register for use during elections and information must be published in the Government Gazette stating where the lists are available for inspection by the public. In addition, the ECN must make available to all registered political parties a copy of the provisional national voters' register and provisional local authorities' register.³²⁴ However, the lists for the 2004 elections were often released late.

Some opposition parties said they were concerned that the voters' roll was given to them only three days ahead of the National Assembly and presidential elections.³²⁵

In addition, political parties are supposed to give the ECN their candidate lists with the intent that the ECN should release candidates' names in a timely fashion. The president proclaims that nominations should be submitted, and parties have not less than 15 days but not more than 20 days after the day of the announcement of the election details has been published in the Gazette.³²⁶ However, political parties did not adhere to time limitations and in the case of the regional council elections some candidates were not able to run because they showed up late to register as candidates. Conversely, political parties complained that the ECN did not gazette political party lists in a timely manner, with regional council election lists being published only 24 hours prior to an election. The ECN said that the late gazetting of the lists was due to technical delays, such as having to verify lists with political parties, and also noted that there was no designated time within which the lists have to be gazetted. The ECN stated further that the late gazetting should have no impact on political party campaigns because they were able to campaign for their candidates prior to the publication of the lists.³²⁷

THE MEDIA AND CONFLICT

In the run-up to the elections, several opposition parties accused the NBC (a government parastatal) of favouring the ruling SWAPO Party with airtime on television and radio. Airtime for political parties was assigned to parties based on their current level of representation in the National Assembly, leading to SWAPO Party having significantly more airtime than the opposition parties.³²⁸ Several parties accused the NBC of favouring the SWAPO Party in its reporting of news events during election campaigns, which eventually led some parties to boycott the NBC. However, other forms of media were also openly biased in their reporting and coverage of political events.

Although most printed media are fairly empirical with their reporting of political activities, other printed media have been seen to be biased in their reporting of news events or coverage of political party activities. The Namibia

Today, a SWAPO Party-owned newspaper, campaigned vigorously for the SWAPO Party, while the Allgemeine Zeitung and Republiken have close historical links to the DTA and more recently to the RP. The Windhoek Observer is a strong opponent of the SWAPO Party and does not particularly favour any one opposition party, although it does have a weekly column written by the MAG's MP.³²⁹

The Namibian is one of the most widely read newspapers in Namibia but has had a government ban on it since 2001 because it had been critical of government officials and was deemed to be 'anti-government'. The ban has meant that government offices are not allowed to purchase the paper and may not advertise in it. This ban negatively impacted on voter education in 2004 because the ECN was not allowed to place its voter education and information materials in the newspaper. Many readers complained that they were not able to obtain important educational and voter-related materials, although several inserts and adverts had appeared in various other newspapers.³³⁰ For example, on 5 November 2004 an insert which detailed polling stations for the National Assembly, presidential and regional council elections was not allowed to be placed in The Namibian. Some complained that those voters (primarily English speakers who read only The Namibian) were denied important voter information and had been discriminated against because of the ban.³³¹

In another conflict involving the media and the election process, the CoD accused the New Era of fabricating a memorandum that was then used as the basis for a story.³³² The centre of the controversy was the New Era's claim that it had a document showing which opposition party members were to be witnesses in the pending court case by various political parties against the ECN. The CoD said that the report tarnished the names of the officials involved and promoted distrust. However, this was not the only conflict to have arisen between the CoD and the New Era. Prior to the elections, a letter/email had been widely circulated in Namibia which attacked SWAPO Party members who had supported Minister Hamutenya in his bid for the SWAPO Party presidency. The author of the letter was never clearly identified, but one New Era report attributed it to CoD party members, upon which the CoD responded by confronting the editor of the newspaper. Although no resolution was reached, the CoD wrote a letter detailing the interaction.

Media Tenor and IPPR analysed media coverage of political parties in the run-up to the national and regional elections in early November 2004. This analysis, the first of its kind in Namibia, sought to answer a number of questions, namely: who is covered during the election period and how often; what is the prominence given to elections; and how do the media in general portray elections in ways that might shape voting patterns and voter turnout?³³³ In short: how much influence do the media have in shaping opinion? The analysis showed that:

- overall, SWAPO Party had the highest volume of coverage;
- although most coverage of all political parties was neutral, negative coverage outweighed positive coverage;
- President Nujoma was covered twice as much as his proposed successor; and
- parties spoke mainly about themselves and not the opposition – meaning that there was relatively little mud-slinging among political parties.³³⁴

Specifically, the highest percentage of negative media coverage was aimed at the SWAPO Party and NUDO, although SWAPO received far more positive statements.³³⁵ The analysis showed trends in newspaper favouritism, as stated above, with *Republikein* giving negative coverage to the SWAPO Party but positive coverage to the RP; the *New Era* giving negative coverage to most major opposition parties; the *Allgemeine Zeitung* being negative towards every party; *The Namibian* negatively covering all parties except the UDF; the *Namibia Today* (SWAPO Party-owned) being severely critical of all opposition parties; and the *Windhoek Observer* being dominated with positive coverage of the MAG.³³⁶ In the electronic media the SWAPO Party dominated the NBC news with positive reporting, while NUDO was most likely to be negatively represented on the NBC, followed closely by the CoD.³³⁷ However, the NBC TV News Journal was positively inclined towards the main opposition parties.³³⁸

In terms of topics covered by the media during this period, the NBC news covered almost no policy issues (only 5.9% of total coverage), while print media ranged from 27.3% (*The Namibian*) to 50% (the *Allgemeine Zeitung*), with the TV News Journal and *Talk of the Nation* having the best coverage of

policy issues.³³⁹ In terms of party coverage of policies, the MAG fared best with 51.1% of issues being policy related, followed by the UDF (47.5%) and the CoD (47.2%), while the SWAPO Party only had policy coverage 29.6% of the time.³⁴⁰ This data indicates that some of the smaller parties were more issue orientated than the larger and more established political parties. In addition, President Nujoma had the most media coverage for this time period, followed by Minister Pohamba. Opposition party leaders received far less coverage with Kosie Pertorius (MAG), Henk Mudge (RP) and Kuaima Riruako (NUDO) getting some, but far less, coverage.³⁴¹ All leaders received mostly positive coverage, with Pohamba most likely to be portrayed in a favourable manner.³⁴² The summary data indicates that the more coverage a party received, the more votes they won. Of course, this should not be assumed to be a causal relationship because this data could well indicate that more popular parties received more media coverage. The media sources in Namibia, although often neutral in reporting political events, have traditional party affiliations and have maintained their affinity (or dislike) for these parties over time.

CONFLICT SURROUNDING ELECTIONS

Even before the voting was over some critics projected low voter turnout or that opposition parties, due to the fragmentation of the DTA, would experience fragmentation of votes as well.³⁴³ Although the vast majority of election-related complaints of irregularities centred on the mechanics of voting and the ECN, there were one or two instances where individual candidates were accused of attempting to influence election outcomes. One such example came from the Caprivi region where the National Society for Human Rights (NSHR) witnessed a candidate for regional council handing out money to party agents, police officials and election officials.³⁴⁴ The candidate concerned was elected to regional council. An NSHR election observer also reported a 'dancing and drinking' party going on at one polling station in this area while voting was still taking place.

In the wake of national elections there have been accusations about problems with ballot counting as well as other irregularities. The ECN in particular has come under attack for a range of alleged irregularities. The core of most of these complaints has been the fact that the ECN, although an independent body, is run by government which is SWAPO Party dominated, with

opposition parties claiming that there is no allowance for them to audit voting outcomes.³⁴⁵ However, the Electoral Act, 1992 clearly stipulates conditions under which political party members can register with the ECN to be vote counting observers, and counting for the 2004 national elections was witnessed by political parties and foreign observers.

Probably one of the more glaring situations to come under fire by opposition parties is the fact that it took the ECN far longer to count the national election ballots than had been projected, making some opposition party members – as well as members of the public – question the counting procedure. As party members nervously awaited election results, the ECN postponed the deadline for the first results to be released. One reported cause of the delay was the tendered ballot system which allowed voters to vote at any polling station, not only in the area where they lived. One ECN official explained that because ballots were not cast in people's own constituencies, all of the ballots had to be sorted and each ballot had to be allocated to its constituency.³⁴⁶

Some accusations of irregularities centred around procedures not being followed at polling stations; for example, that infrared lights were not used to detect ink marks which identified a person as having voted, or that some people were able to wash the ink off of their hands and thus vote again.³⁴⁷ ECN officials said they would address this problem in future by marking two fingers on the voter, and in a place that would be more difficult to wash the ink off and one that was more readily visible.³⁴⁸ The ECN's response to accusations of ballot boxes being stuffed with extra ballots was that this was not possible because government security officials were at all polling stations.³⁴⁹ Although rare, some people claimed that they were intimidated at polling stations or that people were told for whom they should vote.³⁵⁰

Another point of contention raised by some opposition members was the fact that 1.8 million ballots were printed, while there were only 977,742 registered voters. Questions were raised as to why so many ballots had been printed and what had happened to the unused ballot papers.³⁵¹

After the National Assembly and presidential election results had been released, some opposition parties questioned how some constituencies could have more voters turn out than were registered to vote, even in small

constituencies. The ECN claimed that this inconsistency was caused by the tendered ballot system whereby a voter not in his/her registered area could vote in the constituency where he/she was at the time of voting. Some opposition members also questioned the unusually high turnout rate for the national elections. However, the ECN said it viewed the high voter turnout as a positive, not negative, attribute of these elections because it showed that there is no political apathy in Namibia.³⁵² Some of these points of contention have been cited in the pending court case against the ECN, with opposition party members believing that the ECN has not adequately addressed their concerns over some of the vote counting irregularities.

Concerns have also been expressed over the number of spoilt ballots (11,405) from both the presidential and National Assembly 2004 elections; in the 1999 presidential and National Assembly elections only about 1% of ballots were spoilt (6,617 and 5,078 respectively).³⁵³ Indeed, the local authority elections also saw an increase of 50% spoilt ballots from 1998 to 2004.³⁵⁴ Controversy continued to surround the 2004 National Assembly and presidential election returns when the ECN announced it had made a mistake by rejecting ballots as spoilt because they did not have the prescribed 'secret mark or stamp'. The ECN required each election official to place this secret mark on voters' ballots, but after a higher than expected number of ballots were rejected for not having the mark, an internal investigation was ordered whereupon it was discovered that some election officials had failed to use the prescribed stamp, leading the ECN to conclude that about half of the 11,405 spoilt votes were, in fact, valid. The Director of Elections admitted to the 'human error' and said that the officials in question would be demoted, adding, however, that he did not suspect foul play.³⁵⁵ Opposition parties reacted negatively to the news of the spoilt ballots, with the RP saying it reflected 'inefficiency' on the part of the ECN for not having trained staff properly or provided enough voter education. The ECN retorted by reminding political parties that they too bear the responsibility of educating voters how to vote for them.

Several members of opposition parties were not satisfied with the voting process. Some opposition parties have contested the 2004 presidential and National Assembly election results and have lodged an application with the courts to have the count verified by an independent auditing body.³⁵⁶ Representatives from the CoD and RP have said that given several

irregularities in the voting process and post voting questions, they have asked to have the voters' roll, tender ballots, spoilt ballots and ballot books re-examined.³⁵⁷ On Friday 16 December, members of the opposition parties were granted a High Court order allowing them to inspect many of the ECN election documents, estimated to be as much as 6,000 pages of documentation. When opposition party members inspected the said documents, several irregularities were discovered. For example, upon inspecting the ballot papers they allegedly found that stacks of 100 ballots for SWAPO Party in some cases contained only 90 ballots, or that as many as 15 of the 100 were actually votes for opposition parties.³⁵⁸

Several opposition parties were not satisfied with the regional council elections either and were planning a court case in relation to some constituencies where they felt they should have done better, citing irregularities such as more votes counted by the ECN than the number of people counted at the polling stations by party election observers, or allegations that opposition voters were intimidated at the polls.³⁵⁹

However, even with opposition party members being able to show irregularities in the voting process, they would have to show that these irregularities were of such a magnitude that they affected the election results, if they were to win their bid to have the National Assembly elections set aside. However, even if the evidence submitted before the court can be proven to be true, the court could instead order only a full external audit of the outcome or a ballot recount. As it turned out, in mid-March 2005 the court found that the election process itself did not have enough irregularities to warrant the outcome being set aside but that there were enough irregularities with the counting process to order the ECN (not an external body) to recount the votes.

The recount of the votes showed only slight differences from the original count (818,439 valid recount versus 813,955 previously). The CoD lost one vote, the DTA gained 356 votes, the MAG gained 30 votes, the NDMC gained 242 votes, NUDO gained 940 votes, the RP gained 222 votes, SWANU gained 172 votes, SWAPO Party lost 178 votes and the UDF gained 1,019 votes. The most contentious issue for the recount was the 935 votes from the Ohangwena region being spoilt by rain damage.³⁶⁰

INTERPERSONAL POLITICALLY RELATED CONFLICT

Although there were some alleged instances of political parties inciting their members to violence towards opposition party members, probably the most common form of political violence occurred when members of opposing parties got carried away with election fever and attacked members of opposing political parties. Some examples of interpersonal violence caused by political party affiliation include the following:

A report from the Kavango region of 18 November said that a SWAPO Party supporter hit a CoD candidate during a SWAPO Party political march. The police reported that marchers shouted 'down with CoD' as they marched past the CoD candidate's shop and the candidate responded, which led to the CoD candidate being hit in the head. The SWAPO Party was sending a regional coordinator to investigate the incident.³⁶¹ Of course, the CoD believed this was a political attack on the CoD candidate, while the SWAPO Party maintained that the CoD candidate provoked the SWAPO Party members.

In another instance, a young man who was stabbed in Swakopmund late in the evening alleged that the attack was politically motivated because two of his assailants were wearing SWAPO Party T-shirts, while the victim was a well-known UDF supporter.³⁶²

Although these are not the only isolated incidents of interpersonal violence possibly motivated by political affiliation, they do serve to show that political parties did not orchestrate the attacks. Most of the incidents of interpersonal violence that seemed to be politically spurred were not forms of organised party violence but rather spontaneous acts of aggression perpetrated in the heat of the political moment – as it were.

GENDER AND YOUTH REPRESENTATION

MARGINALISATION FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

The Namibian constitution guarantees that all citizens who are 18 years of age or older have the right to vote.³⁶³ The constitution further guarantees that all citizens have a constitutional right to 'participate in peaceful activity intended to influence the composition and policies of the Government. ... to form and join political parties. ... [and] ... subject to such qualifications prescribed by law as are necessary in a democratic society, to participate in the conduct of public affairs, whether directly or through freely-chosen representatives'.³⁶⁴ In addition, the Electoral Act, No. 24 of 1992 makes provision for a quota system of elected representatives.

However, there are some groups of people who could be considered marginalised from the democratic process. Thus, voting or political marginalisation refers to a group of people who, for whatever reason, may experience a higher than average likelihood of not participating in the democratic process.³⁶⁵ This definition not only looks at whether all people are registered to vote but whether they have equal access to registration, voter information and the voting process. Somach et al³⁶⁶ found that groups of people who have been identified as marginalised from the democratic process are also in some way marginalised in several areas of life. Recent research has suggested that people who are marginalised from the democratic process (registration, information and voting) are more likely to come from such groups as people with disabilities, AIDS affected, farm workers, homebound (for whatever reason, such as caregivers, an illness, disabled, etc.), elderly, remote rural dwellers, San/Ovahimbo (ethnic minorities), illiterate, informal dwellers or homeless, the chronically ill, and/or disaffected youth.

Marginalisation in one aspect of life (such as economic) is thus a predictor of marginalisation in other aspects of social and/or political life.³⁶⁷ This marginalisation in various aspects of the social/political reinforces economic marginalisation, creating a vicious circle of poverty and social/political marginalisation.³⁶⁸ Therefore, although the vast majority of Namibians had registered to vote, there were select segments of the

population who did not vote in proportion to their numbers. In addition, certain groups of women (such as the elderly or rural dwellers) experienced some degree of marginalisation from the democratic process for a variety of social and cultural reasons.

There are various contributing factors that led to this marginalisation. These include social factors such as access (including distance and time), lack of education, language, cross-cutting issues and cultural barriers (including gender/disability stereotypes, and school children over 18 years of age who are not considered adults). Economic factors that contribute to voting marginalisation include unemployment, migration for work, poverty, employment barriers, control over workers by commercial farmers, a lack of time off work, and remoteness of employment. As will be discussed later in the section dealing with the ESC, through the work of the ESC some of these groups have been targeted for additional civic and voter education. Some examples are given below of various factors that might lead to democratic marginalisation, specifically as they relate to women and the youth.

Research shows that only 10% of the youth have high protest potential, driven primarily by a sense of deprivation. This feeling was confirmed by interviews with some youth prior to the 2004 elections who feel they are marginalised by older politicians, making it difficult for youth leaders to come up in politics; hence they said, 'parliament is becoming an old age home'.³⁶⁹ In the run-up to the 1999 elections, controversy arose between the CoD Youth Wing and senior party members over the names on the candidate rolls, with the youth accusing senior members in the party of sidelining young people to ensure the former's names ranked first on the list.³⁷⁰ However, the SWAPO Party's National Assembly list shows that it made an effort to integrate younger members of its party into senior positions of government; a move which SWAPO Party supporters see as an attempt to transform SWAPO Party from a liberation movement into a serious political party, while others see it as a display that loyalty to the party line is more important than experience and skills.³⁷¹

AIDS affects not only patients but caregivers and families as well. The 2004 sentinel survey indicates that 19.8% of the population 15-49 years old are HIV positive. In 2002, women 15-24 years old had infection rates between

18.8%-20.8% versus their male cohorts with rates of 7.9%-10.4%,³⁷² and one out of every 20 households in some regions have orphans.³⁷³ AIDS affects both patients and caregivers in ways that could cause them to be marginalised from voting. Elderly women are often the caregivers for AIDS patients and later children orphaned by the patients. AIDS causes people to be homebound due to illness, home work and care giving. AIDS also causes a reduction in the number of economically active people and a loss in household income, as well as causing additional costs (including time related) vis-à-vis food, medicine, hospitals and funerals.³⁷⁴

The characteristics of homebound people cut across numerous sectors of society. These include people with severe physical disabilities who have limited access to wheelchairs, and even those with such access must traverse uneven and unpaved roads to travel even short distances from their homes. Individuals in the advanced stages of AIDS are often confined to their homes by illness and stigmatisation. Individuals with short-term disabilities or illnesses are sometimes temporarily homebound. Caregivers for the ill (traditionally the role of women) and women with many young children under their care may also be homebound due to their obligations.³⁷⁵

WOMEN AND THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

Campaigns, policies and programmes aimed at increasing women's position in political power-sharing have been a feature of Namibia in recent years:³⁷⁶ several institutions have been established to address gender issues; a system to address the issues within those institutions has been developed; and a National Gender Policy and National Gender Plan of Action were put in place.³⁷⁷ Relevant institutions that have been established include the Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare, gender sectoral committees, gender focal points within ministries, the National Gender Mainstreaming Task Force (a collaboration of stakeholders), and a Gender Commission (yet to be instituted).³⁷⁸ The Constitution of Namibia includes three specific clauses covering the particular rights of women.³⁷⁹ Since independence, the Namibian government has entered into national, regional and international commitments to strengthen democratic institutions and promote women's participation as elected representatives.³⁸⁰ For example, the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development commits member countries to achieving 30% women's representation in political and decision-making structures by 2005.³⁸¹

Women's participation in Namibian politics has increased in the 15 years since independence. At independence the proportion of women in the National Assembly was only 8%, while overall (in both houses, that is, the National Assembly and National Council) women occupied only 22% of the seats.³⁸² Thiel³⁸³ reports that an Inter-Parliamentary Union report of 2002 ranked Namibia as 23rd in the world for women's representation in parliament; only out-performed in Africa by Mozambique (ranked 10th with 30%), South Africa (ranked 11th with 29.8%), and Rwanda (ranked 21st with 25.7%). Given that two of these countries have experienced prolonged wars and a resultant loss of their male population, this data indicates that South Africa and Namibia have made some of the greatest strides in Africa when it comes to gender equality in parliament. Despite these advances in gender equality in political power-sharing, as of the 2004 elections only one level of government in Namibia has passed the 30% SADC mark, with women's representation in local authorities reaching 43%.³⁸⁴ Despite the level of women in the National Assembly being 27.3% (following the 2004 elections) and almost reaching the SADC target, the proportion of women in the executive remains low, and only five women (or 19%) have been elected members of the 26-strong National Council.³⁸⁵ Although the number of women in political positions has increased, women have not reached the 30% representation mark (and probably will not), and are far from having 50% representation in higher level decision-making positions.

After the 1998 regional council elections, only one out of 13 regional governors and only 6% of regional councillors were women.³⁸⁶ Women's representation in the National Assembly before the 2004 elections was 27% (with 21 out of 72 members) and in the National Council 7.6% (or two out of 26 members).³⁸⁷

Elected women in the National Assembly, as well as across national and regional levels, have formed a number of groups that promote women's agendas. For example, the Elected Women's Caucus, the Elected Women's Forum, and the National Council for Women in Development in Namibia have all worked towards promoting women's equal participation in political power-sharing.

Data from 2002 found that 48% of people surveyed think that political parties should be compelled to adopt a 50/50 zebra-style list, while 32% say that

political parties should have a right to decide for themselves.³⁸⁸ When asked whether or not they think it is important for a country like Namibia 'to have equal numbers of men and women as candidates', 81% of respondents indicated that it is important.³⁸⁹ Additional data shows that over two-thirds (68%) of Namibians surveyed believe that Namibia needs more women in positions of power.³⁹⁰ As can be expected, women are more likely than men to agree with this assessment. Although positive in its outlook, this also shows that people think there are not enough women in positions of power. Thiel³⁹¹ and Keulder³⁹² indicate that there is no significant difference in these gender attitudes by urban-rural domicile, education, sex or any other demographic attribute.

Although these findings imply that most people think the number of female candidates should be increased, this data does not translate into support for a gender quota nor does it necessarily mean that people would vote for women candidates.³⁹³ On the positive side, it appears that people's attitudes towards women in political positions of power are changing, given that previously Lipinge and LeBeau³⁹⁴ reported that a survey of voters' attitudes during the 1992 elections showed that almost one-fourth of respondents, men and women alike, said they would not vote for a women candidate. The most commonly given reasons at the time were that women are not suitable for public office and that the man is the head of the household.

The 2002 research also found that women and men are interested and participate in the political arena – a finding which goes against generally accepted discourse that men are more interested in politics than women.³⁹⁵ Thiel³⁹⁶ reports no significant difference between men's and women's attendance at political meetings and rallies (although fewer women said they attend most of the time), contact with elected representatives (although 78% women versus 72% men said they have no contact with elected representatives), or expressed interest in politics (although 35% men versus 30% women said they had a lot of interest in politics). Men (45%) are found to be slightly more likely than women (41%) to discuss issues of politics regularly. However, these research results indicate that areas of concern differ for men and women: men are more interested in issues relating to war and national defence while women prefer to address children's issues.³⁹⁷ Most community members believe that male MPs should deal with war and defence, crime,

land reform, agriculture and water, international relations and employment or job creation; while women MPs are thought best suited for addressing children's rights, human rights and health care issues.³⁹⁸ Indeed, community members' perceived gender division in the policy domain follows the gender division for MPs in Namibia whereby women are typically ministers of traditionally stereotyped women's issues.

Thiel³⁹⁹ also found that men are no more likely than women to want to run for political office. Both Keulder⁴⁰⁰ and Thiel⁴⁰¹ argue that if Namibians in general were opposed to women's greater involvement in politics, then it could be argued that culture would account for such attitudes. However, given the above-mentioned data which indicates that both men and women think women should be in power-sharing positions, it would seem that structural and/or institutional attributes of society are more likely to explain women's low rates in positions of power sharing. However, even with women's participation in the voting process, they are not as likely as men to run as candidates or to be elected to political office. A number of barriers – such as family responsibilities, discriminatory cultural beliefs, harassment, a lack of education and a lack of solidarity among women voters and candidates – hamper women's fuller participation in the political arena.⁴⁰² Another common barrier is that women do not know about women candidates, while men are unlikely to vote for them.⁴⁰³

It is also noted that increased numbers of women in positions of power sharing have not necessarily translated into women's ability to push gender issues forward as national concerns.⁴⁰⁴ Even though marked advances in pushing towards target goals for representation have been attained, the level of influence these women have over gender issues has not increased.

A survey of 2004 local authority representatives found that there is no significant difference in male and female candidates' views and preferences on policies (there are no gender gaps on all ideological and issue-based items); and concludes that there is therefore no prospect for change in policy priorities even though women now comprise almost half the number of local authority councillors. Keulder and Soiri⁴⁰⁵ argue that although there are more women candidates, the fact that they do not significantly differ from their male counterparts on policy issues means that this data does not support

Critical Mass Theory.⁴⁰⁶ Having more women in legislative positions will therefore not introduce any significant changes in gender policies and programmes at local level. Furthermore, since women local authority councillors are appointed based on party lists, they tend to support party politics over policy reforms that are against party policy – an area where lists have been criticised previously. In addition, local authorities do not congregate as a body but stay in their constituencies – therefore, no critical mass can be formed.⁴⁰⁷ Indeed, it is precisely due to local authorities' perceived lack of power and low standing as a political entity that parties are prepared to allow more women in these positions, which are deemed to be unimportant. The 50/50 movement therefore aims at equal representation of women at all levels of government (not just at the lowest rung) – and this is a prerequisite for test Critical Mass Theory.

YOUTH AND THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

Namibia's legislation has an age-based definition of youth for purposes of implementing programmes related to income generation and vocational training. Thus youth are defined as those aged 15 to 30 years of age. It also states that the future of the country is predicated on how successfully society (parents and authorities) socialise the young.⁴⁰⁸ Furthermore, young citizens who are active in politics are good for democracy. Several reasons have been advanced as to why the youth should participate in politics. Van Zyl and Keulder⁴⁰⁹ point out that the youth form the largest group as a percentage of eligible voters in Namibia, and that low turnout of the youth is likely to suppress overall turnout. In addition, the youth may hold political interests that differ from those of other groups in the country, and these interests cannot be represented if youth do not participate in the democratic process. Furthermore, getting the youth to vote at an early age is part of socialising them as citizens in a democracy. It helps them to gain experience with the institutions and processes of democracy, and if they do not participate their opportunity to exercise political influence is lost.⁴¹⁰ Van Zyl and Keulder argue further that the youth can either be the elite or the marginalised of the future, and it is important to understand and guide them to participate in the democratic process.⁴¹¹

A survey on youth and politics in Namibia undertaken in 2000/1 assessed youths' attitudes towards democracy and government, as well as socio-

economic issues and perceptions of their responsibilities in the public sphere as citizens. The main findings of the survey, which were later subjected to cluster analysis, give insight into young Namibians' political views.⁴¹² Most young Namibians define democracy in terms of freedom and civil liberties. This suggests a liberal understanding of the term 'democracy', and in relation to the colonial past that denied most Namibians these same freedoms and civil liberties.⁴¹³ Qualitative data shows that the youth give a wide range of definitions of human rights and freedoms. Although some youth identify freedom of speech (for the media, for example) as a right, other youth qualify it by saying that you only have this right if 'you have your facts straight'.⁴¹⁴ Many youth understand the rights to freedom of speech and expression, but do not see the state as necessarily bearing the responsibility to safeguard these rights and link these rights to being contingent upon other factors (such as the truth and not saying something against others).⁴¹⁵ Therefore, although the youth see democracy in terms of freedoms, they also see these freedoms being contingent upon behaviour – more like a benevolent dictatorship than a democracy.

Youth attitudes towards democracy are not consistent, implying an inadequate level of political education and knowledge. About one-fourth of youth say that majority rule is not important for democracy, while almost one-third (30.9%) say that freedom to criticise the government is not important for a democracy.⁴¹⁶ The majority of youth (69.6%) believe that multiparty competition is not essential for a democracy, with almost one-third (31%) saying that it is not important. In qualitative research, many youth express the ideals of apathy when they indicate that the Namibian form of democracy does not work because there is one dominant party and it therefore does not matter if one votes because that party is always going to win. One youth said: 'I have never voted and I will never vote. Why should we vote? It doesn't help'.⁴¹⁷ On the other hand, most youth (82.1%) feel that regular elections are important for a democracy.⁴¹⁸ Measuring support for non-democratic alternatives, more than one-third (37.3%) of youth do not value a democratic government enough in that they feel that sometimes non-democratic government can be preferred or that the form of government does not make a difference for them. In addition, many youth are not informed enough to openly support a democratic form of government. In addition, over one-third (34.5%) of youth say that sometimes a strong leader

is preferred over a democratically elected one. When given alternatives to democracy, a small but disconcerting proportion of youth would approve of the country being run by: a traditional leader (12.1%); military rule (10.2%); presidential rule without a parliament (15.4%); or technocratic rule (25.5%).⁴¹⁹ This data is cause for concern because the implication is that there is scope for political mobilisation on non-democratic platforms in Namibia. In addition, this data indicates possible high levels of youth apathy towards the voting process.

Some findings from various IPPR monitoring and evaluation activities, including those within the ESC, indicate that young Namibians do not have high levels of trust in government officials. The majority of the youth, to varying degrees, believe that there are problems in the way the country is governed, which render it less democratic.⁴²⁰ For example, only about half (52.2%) of youth think the 1999 elections were completely free and fair, with an additional 16.9% saying it was free and fair, but with major problems. Only 4.5% of youth say it was not at all free and fair.⁴²¹ Nevertheless, there is a strong belief among the youth that they should support the government because it has been popularly elected.⁴²² This gives an indication that the majority of Namibian youth accept elections as the method for selecting the government. However, a good number of youth (17.1%) state that government decisions deserve support, but not all the time.⁴²³ Qualitative research points to a feeling among the youth that benefits and privileges are reserved for the people who vote for a particular political party (implying favouritism) and that the implied threat of not getting benefits is how parties maintain their political base.⁴²⁴ The most important socio-economic problems highlighted by the youth are unemployment (38.2%), HIV/AIDS (13.0%) and poverty (5.9%). Although education is a general concern and an issue expected to be important to the youth, they do not list it as being among their problems.⁴²⁵ Namibia's education system still generates exclusion among the youth, especially from opportunities opened up by formal education.⁴²⁶ This would support the findings of Somach et al⁴²⁷ that identify 'disaffected youth' to be among those marginalised from the democratic process.

Disaffected youth are identified in two groups: the first group are those still in school who are socially classified as 'school children' and are thus not

seen as mature enough to vote, although they may be of legal age to vote. The second group are youth who are unemployed and may be disillusioned with the government. Indeed, research shows that the youth are critical of the government's inability to create employment or provide scholarships for study.⁴²⁸ Van Zyl and Keulder⁴²⁹ found that 59.9% of youth feel that the government is not doing very well in creating jobs, while with the same youth only 31.8% think that the government is not doing well in addressing their educational needs. This data shows that young people want jobs and economic security; unfortunately unemployment and economic security in Namibia are still seen as major social problems, with the result that many of the unemployed are youth – which research has shown leads to voter apathy.

Regarding interest of the youth in politics, a minority (15.1%) of the youth pay attention to politics by way of regular discussions with their friends on the topic, while only 22.5% always follow political issues.⁴³⁰ Only 25% report they engage in political activities, with rural youth indicating more political activity than those in urban areas.⁴³¹ More than two-thirds (67.3%) of the youth claim to be registered voters and most (61.3%) state they voted in the 1999 elections.⁴³² This data is contradictory in that youth do not show an interest in political issues yet claim to vote. This could indicate that either the youth are voting along political party lines without concern for the issues, or that youth are not as interested in voting and only vote out of other motivations.

Lack of official documentation can be a contributing factor to the low levels of youth political participation. In a voter analysis, Keulder and Wiese⁴³³ found that 89% of those who used sworn statements (because they did not have identification documents) in Windhoek West Constituency in 2003 were between 18 and 35 years old; and 82% of these voters had come of voting age after independence. By implication, lack of national identity documents could promote disinterest among the youth such that they might be reluctant to register and subsequently vote.

Cluster analysis of the 2000/1 survey results reveal that the largest cluster of young Namibians, approximately 40%, are apathetic and do not engage in political activities and therefore do not contribute to the political capital in the country. This suggests that almost one in 10 young Namibians can be

classified as apathetic. Apathy cuts across all Namibian youth and is not confined to any socio-biographical group or region of the country. Another cluster analysis of the data shows that approximately 25% of these youth engage in social activities with no inclination towards political activities and that they are predominantly from urban areas. The irony is that urban areas are endowed with more resources such as information, media and organisational capacity, and yet urban youth are not as politically active as rural youth. A small gender gap shows young men to be more active in politics than women.⁴³⁴ It is disconcerting that wealthier, better-educated urban youth are not inclined towards political participation because this means that financial and educational resources are used for social and not political participation. The implication is that an inactive middle class may have a negative impact on the formation of a vibrant civil society, which is the backbone of democratic consolidation. Democracy needs a strong and active civil society that provides the basis for participation in society.⁴³⁵

Although it is difficult to judge this data by international standards, it is a cause for concern. By implication, the youth have little interest in public and political affairs, and therefore are not exposed to important agents of public and political socialisation.⁴³⁶ Causes of voter apathy among the youth may include the belief that Namibian society has not fully succeeded in democratically socialising its youth. It is perceived that youth in pre-independence time were more involved in politics because of their visible involvement in various organisations that contributed to the liberation struggle. Thus, youth were politically involved because they had a focus (apartheid) to fight against; however, this does not necessarily mean that they were generally more politically active.⁴³⁷ Unless the youth from the most recent studies change their apathetic attitudes and behaviours as they relate to political participation, it does not bode well for the consolidation of democracy in Namibia.⁴³⁸

The discussion above indicates that causes of youth apathy include lack of education, lack of employment opportunities and inadequate democratic socialisation, which can be sources of exclusion for the youth because they fail to develop individual talents, abilities and potential.⁴³⁹ If the future of democracy in Namibia is to be secured, the youth should be targeted through the provision of good basic education (with employment opportunities) as

well as with civic and voter education messages. A good educational and democratic socialisation base will help the youth to develop a critical view of politics and the ability to understand and appreciate democracy.

WOMEN AND YOUTH AS PARTICIPANTS IN POLITICAL PARTIES

Some political parties have also been active in advocating for women's rights, specifically in the area of political power-sharing. The ruling SWAPO Party has a SWAPO Party Women's Council (SPWC). The SPWC has been working towards the advancement of equality for women and envisions women's full participation in the struggle for economic, cultural and social empowerment.⁴⁴⁰ The SPWC is primarily responsible for gender equality within the party. The DTA also has a women's league and an executive secretary for the Women's League; however, the party has yet to institute gender activities within its organisation. Another active political party in Namibia, the UDF, does not have a women's wing. Although the CoD currently does not have a functioning women's wing either, its constitution makes provision for a women's organisation⁴⁴¹ and the gender-sensitive mandate encourages women's equal participation in the party.⁴⁴²

Most political parties do not specifically have gender issues identified in their mandates, except the SWAPO Party and its women's council, which has as its stated task to ensure gender balanced representation in government and to advance women due to their previously disadvantaged position.⁴⁴³ The SPWC has as its aims to: achieve equality for women and their full participation in economic, cultural and social life; develop a political understanding among women; assure women's full participation in employment and education; promote international liaisons for women; and promote gender awareness among Namibian women.⁴⁴⁴ In addition, the SWAPO Party has been given the task of ensuring a 50% gender balance for regional delegations and 30% women in its Central Committee.⁴⁴⁵ The CoD also addresses gender in its constitution when it states that it strives to pursue a gender-balanced approach to all of its structures and that the CoD would include a provision for a gender quota in line with the most current international agreements.⁴⁴⁶ Although the SWAPO Party and CoD both have clearly identified gender mandates, the situation of women in other political parties is not clear-cut; the DTA in particular has been reported by its own members to undermine women's status within the party.⁴⁴⁷

Women are still under-represented in political parties at national, regional and local levels. SWAPO Party has three out of 13 (23%) regional coordinators who are women, 22.9% women in its Central Committee and 30.8% of its National Executive Committee members are women.⁴⁴⁸ In the CoD, 47.3% of its Central Committee members are women, but only 13% of its National Executive Committee members are women.⁴⁴⁹ In the DTA, 18.8% of Central Committee members and 19.2% of National Executive Committee members are women (see Table 5).

Table 5: Members of the executive of political parties, 2001

2001	Central Committee			National Executive Committee		
	Total No.	No. of Women	% Women	Total No.	No. of Women	% Women
SWAPO	83	19	22.9	15	4	30.8
DTA	32	6	18.8	26	5	19.2
CoD	19	9	47.3	13	4	13.0

Source: Updated from: E Iipinge & M Mwandangi, *The Status of Women in Politics and Decision-Making in SADC Countries: Namibia, GTRP/UNAM, Windhoek, 2001, p 17.*

Despite gender equality being ideologically embraced in party constitutions and manifestos for the 2004 elections, the political parties vary in the degree to which they implement this ideology. A woman heads none of the 11 political parties registered with the ECN, and only the CoD has a female vice president. Women are represented in CoD's party structure through 'Women Democrats'. After the 2004 CoD congress, 10 women were elected members of the 36-strong National Executive Committee. In its 2004 manifesto, CoD states that its senior leadership is 40% female, and that women make up 43% of the party list for the regional council elections. The list of MPs for 2004 reflected only two women.

Despite the SPWC having been active and in the party's structure from pre-independence time, within the SWAPO Party there are only 19 women in the 83-member Central Committee (23%), and four out of the 21 members on the Politburo (19%) are women.⁴⁵⁰ The SWAPO electoral convention

published a party list featuring 33 women out of 72 placed in various positions, but only 14 appear on the list of MPs and only two women are among the first 10 on the list. The list of MPs reflects only one woman each from the DTA, NUDO and UDF parties.⁴⁵¹

None of the other parties represented in parliament, as well as those not represented, has a significant number of women in their top party structures. Civil society organisations (CSOs), in particular Namibia Women's Manifesto network, have lobbied government to legislate 50% women candidates in future elections.⁴⁵² To avoid parties dumping women at the bottom of party lists, campaigners urge parties to use the zebra system of alternating women and men in the lists. It is noted that the number of women in decision-making positions has increased; however, the Namibia Women's Manifesto points out that at the rate of progress from 1990 to 2004, gender balance in top decision-making positions would only be achieved in 2050.⁴⁵³

lipinge et al⁴⁵⁴ found that although political parties are not adequately funded, a lack of political will within some parties also means that their gender components are under-resourced. For example, the women's league of the DTA has no transportation, no office equipment such as computers and no internet facilities; while the UDF and CoD do not have functioning women's sections.

In the same manner that political parties have ideologically embraced gender equality, youth participation is similarly represented under different terminologies in political party structures. These include: the CoD's Young Democrats; the SWANU Youth League; the SWAPO Party Youth League; the DTA Youth League; and the UDF Youth Wing. These groups form part of the parties' decision-making bodies and are prioritised in some of the parties' 2004 election manifestos.⁴⁵⁵

Although political parties present their views about the youth in the media, only two parties mentioned policies on the youth in their manifestos. The CoD said it affirms its obligation to secure the future of the youth, because its support base and the majority of its members are young people.⁴⁵⁶ The SWAPO Party said it would put urgent measures in place to address unacceptable levels of unemployment among the youth, such as strengthen-

ing youth schemes around the country.⁴⁵⁷ In addition, the president-elect said he welcomed the presence of younger people in the new National Assembly, stating that: 'If you have a society that does not have youth, you should not consider yourself a nation.'⁴⁵⁸

WOMEN'S TARGETS NOT REACHED

One area where it was hoped that political status might see a shift was in the area of greater women's representation at the various levels of political decision-making. However, this is not the case after the 2004 elections. Although women have slight increases in their numbers for some decision-making bodies, they are far from the 30% representation by 2005 that Namibia agreed to by signing the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development. Although women scored an early victory with 43.4% representation at local levels of government, the elections were not a success for women's overall representation within the National Assembly and regional councils.

In the May 2004 local authority elections women were elected in 123 of the 283 seats available countrywide, and moved from holding 41.3% of seats in 1998 to 43.4% in 2004. Women form the majority on 13 councils but one is completely under men's control. These results have been achieved largely by affirmative action measures to promote women, which require political parties to name a given number of women on their lists for local authority elections. In the 2004 elections, local authority councils with 10 or fewer members had to include at least three women, and five women for larger councils. This policy dictating greater women's representation on party lists was, however, not implemented at regional and national levels, leading to a relative loss (given the high expectations) in women's representation at higher levels of government.

Women's representation increased by less than 1% after the 2004 elections, moving from 26.4% to 27.3%.⁴⁵⁹ In the National Assembly, the SWAPO Party now has 27.3% women representatives, the CoD has 40% and the UDF 33%, while the DTA, NUDO, MAG and the RP do not have any women representatives.⁴⁶⁰ Women's low level of representation at national level stems from the fact that although all of the political parties had more than 30% women candidates on their lists, the women's names were placed too far down for them to get seats in the National Assembly.⁴⁶¹ As noted in the section

on the electoral system, women's low representation in the National Assembly can be attributed partly to the type of political institutions Namibia uses in deciding who sits in the National Assembly. Given the system of 'largest remainder', which encourages small political parties at the expense of larger coalitions (which would be the case if there were legal thresholds), small political parties that get only a few seats tend to place men in positions on lists for those seats. Indeed, the above figures indicate that out of seven political parties represented in the National Assembly only three have placed women in seats; with these three parties primarily being those with the most overall seats. The only exception is the DTA which has traditionally held more National Assembly seats but has consistently had women under-represented in these seats. For example, in the National Assembly prior to the 2004 elections, the DTA had seven seats with only one (14.3%) held by a woman, while the UDF had only two seats, but one (50%) was held by a woman.⁴⁶²

Table 6: Women in regional councils, 2004

Region	No. of councillors	No. of women
Caprivi	6	1
Erongo	7	0
Hardap	6	1
Karas	6	1
Kavango	9	1
Khomas	10	6
Kunene	6	0
Ohangwena	11	2
Omaheke	7	1
Omusati	12	0
Oshana	10	0
Oshikoto	10	0
Otjozindjupa	7	0
Total	107	13 (12.2%)

Source: The Namibian, 9 December 2004.

One hundred-and-seven regional councillors were elected in 2004: six of the 13 regions do not have any women councillors and only three (23.1%) women councillors have been appointed as regional governors. Regarding the 26-member National Council, it is said that 19% of those appointed will be women – an increase from the 7.7% in 1998.⁴⁶³ However, the deputy chairperson of the National Council (a woman) who was in line to take over as chairperson of the House, was passed over in favour of another member (a man). It had been hoped that the deputy chairperson would have become the first woman chairperson of the National Council.⁴⁶⁴ Table 6 shows the number of women versus the total number of members of regional councils across the country.

Although the regional councils are sending more women to the National Council, women are still seriously under-represented at regional level. Given that in all cases political parties either nominate candidates for election or put them on party lists, this poor showing for women's representation rests squarely with the decision-making wings of political parties.⁴⁶⁵

DEMOCRATIC ASSISTANCE

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Annual total official development assistance (ODA) to Namibia is about 16% of government expenditure and 5% of its GDP.⁴⁶⁶ The total ODA received by Namibia in 1999 was US\$109.1 million and per capita, US\$56.5.⁴⁶⁷ The majority of assistance from UN agencies comes from the United Nations Children's Fund (33.4%), the World Health Organisation (17.5%), the UNDP (17.4%) and the United Nations Population Fund (16.3%). In addition, top bilateral donors include Germany, the United States (US), Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands and China; while the European Union, bilateral agencies and NGOs also contributed to aid for Namibia.⁴⁶⁸ ODA to Namibia has increased steadily since independence, but has been more unpredictable in recent years. In 1990 ODA was US\$64.1 million: 11.1% of government expenditure and 3.5% of GDP. By 1998 ODA was US\$184.9 million: 19.2% of government expenditure and 6% of GDP.⁴⁶⁹ Major areas targeted for ODA are human resource development such as education, health and social sector projects (potable water, housing and sanitation provisioning), accounting for about half of all development assistance. In addition, about 17% of ODA has gone to the natural resource sector (agriculture, forestry and fisheries), while 16% is spent on communication and transport, and 22.3% is spent on development administration and regional development.⁴⁷⁰

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE TO THE ECN

The ECN has a budget allocation from government as well as donor funding for the ESC (to be discussed separately). The cost of the 2004 elections covers those costs involved in administration, registration of voters, establishment of constituency boundaries, voter education, purchase of equipment, the election itself and immediate post-election expenses relating to the polls. Tables 7 and 8 indicate the ECN budget appropriation and provisional expenditures for the year 2003/04, with Table 7 showing the budget and expenditures for administration.⁴⁷¹ Provisional administrative costs for the financial year 2003/04 indicate expenditures of N\$4.26 million out of a budget of N\$5.98 million, with a balance of N\$1.72 million. This balance could have been used to recruit the necessary staff to strengthen the administrative capacity of the ECN.

Table 7: ECN administrative expenditures 2003/04*

ECN budget appropriation	Budget	Expenditure	Balance
Salaries – head office staff	2 626 000	2 069 017	556 983
GIPF	314 000	212 294	101 706
Other conditions of service (clothing, trips, etc)	8 000	1 158	6 842
Subsistence and travel- head office staff	638 000	232 974	405 026
Materials and supplies	218 000	180 167	37 833
Transport	268 000	217 005	50 995
Utilities	215 000	205 985	9 015
Maintenance expenses	110 000	108 636	1 364
Other services	1 501 000	965 137	535 863
Membership fees	11 000	–	11 000
Furniture and office equipment	69 000	62 977	6 023
Total	5 978 000	4 255 350	1 722 650

* Figures have been round off for ease of examination.

Source: ECN, Annual Report 2003-2004, ECN, Windhoek, 2004, p 17.

Table 8 shows that electoral operations for 2003/04 were budgeted at N\$45.21 million, while provisional expenditures came to N\$45.93 million, thus reflecting an overall over-expenditure of about N\$0.72 million. Components that reflect over-expenditure are salaries for coordinators, area managers, registration officials, stores staff, drivers and voter education officers (N\$4.1 million over-expenditure), as well as subsistence allowances and travel costs for coordinators, area managers and registration officials (N\$2.92 million over-expenditure). However, savings were made in the area of transport costs on vehicles for registration personnel (N\$5.5 million saving), and an amount of about N\$0.79 million was saved on materials and other services. The over-expenditures imply either under-budgeting or inadequate management of funds on budgeted components. These expenditures are provisional and do not include expenses relating to the National Assembly, presidential and regional council elections because the government financial year ends on 30 September 2004 and thus the budget for those elections held in November will come from the 2004/05 provisional budget.⁴⁷²

Table 8: ECN Election operations expenditures 2003/04*

ECN budget appropriation	Budget	Expenditure	Balance
Salaries	25 491 000	29 576 626	(4 085 626)
Subsistence and travel	5 958 000	8 877 988	(2 919 988)
Materials and supplies	576 000	283 459	292 541
Transport	8 341 000	2 840 673	5 500 327
Other services	4 848 000	4 352 536	495 464
Total	45 214 000	45 931 282	(717 282)

*Figures have been round off for ease of examination.

Source: ECN, Annual Report 2003-2004, ECN, Windhoek, 2004, p 18.

Included in 'other services' expenditure of electoral operations is the civic and voter education programme component, with an input of N\$16,109,179 donated by the Netherlands and Sweden to complement the work of the ESC. The civic and voter education and registration projects fell into two phases: one phase from September 2002 to August 2003; and a second phase from September 2003 onwards. An assessment of the distribution of donor funds was conducted in February 2004 and found that at the time of the assessment only 70% of the civic and voter education donor budget had been utilised, but funds were expected to last through August 2004 because most of the capital procurements had already been made.⁴⁷³ Acceptable reporting to donors of civic and voter education funding could not be fulfilled at that time due to limited staffing and an over extension of responsibilities at the ECN that led to a shift in focus away from civic and voter education to practical operations such as voter registration. In addition, for the civic and voter education programmes, reporting according to different donor requirements was tedious; budget revisions did not maintain work plans of the first phase and resulted in loss of budgetary basis.⁴⁷⁴ Therefore, as previously mentioned, financial reporting was characterised by inconsistent bookkeeping entries as well as confusing reports. Other financial challenges to the reporting of ESC funds for civic and voter education have been mentioned above in the section on administrative capacity, provision and training of ECN staff.

Table 9 shows the allocation of election-related expenses in the contingency provision of 2004/2005 budgeted costs for the National Assembly, regional council and presidential elections. Of the total contingency provisional budget of N\$150 million, N\$63.6 million had been budgeted for election expenses. This indicates that the total is 42% of the contingency provisional budget, indicating that much of the government's unexpected deficit comes from election-related activities.

Table 9: Government 2004/05 expenditure on the 2004 elections

Government of the Republic of Namibia budget appropriation	Expenditure N\$ million
Presidential national elections	30
Police operations: Elections	20
Election monitoring	8
Political parties: National Assembly	3.1
Election broadcasting	2.5
Total	63.6

Source: The Namibian, 2 December 2004.

Moreover, there were financial inputs from donations and the ECN showed the need to recruit and train additional staff. However, these additional staffing needs would imply that the ECN would also have required additional funding to build capacity through recruitment and training of additional staff if it were to fulfil its obligations. The government may in future need to allocate additional funding to continue civic and voter education programmes because donor dependency for such programmes is unsustainable. This would be in conformity with SADC principles that governments should prioritise the funding of civic and voter education through provisions in the state budget prior to elections.⁴⁷⁵ Given Namibia's history of Bantu education and the subsequent generally low educational obtainment of the Namibian people, coupled with the inexperience of most Namibian's in the voting process due to disenfranchisement by the apartheid government, civic and voter education should be a priority for the government for many years to come so that principles of democracy which

have begun to take root in Namibia can continue to flourish. That said, better saving mechanisms such as interest earnings should be pursued when donor funds are received. Sustainability of election funding in the country will require government commitment to regular review of the ECN budget.

EXTERNAL FUNDING OF POLITICAL PARTIES

As discussed earlier, political parties are essential components of democracy: without political parties there would be no multiparty contests which put forward options for forms that a government can take. To participate in the democratic process, political parties need financial capacity. If there is no funding, only a few parties can participate in democracy: which would mean less choice for voters, fewer ideas on how to move the country forward and weaker mechanisms to support elected officials.⁴⁷⁶ The role of money in politics has been controversial and subject to debate internationally, but the bottom line remains – nothing comes for free and a multiparty democracy is expensive. Over and above the sources of political party funding discussed previously, political parties also get funding from government as well as foreign support.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Namibia is one of the 14 African countries which finance political parties from public funds. Political parties require funding for running their legislative and party offices, undertaking routine political work, ensuring political capacity to properly administer themselves as well as conducting voter outreach. Public funding also prevents over-reliance on foreign aid.⁴⁷⁷ Political party funding in Namibia is guided by section 46(i) of the Electoral Act of 1992, which addresses foreign funding only.

As will be discussed in the section on the external funding of political parties, the act regulates foreign funding disclosure and penalties for not disclosing; however, the act does not specify how the disclosure should take place.⁴⁷⁸ There are no other laws or regulations regarding the amount that private individuals, companies or organisations can donate to a political party or disclosure by donors, nor are there tax benefits for supporting political parties. No ceiling on contributions or limits on how much money parties can raise have been set, and there is no ban on foreign, private, government bodies or anonymous donations.⁴⁷⁹

Following the recommendations from a parliamentary select committee in 1996 for political parties represented in the National Assembly to receive a subsidy from public funding, the government in 1997 implemented a scheme whereby each party represented in the National Assembly gets funding proportional to the number of votes it received in the last National Assembly elections.⁴⁸⁰ However, the recommended amount of N\$25 was reduced to N\$16.50. For the most recent disbursement, this amounted to 0.2% of government revenue for the previous year.⁴⁸¹ Political parties that have received government support since the 1999 elections are the CoD, DTA, MAG, SWAPO Party and UDF. The Democratic Coalition of Namibia received its share when it had representation in parliament, but it is no longer represented.⁴⁸² Among the parties participating in the 2004 elections, SWANU, the RP and the NDMC did not qualify for government funding because they were not represented in parliament. These political parties have complained of being discriminated against by the allocation formula, claiming that the system is unconstitutional and that all political parties should be treated equally.⁴⁸³ Indeed, Table 10 shows that of the parties that did get funding, the SWAPO Party received most of the money for the most recent two fiscal years.

As can be seen in the last column of Table 10, government funding for the 2004/05 fiscal year (the current election year) was N\$15.86 million. Boer⁴⁸⁴ extrapolates percentages of votes for the 1999 National Assembly (after

Table 10: Funding to political parties 2002/03–2003/04

Party	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05*
CoD	1 700 000	1 900 000	1 589 880
DTA-UDF	2 200 000	2 400 000	1 984 955
MAG	316 077	284 710	107 164
SWAPO Party	13 700 000	14 600 000	12 180 004
Total	17 916 077	19 184 710	15 862 000

* The 2004/05 figures are estimated by Boer, 2004b, op cit, p 4 based on the percentage of votes each party received in the 1999 elections.

Source: M Boer, *The Life of the Party: The Hidden Role of Money in Namibian Politics*, IPPR Briefing Paper No. 33, IPPR, Windhoek, 2004, p 3.

removing 0.35% for SWANU and the WRP which were not funded) and estimates that the amount received for the 2004 election by the SWAPO Party is N\$12.18 million, while the CoD, DTA-UDF coalition and MAG received N\$1.59 million, N\$1.98 million and N\$0.11 million, respectively. Despite the higher allocation to the SWAPO Party, the CoD accused the SWAPO Party of using additional public resources (taxpayers' money) for its 2004 election campaign, including the use of official vehicles by cabinet ministers for political rallies – a charge that the SWAPO Party denies.⁴⁸⁵

The government's funding of political parties is a relatively progressive policy given that only 14 of the 53 African countries have such a policy.⁴⁸⁶ However, the size of the allocated amount in the 14 countries only makes a real difference in three countries – South Africa, Morocco and Seychelles. Boer⁴⁸⁷ reports that even if the Namibian government funds opposition parties, the amount is too small to make a meaningful difference. Government funding is intended to help parties run their offices and undertake political activities during elections and non-election time. This support is 'supposed to help ensure the survival of multiparty democracy'.⁴⁸⁸ When this scheme was implemented in 1997, an amount of N\$8 million was allocated to the parties represented in the National Assembly. However, this amount has grown consistently, with a total of N\$103.6 million having been allocated to six different political parties in the last seven budget years, not counting estimates for 2004/05.⁴⁸⁹

The Electoral Act of 1992 does not provide guidelines on how government allocated funds should be spent. Political parties are required to submit their audited accounts to the auditor-general and report back to parliament under general categories of spending. Despite receiving millions of dollars from public coffers, political parties have not submitted their audited accounts as required under the terms for receiving the money. In addition, the auditor-general has no mandate to audit the use of the money by the political parties.⁴⁹⁰ The auditor-general has consulted government lawyers on how to compel political parties to submit their audited accounts. Government will also introduce new rules in 2005 requiring political parties to show how the funds are being spent. In addition, parliament has decided that in 2005 it will introduce new rules requiring political parties to account for public funds and will restrict political parties on how they can spend these public

funds.⁴⁹¹ Boer found that it is difficult to collect data on expenditures of Namibian political parties because most parties are not willing to provide information, partly due to the fact that many of them do not keep accurate records.

FOREIGN FUNDING OF POLITICAL PARTIES

The Electoral Act of 1992 (section 46) indicates that foreign donations to political parties should be made public within an appropriate time period.⁴⁹² Section 98 of the act indicates that failure to disclose such funds can result in a fine of up to N\$12,000 and/or imprisonment of up to three years.⁴⁹³ Although there is currently no specified method of how this reporting is to take place, parties that receive funds and do not report them can be de-registered by the Directorate of Elections.⁴⁹⁴ As discussed under the section on funding and party expenditures, there have been recent attempts to give public subsidies to political parties in an effort to ensure their viability as well as to ensure that they do not become too heavily dependent on foreign aid. In 1997 the government implemented this scheme and the larger parties (SWAPO Party, CoD, DTA, MAG, etc.) have received public funds according to the number of votes they won in the last National Assembly elections. Although it has been recommended that parties submit their audited accounts, parties are not required to account for the public funds they receive. However, as of mid-2004, other than the requirement that parties disclose foreign funding, no law on party funding had been introduced.⁴⁹⁵

It is unclear how strictly political parties adhere to the law of open disclosure of foreign funding and few parties have admitted to receiving foreign funding. Usually these revelations are made through press conferences. In many countries, liberation movements received most of their funding from foreign donors and some parties (such as SWAPO Party in Namibia) still receive a large percentage of their funding from foreign sources.⁴⁹⁶ For example, the SWAPO Party has acknowledged that it received N\$240,000 from the Chinese Communist Party in 2003 to help pay for an extraordinary party congress. The SWAPO Party explained at the time that receiving the funding was acceptable since the donation was not meant to 'destabilise the country'.⁴⁹⁷ In 2004, the CoD confirmed that it had been given assistance from Westminster Foundation, linked to the United Kingdom's Labour Party, although it did not disclose the amount of assistance.⁴⁹⁸

One of the most controversial revelations of external party funding came when it was discovered that the South African apartheid government had donated tens of millions of dollars (said to be N\$185.5 million)⁴⁹⁹ in secret funding to the DTA for the 1989 elections to help improve the DTA's chances and to damage the chances of the SWAPO Party.⁵⁰⁰ The Democratic Media Holdings (DMH) company also gave financial assistance to the DTA during the 1990s.⁵⁰¹ In 2000, Dirk Mudge indicated that the DTA had received N\$8.6 million from the DHM since independence.⁵⁰² Since then, the DTA and the RP have acknowledged receipt of N\$28,000 from a South African electricity company SELco to pay for municipal elections.⁵⁰³ The DTA and RP state that they are currently not receiving foreign funding.⁵⁰⁴

Since independence, only four of the nine political parties participating in the 2004 elections have disclosed foreign funding. It is difficult to determine exactly to what extent political parties are receiving foreign funding. In general, political parties tend to be paranoid and do not want to give out information about any aspect of their parties, especially when it comes to funding. This paranoia – coupled with the lack of legislation requiring full disclosure of political party funding – means that even when foreign funds are received it is hard to track them, and the manner in which they are spent does not need to be disclosed. However, one can assume that the level of foreign funding for political parties in Namibia is low for two reasons: first, there appears to be general sentiment that foreign funding could mean the funder would try to control party officials, leading to suspicion regarding the motives of the party; and second, many donors, although they may agree with certain party platforms, will not fund political parties. For example, Iipinge et al⁵⁰⁵ found that women's wings of political parties do not easily get donor funding. They state that:

'Many donors cite political policies as reasons for not funding women's wings in political parties. However, it could be argued that women's wings of political parties are an area where donors would be assured that their funding could help impact political will in relation to gender mainstreaming. It is political parties, particularly the ruling party which set up the Namibian government, that formulate policies which government implements. If gender issues are to be advanced, women's wings in political parties should be strengthened.'⁵⁰⁶

THE ELECTORAL SUPPORT CONSORTIUM (ESC)

As mentioned previously, the ESC is funded by international donors and consists of the government, in the form of the ECN, and several NGOs. The ESC was established to encourage voters to participate in elections and to help voters make informed voting decisions.⁵⁰⁷ The ESC includes both funding and implementing partners. Funding partners include the governments of the Netherlands and Sweden as well as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Implementing partners include the ECN (which coordinates the overall programme), the Namibia Institute for Democracy (NID), the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC), and the IPPR. Recently a secondary consortium of partners was added to the Civic and Voter Education programme, namely, the Namibian School Debating Association, the Service Centre for the Visually Impaired, and the Namibia Community Radio Network. In addition, Sister Namibia – although not a formal ESC or secondary consortium partner – also runs civic and voter education activities focusing on improving gender equality in political participation.⁵⁰⁸

The ESC is unique in that it brings together international donor agencies, the government (through the ECN) and civil society (through the LAC, NID, IPPR and secondary partners). Each of these partners has specific tasks and set goals to achieve, which taken together form a coalition for comprehensive civic and voter education. The primary task of the ECN is project coordination and voter education. While the LAC has undertaken training of civic and voter educators and trainers, the NID is responsible for a multi-media civic education campaign and the IPPR is responsible for monitoring and evaluation. The stated goals of the ESC are:

‘... to strengthen the democratic political culture in Namibia and to promote acceptance by both citizens and political elites of a shared system of democratic norms and values. Therefore, it will be important to increase public awareness of, and informed participation in the political process; specifically to increase public awareness of key democracy principles; of the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic system; of the importance of broad and continuous citizen participation in democratic processes, including in particular, the upcoming local

and national elections; of key issues relevant to the respective elections; and, to the extent that impartiality can be assured, of the political platforms of the respective parties.⁵⁰⁹

The ECN had the most challenging responsibilities in the ESC in that it was required to implement two programmes from two different donor sources (which required two different methods of accounting). The ESC was to utilise its funds for the organisation and training of election officers and poll workers throughout the country as well as for voter registration through the purchase of modern computer equipment. The ESC also produced multi-media civic and voter education materials that were distributed to regional government offices, as well as to television and radio networks throughout the country.⁵¹⁰

The LAC was primarily responsible for civic and voter education at community level and developed a civic and voter education manual to train-the-trainers within communities. The LAC focused on: creating awareness among the youth through 'youth camps'; raising awareness about the democratic process through community meetings; democracy training workshops for unemployed youth; democracy training workshops with people living with disabilities; democracy training workshops with women's organisations; and translating training manuals into local languages. An evaluation of the ESC found that the community level civic and voter education provided by the LAC was critical to the success of the programme because it took this information to grassroots level.⁵¹¹

The NID was primarily responsible for printed and electronic media information dissemination, but ultimately also included a secondary level of partners which included community radio and community level organisations. The NID began its multi-media project in 2003, primarily targeting literate populations. The multi-media project included: inserts into newspapers that discussed and defined aspects of the democratic process; essay competitions in schools; radio and television advertisements; as well as an internet site with games and democracy information.⁵¹²

The IPPR was introduced into the ESC to monitor and evaluate partner performance. The IPPR pre-tested some of the NID's information materials to determine relative reach and effectiveness of various media alternatives,

conducted impact assessments of work by various partners, conducted a survey of voters' opinions on civic and voter education, and produced progress reports on activities of the ESC.⁵¹³

The ESC has had two evaluative programmes and workshops aimed at improving its communication and functioning.⁵¹⁴ In its formative phase, the ESC recognised the need for an inclusive approach to civic and voter education and, among other objectives, committed itself specifically to gender mainstreaming and disability sensitisation, which were the focus of the first workshop; however, this focus was expanded for the second evaluation and workshop phase to include mainstreaming and sensitisation of all democratically marginalised groups (as discussed above). Although there were various challenges to the ESC, its overall aims and objectives of targeting people at various levels (from grassroots to international internet level) with civic and voter education was successful. It is anticipated that civic and voter education activities will continue after the 2004 elections, given the importance of civic education for the consolidation of democracy.

EXTERNAL SUPPORT FOR CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY

The following section is not comprehensive in its analysis of external support for the democratic process in Namibia given that there is no central reporting agency which keeps track of donor activities within Namibia. In addition, much of the ODA discussed above – although targeted at specific areas such as gender – impacts civic and voter education because it raises the social, economic and educational status of these target groups, which in turn raises their awareness about democratic issues.

BILATERAL DONOR SUPPORT

Several of the top bilateral donors to Namibia such as the US (through USAID), Sweden, Finland and the Netherlands focus some of their programmes on democracy building as a primary activity. Some of these bilateral donor activities have already been discussed as they relate to the ESC. The following section will discuss other aspects of bilateral donor support.

The USAID Democracy and Governance section is guided by USAID strategic objective 673-004 Increased Accountability of Parliament to all

Namibian Citizens, Pillar IV: Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance of the Democracy and Governance strategic framework.⁵¹⁵ The US embassy's Human Rights and Democracy Fund has also given financial support to the Women Support Women NGO which is known for its community level work, leadership development and democracy building programmes.⁵¹⁶

The Royal Netherlands Embassy funds Afrobarometer for Namibia, as well as funding the ESC. Afrobarometer is administered by the IPPR and is a multinational survey that covers attitudes about markets and democracy in 15 African countries. Much of the data covered in this report on women and youth attitudes and participation in the democratic process has come from Afrobarometer data collected by the IPPR since 1999. The Finnish Embassy in Namibia funded the previously discussed analysis of media coverage for political parties done by the IPPR in the run-up to the November 2004 elections.

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) supports the training of candidates in campaign skills and expectations of elected leaders.⁵¹⁷ The FES began working for democracy in Namibia prior to Namibian independence in that it supported Namibians in exile by cooperating with the Southern African Frontline States to end apartheid.⁵¹⁸ Since independence, the FES in Namibia supports the dissemination of information and training of Namibians about aspects of democracy, supports a democratic society and its institutions, and assists, lobbies and campaigns for gender equality.⁵¹⁹ The most important democratic programme of the FES in Namibia is its Civic Education and Institution Building project, which is aimed at enhancing the general understanding of Namibians about the Namibian constitution and the functioning of democratic institutions. In order to meet its democratically related aims and objectives, the FES conducts workshops, seminars and training programmes, and produces information and publications on democracy.⁵²⁰

CIVIL SOCIETY SUPPORT

A host of NGOs, donor agencies, parastatals, political parties and CSOs are active in Namibia. A number of these CSOs operate in such areas as human rights, democracy building and support for government and civil society

voter education programmes. The Ministry of Trade and Industry is mandated with the function of registering companies and organisations; however, reliable data is not readily available to reflect on the size and role of civil society with respect to assistance for democracy building. Although there are some community organisations with initiatives geared towards community-level empowerment, there is no comprehensive information due to a lack of data and because there is no coordinating body.

Table 11 indicates the percentage of NGOs, community-based organisations (CBOs) and CSOs operating in Namibia. NGOs are significant contributors to development by taking on many of the challenges facing Namibia. Some NGOs are relatively new in Namibia, others have changed their mandates over the past 10 years, while still others have aggressively implemented their policies and programmes.⁵²¹ A number of NGOs have only come into existence in the past 10 years. There is currently no adequately functioning NGO coordinating body in Namibia; consequently, there is no coordination and facilitation of NGO activities, often leading to a duplication of NGO efforts, with these various agencies functioning largely independently of each other.⁵²² As can be seen from Table 11, very little civil society effort is specifically geared to democracy building. Many organisations work in other areas and concentrate on the democratic process only as it relates to their

Table 11: NGOs, CBOs and CSOs in Namibia

Agriculture and Rural Development	25%
Human Rights	6%
Democracy	1%
Education & Training	36%
Health	6%
Housing	6%
Women	9%
Environment & Nature Conservation	6%
Small Business & Informal Sector	7%

Source: National Planning Commission (NPC), Second National Development Plan (NDP2): 2001/2002-2005/2006, Vol 1-3, NPC/GRN, Windhoek, 2001, p 711.

area of focus. For example, there are several NGOs working within the area of gender but which focus on issues of gender and women in decision-making policies.

Civil society in Namibia has become increasingly active in politics, often because it is difficult to divorce politics and decision-making from social reforms and movements – such as the gender equality or human rights movements. Some NGOs are specifically formed to lobby for influence over decision-making bodies, while others consider this part of working towards more societal-wide reforms; however, the majority of these forums have only come into existence within the past few years. Many NGOs focus on aspects of disenfranchisement, including voter and civic education and encouraging voter registration.

The LAC has been involved in law reform, particularly relating to gender, and provides input to legislation that focuses on gender issues but also has a strong slant towards democracy building. The LAC programmes include addressing human rights issues and constitutional litigation activities, a paralegal training programme, a juvenile justice programme, promoting human rights and preventing discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS, and protecting land rights with a particular focus on women. The LAC is also a member of the ESC, whereby its activities primarily include the preparation of training materials and conducting training workshops to provide the general public with voter education.⁵²³

The NID was established in 1991 and has as its aim the promotion of general and widespread acceptance of democratic values and practices in Namibia.⁵²⁴ The NID conducts civic education through contact with schools, radio programmes and local newspaper sections. The NID often publishes training materials on topics including the Namibian constitution, laws, the electoral process and civic education in a variety of local languages with wording geared towards the local community members.⁵²⁵ The NID also managed a Civil Society Development Programme in collaboration with USAID in which the NID (through small grants and technical support) administered support to 33 emerging CSOs. Technical support included organisational support in helping to develop advocacy programmes. The focus for these organisations included good governance, human rights, anti-corruption, public health,

HIV/AIDS, small business development and community media.⁵²⁶ The NID is also part of the ESC and has a substantial civic and voter education component (discussed earlier), as well as publishing more academically orientated books and journal articles.

The IPPR was started in 2000 and undertakes public interest research, conducts research with politicians and the general public on political issues and serves as the Namibian branch for Afrobarometer. Afrobarometer is a cross-national annual survey on attitudes towards the market and democracy in 15 African countries that have multiparty elections. The IPPR has covered such diverse political topics as the national budget, business climate updates, electoral processes and other issues of democracy.⁵²⁷ One of the most recent additions to the IPPR has been its new collaborative publication, *Insight*, which is an ambitious effort by one of the IPPR's directors to produce a wholly Namibian monthly journal that discusses the Namibian social, economic and political climate.

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) was established in 1989 and in 1995 began a parliamentary programme with USAID. This programme sought to build the capacity of MPs and parliamentary staff, as well as to publish research documentation. The NDI has conducted orientation and training for new (especially women) MPs and has worked with parliamentary committees such as the Women's Caucus.⁵²⁸ In 1996 the NDI helped to implement the use of new technology in parliament and developed a 'constituency channel' to facilitate access to civil society.⁵²⁹

The National Society for Human Rights (NSHR), founded in 1989, is a non-partisan human rights monitoring and advocacy organisation that envisages a world free of human rights violations. The organisation's mission is to stop human rights violations altogether in Namibia and in the rest of the world. The NSHR compiles and produces a civic education series as part of its Civil Rights Education Programme. Such publications are aimed at creating public awareness on human rights and responsibilities as well as promoting and consolidating a democratic culture in the country. Some of the NSHR objectives are to promote accountability, accessibility and transparency in public administration, and to promote representative and

decentralised political power based on active and full public participation. In relation to democracy building, the NSHR has identified the lack of intra-party democracy within the country's several political parties as a possible obstacle to democratic consolidation. The NSHR states further that because political parties are ethnically based and public officials are appointed in a top-down fashion, this lack of intra-party democracy could hinder human-centred development in Namibia. It is with these aims and obstacles in mind that the NSHR produced a civic education series aimed at promoting sustainable human development by encouraging democracy within political parties, ensuring that party members choose their own representatives in a bottom-up fashion. The purpose is also to sensitise and educate ordinary citizens on the roles of the state, and the role of civil society vis-à-vis the state.⁵³⁰

In addition, the publication focuses on enhancing political education and general public knowledge as well as confidence in the Namibian constitution.⁵³¹ This NSHR civic education series was written in 2002 and deals with another main obstacle to democratic consolidation and human centred development in the country: the lack of active and effective public participation in the affairs of government.⁵³² The publication aims at informing and encouraging Namibians to exercise their participatory rights and to be tolerant of each other's opinion, beliefs and practices. The reader will be informed about participatory rights, such as freedom of expression and opinion, freedom of association and assembly and how and when citizens should use such rights to change the composition or policies of their government. While the short-term objective of this civic education series is to increase political and other tolerance, the long-term objective is to enhance human centred development in Namibia.⁵³³

Several NGOs are involved in promoting women's greater participation in power sharing and decision making, especially within the political arena.⁵³⁴ For example, the previously mentioned 50/50 campaign, although a global effort, is spearheaded by Sister Namibia in collaboration with stakeholders, also coordinates the Women's Manifesto Network.⁵³⁵

Sister Namibia also publishes a quarterly magazine – Sister Namibia – which focuses on, among other gender issues, women in leadership and highlights

the accomplishments of successful women from the public, private and civil sectors.⁵³⁶ The Namibian Women's Network, which consists of 11 rural groups from across Namibia, also provides advocacy, lobbying and voter education.⁵³⁷ A very new NGO aimed at improving women's participation in politics and power sharing is the Namibian Centre for Women's Leadership, founded by Elizebeth Khaxas who was previously affiliated to Sister Namibia.

The Women's Action for Development (WAD), in addition to dealing with other gender issues, has formed 42 Women's Voice committees in seven regions as well as a national Women's Voice committee. These local and national level committees are avenues for community outreach as well as for identifying women leaders, including potential women political candidates.⁵³⁸ Women's Voice members address social problems (such as educational or health problems, drug abuse, alcoholism and AIDS awareness) that exist in their communities, but work through their community leaders and traditional authorities.⁵³⁹ The WAD, in collaboration with the LAC, also trains paralegal advisors in the regions to assist rural people with their legal problems.⁵⁴⁰

In addition, Women's Campaign International (WCI) sent a fact-finding mission to Namibia in 2003 with a view to establishing a training programme for aspiring women leaders and women already in politics. The training was to include candidates for local and regional elections with a mix from all political parties, and with regional party representatives and participants from the MWACW, MRLG&H and MIB. However, the parties concerned could not agree on the form and content of this training exercise and the WCI programme did not take place.

THE NEED FOR SUPPORT IN THE CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY

There are some 'products', even in a capitalist economic system, which cannot be independently economically sustainable. Many of these 'products' relate to the 'public good', such as law reform, advancing minority rights (e.g. women or the disabled) and support for the democratic process. There are many 'products' that have a price which people are willing to pay, but how much would – or could – each citizen contribute to, for example, civic and voter education or to the printing of ballot papers? Without support

from foreign donors, the government and civil society, most aspects of the democratic process – such as political parties and voter education – would not be available; and thus there would be no democracy. As shown in the section on government support for the most recent 2004 elections (as well as the discussion on election administration), the government puts substantial human and economic resources into the implementation of the election process. This expenditure of human and economic capital is necessary given that democracy can best be viewed as a ‘common good’ (or common product) that is owned by none, but shared by all. Therefore, it is the responsibility of government, as well as civil society, to protect and encourage this ‘common good’. It is only through the efforts of those such as the ESC, the government, bilateral donors and civil society that democracy can be said to be consolidated in Namibia.

DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN NAMIBIA

This monograph has examined various democratic processes and the consolidation of democracy in Namibia with specific reference to the most recent 2004 election process. The data indicates that Namibia is on its way to being a strong democracy, although the democratic process in Namibia faces challenges that could risk the consolidation of democracy. Given that Namibia has been independent for only 15 years, democracy is in its infancy and needs to be nurtured lest it fall victim to alternative forms of government such as dictatorship or military rule. Some of the more formidable challenges facing the democratic process in Namibia are discussed below.

ISSUES AROUND THE 2004 ELECTIONS

The run up to and preparations for the 2004 elections in Namibia witnessed conflict at various levels. Pre-election conflict centred on issues of obtaining greater women's representation, possible biases by the media and, importantly for this election, conflict within political parties as the SWAPO Party chose a new presidential candidate and the DTA member parties broke from the alliance. The majority of physical and interpersonal violence tended to be in the form of over-exuberant party supporters; while political mud-slinging was more the norm for parties not satisfied with the 2004 election results.

The most recent elections have seen a realignment of political personalities both within and between political parties. The split of two factions from the DTA (the RP and NUDO) has created more divisions in votes, leading to the SWAPO Party's consolidation of power in several regions and sectors: this fracture split votes for the DTA and means that the DTA lost its status as the official opposition party to the CoD after the most recent elections.

Another disconcerting issue in Namibian politics is the trend within the SWAPO Party to deal harshly with dissention, even when competition was originally sanctioned within party structures. Although the question within the SWAPO Party of who was to run for SWAPO Party president was resolved (and indeed the SWAPO presidential candidate has been elected as the next Namibian president), the fallout of the conflict surrounding the nomination at the SWAPO Party congress continues to be felt even after the elections.

Several SWAPO stalwarts have resigned, lost their positions or been demoted – with widespread speculation that these actions have been taken against Hamutenya supporters as a result of the candidacy nominations. The realigning seems set to continue through March when the new president and National Assembly take their seats. The president-elect is calling for unity in the SWAPO Party ranks, while some see a split along ethnic lines as a possible outcome of the dissention.

ATTITUDES ABOUT DEMOCRACY

The most recent Afrobarometer and youth surveys have found that there is a growing trend for people to be disenchanted with the form of democracy in Namibia, and voter apathy has been observed in a democracy that is only 15 years old. Research shows that more people are beginning to believe that alternatives to democratic rule might be acceptable or that the multiparty system does not function well. Some of this disillusionment is a result of the country's slower than anticipated progress in economic and social development. Some of the slow pace of development can be attributed to an unfortunate twist of historical fate – Namibia became independent at the exact time that the HIV/AIDS pandemic was tightening its grip on the Southern African region; and further still, Namibia's independence allowed for the free movements of people within and between countries, exacerbating the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Given the challenges facing a new country rising from the ashes of more than 100 years of colonial rule, the additional burden of the AIDS pandemic has seriously impinged upon government's development efforts. Several parties have used the social and economic challenges still facing Namibia as the basis upon which to formulate their platforms; however, most political parties not only fail to offer implementable alternatives to the current ruling SWAPO Party policies and programmes, but they fail to identify mechanisms to fund their proposed policies. Nonetheless, when all is said and done people generally still have an overall positive feeling about Namibian democracy, although this is beginning to change.

DO ALL DEMOCRATS WANT DEMOCRACY?

Many democratic countries assume that what everyone else in the world wants is more democracy. Often democrats are so busy trying to promote

democracy by converting non-democratic countries and reinforcing democratic principles in countries that already have democracy, that they fail to ask if this is really what everyone wants. Indeed, Western style democrats are so fundamentally opposed to Marxism, socialism and communism that they forget that their style of democracy might, firstly, not be the only alternative, and secondly, not be preferred by other people in other forms of democratic processes. Indeed, there is a growing trend for Western democrats to become frustrated and want to attack as undemocratic non-Western style democracies, while not acknowledging other possible forms of governance (which do not have to be undemocratic just because they are un-Western). Indeed, the Greeks did not have a 'true' form of democracy because women and slaves did not have the right to vote; and women's suffrage for most Western countries occurred only after the first half of the 19th century. This is not an argument for disenfranchising certain groups of people but an acknowledgment of the possibility that other people may not see Western democracy in the same way that Westerners do.

The data discussed previously indicates that youths' attitudes and behaviours do not necessarily reflect a strong affinity with democracy nor do the youth particularly participate in the democratic process. Are these trends peculiar to the youth or is this a general trend in Namibia? The most recent IPPR Afrobarometer data indicates a growing trend in Namibia whereby people are beginning to wonder if democracy is right for them. This 2003 research shows that in 1999, 57.3% of Namibians said they prefer democracy compared to 54.4% for 2003, while the percentage has steadily increased for people who say that a non-democratic government might be preferred or that the type of government does not matter to them.⁵⁴¹ This data (summarised in Table 12) may not seem too disconcerting unless certain other facts are taken into account, such as that these figures represent a drop of 3% in three years implying a 1% drop a year, which is especially worrying considering that Namibia has been independent for only 15 years.

In fact, Keulder⁵⁴² found that the preference for all types of non-democratic alternatives has risen since 1999, with single party rule and military rule having the highest preference in the 2003 data. Indeed, Van Zyl and Keulder⁵⁴³ have stated previously that democracy cannot exist unless the majority of citizens prefer it to other forms of rule. They go on to explain that in newly

Table 12: Preference for democracy

	1999	2002	2003
Democracy is preferred to any other kind of government	57.3	63.8	54.4
In some circumstances a non-democratic government can be preferred	11.7	14.3	19.8
For some, like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have	11.5	18.6	20.4
Don't know	18.9	3.4	5.4

Sources: C Keulder, Afrobarometer, Namibia 2003, IPPR, Windhoek, 2004, slide 7.

established democracies the preference for democracy is neither uncontested nor consolidated; and that democracy can only be considered consolidated when most of the citizens and the elite are committed to democracy and are of the opinion that democracy is always best.⁵⁴⁴

People's views of the level of democracy in Namibia have also negatively changed over time, with more people in 2003 (28.9%) than in 1999 (15%) believing that Namibia is a democracy with major problems. Conversely, most people believe that their political and economic rights are well protected in Namibia.⁵⁴⁵ Although most people remain satisfied with the way democracy works, more people in 2003 than in 1999 are not at all satisfied with the form of democracy in Namibia.⁵⁴⁶ Overall, the level of political trust for most public servants such as the police (68.9% versus 48%), the courts (63.6% versus 42.6%), the ECN (65.8% versus 40.6%) and the National Assembly (50.7% versus 47.5%) has dropped from 1999 to 2003; however, the level of trust for the president has risen slightly from 72.5% in 1999 to 76.1% in 2003.⁵⁴⁷

WERE THE 2004 ELECTIONS FREE AND FAIR?

This chapter has examined traditional views of political participation for marginalised groups such as the youth and women, as well as conflicts surrounding the 2004 election process. Most of the conflict described in this chapter was at the individual level and was not mass organised violations of human rights. Although questions still surround some of these conflicts (such

as what the final distillation of the changes within the SWAPO Party will be or who will end up in the National Assembly), Namibia's 2004 elections were relatively conflict free.

Despite a number of problems witnessed with the democratic process and some election-related conflict, most political observers believe that Namibia's 2004 elections were not only free and fair, but that they should be held up as the benchmark for free and fair elections elsewhere in Africa.⁵⁴⁸ Both EISA and the SADC Parliamentary Forum observer missions to Namibia stated that the National Assembly and presidential elections went peacefully and reasonably smoothly; with the head of the EISA team stating that the Namibian elections were some of the best he had witnessed given that everything went 'according to the rules of the game'.⁵⁴⁹ Indeed, international election observers believe that election strategies for other Southern African countries should be based on the Namibian example.

Many election monitors commented that they were accorded unhindered access to polling stations and vote counting halls, which they believed was crucial for transparency in the election process.⁵⁵⁰ Although there have been accusations of intimidation and other poll irregularities, the missions to Namibia reported they saw none of this at the polls they monitored. If such behaviour did occur, it was most likely based on individual initiatives and not some form of organised political intimidation.

Indeed, irrespective of the typical conflicts and complaining that accompany any election of national import (mentioned earlier), most political parties expressed satisfaction with the voting process.⁵⁵¹ One opposition member said that although he was frustrated due to the lack of training received by some election officials, his party in principle endorsed the outcome of the National Assembly and presidential elections.⁵⁵² For its part, ECN representatives have also expressed their satisfaction with the voting process and stated that: 'All Namibians have once again proven to the rest of the world that elections can be held in an atmosphere of calmness, peace and tolerance.'⁵⁵³

In 2004 the ECN succeeded in re-registering almost one million voters, conducting by-elections, administering local, regional, national and

presidential elections, as well as providing voter education at national and grassroots community levels. Indeed, given the massive task of re-registering almost one million voters, organising three rounds of voting, and educating the general population on voter procedures, the ECN – with its associated support systems – has done an acceptable job of contributing to the democratic process. Of course the ECN did not complete these endeavours alone: the democratic process in Namibia is a cooperative (and sometimes competitive) effort between government, donors, NGOs, civil society and political parties.

It is hoped that the ECN has learned from some of its mistakes, which contributed to the problems and irregularities described in the section on conflicts surrounding elections, and that it will undertake to resolve these issues in order that the democratic process runs smoother and appears more professional.

The outcome of the court case, whereby some opposition parties alleged mass irregularities with the National Assembly election, and the resultant recount (conducted in only four days) speaks volumes for the health of Namibia's democratic process. The fact that opposition parties could challenge the election outcome (which would be impossible to do in some countries) shows that in Namibia, one can still question the democratic process. Furthermore, the similarity in results between the first count and the court-ordered recount indicates that although problems were experienced with the election process in Namibia, the ECN did succeed in its stated objective of holding credible elections in 2004.

THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY IN NAMIBIA

Probably one of the most significant contributions to the consolidation of democracy in Namibia is the ESC, which is a combined donor, NGO and government effort. It is through such collaborative efforts that democracy can be consolidated within the Namibian context. Other contributors to the democratic process in Namibia include bilateral donors, NGOs and civil society – many of which work directly on issues relating to democracy, while others strive to develop the social, economic and educational lives of Namibians, and thus also prepare the stage for a greater understanding of and participation in the democratic process. Educating and raising the social

status of the general Namibian population – as well as exposure to globalising trends – will mean a more sophisticated Namibian electorate. This should push the consolidation of democracy in Namibia to an advanced level where policies and programmes are seen as more important in voting behaviour than ethnicity, liberation credentials and charismatic personalities.

However, one of the challenges facing Namibia will be the outcome of the SWAPO Party's current internal redeployment of party members. The National Assembly is elected through party lists, except for the six (non-voting) members appointed by the president. It is anticipated that the new president will appoint those who supported him most closely in his bid for the presidency. That said, the SWAPO Party is in conflict due to the fission between Pohamba and Hamutenya. One political option could be to appoint to the National Assembly some SWAPO Party members who have been alienated from the party over the presidential candidate race, thereby attempting to bridge the divide. If the SWAPO Party does not try to make some gesture towards this group of alienated party members, it could split, which would mean the party is no longer guaranteed such high rates of support in the future. It should be noted, however, that SWAPO Party officials say there is no tension within the party, only ill feeling; and if there are 'witch hunts', that these should be stopped because this causes disunity in the party.⁵⁵⁴ Indeed, there have been several published statements made by SWAPO Party members which state that no party member should sow discontent within the party and that anyone doing so could face expulsion (the terms of which are laid out in the SWAPO Party's code of conduct). In what could be seen as a move by the outgoing president to quell dissatisfaction – from both inside and outside SWAPO Party ranks – the president has called on all Namibians to embrace national reconciliation and unity, stating that: 'Together we must build a truly united country, a prosperous Namibia in which the future generations will enjoy human dignity, equality and freedom ...'⁵⁵⁵

Namibia is still a country with serious political and ethnic divides, as well as a general lack of understanding and acceptance of democracy: these factors could be a potentially serious obstacle to democratic consolidation. However, there are also positive attributes such as Namibia's high literacy rates, good levels of trust in representatives and a strong belief that the process is

responsive to the needs of the people – all of which are conducive to the consolidation of democracy.⁵⁵⁶ It seems that to continue to consolidate democracy, Namibia will have to face voter apathy, rising rates of tolerance of other forms of government, and plummeting voter confidence in the very democratic officials they have elected.

Probably one of the best ways of consolidating democracy is through civic and voter education, which should not be viewed as being necessary only at election time but should be an ongoing process that reinforces citizens' as well as politicians' demands for democracy. In addition, there are certain groups that are either marginalised from the democratic process or are on the brink of possible marginalisation. These groups require special attention to ensure that all Namibians participate equally in the democratic process.

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- 406 Critical Mass Theory, although the name is derived from physics, is not a mathematical calculation of the exact number of women required in legislative positions before women push gender issues forward. The idea behind Critical Mass Theory is that women in decision-making positions will not push gender issues forward until there are enough women that they will have a support base for gender programmes. Given that gender is a social as well as political issue, other factors in society (such as perceptions of gender issues and social institutions) will influence the amount of resistance women decision-makers face and will therefore influence the exact proportion of women needed. Thus, some organisations contend that 30% of decision-makers need to be women, while other organisations argue that 50% of decision-makers need to be women in order to reach the number of women critical to push gender policies and programmes. However, Critical Mass Theory in relation to political decision-making, as the name indicates, is not proven but is still in its theoretical infancy and has yet to be systematically tested – primarily because there are so few countries with any form of gender equality in decision-making.
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- 432 Van Zyl & Keulder, op cit, pp 119-120.
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- 434 Keulder & Spilker, op cit.
- 435 Ibid.
- 436 Loosely defined, political socialisation refers to the process by which political attitudes and dispositions are conveyed from one agency in a society to another. It is the way individuals learn about politics and it is the mechanism through which political values and orientations perpetuate themselves across generations (Keulder, 2003, op cit, p 18).
- 437 Keulder & Spilker, op cit, p 6.
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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr Debie LeBeau is an American by birth and has been living and working in Namibia for the past 15 years. She obtained her PhD from Rhodes University, South Africa. Debie is currently a senior researcher at the University of Namibia in the Gender Training and Research Programme and taught for eight years in the Department of Sociology. She has authored many books and chapters in books on Namibian issues. Her most recent co-authored book, with Eunice Iipinge, is the SADC publication *Beyond Inequalities: Women in Namibia*. Much of Debie's work has focused on gender issues and HIV/AIDS-related topics.

Edith Mary Dima is a Ugandan national, currently living in Namibia with her family. She holds a Master's Degree in Sociology from the University of Namibia. Her Master's research topic was Ageing and Elder Care entitled 'Models of Institutional Care for the Elderly in Namibia'. Edith was also a contributor on gender and ageing for the SADC publication *Beyond Inequalities: Women in Namibia*. She has worked previously with the UNDP in Sudan and is currently involved in HIV/AIDS-related activities with the National Council for Older

ABOUT EISA

EISA is a not-for-profit and non-partisan non-governmental organisation which was established in 1996. Its core business is to provide technical assistance for capacity building of relevant government departments, electoral management bodies, political parties and civil society organisations operating in the democracy and governance field throughout the SADC region and beyond. Inspired by the various positive developments towards democratic governance in Africa as a whole and the SADC region in particular since the early 1990s, EISA aims to advance democratic values, practices and enhance the credibility of electoral processes. The ultimate goal is to assist countries in Africa and the SADC region to nurture and consolidate democratic governance. SADC countries have received enormous technical assistance and advice from EISA in building solid institutional foundations for democracy. This includes electoral system reforms; election monitoring and observation; constructive conflict management; strengthening of parliament and other democratic institutions; strengthening of political parties; capacity building for civil society organisations; deepening democratic local governance; and enhancing the institutional capacity of the election management bodies. EISA is currently the secretariat of the Electoral Commissions Forum (ECF) composed of electoral commissions in the SADC region and established in 1998. EISA is also the secretariat of the SADC Election Support Network (ESN) comprising election-related civil society organisations established in 1997.

VISION

Realisation of effective and sustainable democratic governance in Southern Africa and beyond.

MISSION

To strengthen electoral processes, democratic governance, human rights and democratic values through research, capacity building, advocacy and other strategically targeted interventions.

VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

Key values and principles of governance that EISA believes in include:

- Regular free and fair elections
- Promoting democratic values
- Respect for fundamental human rights
- Due process of law/rule of law
- Constructive management of conflict
- Political tolerance
- Inclusive multiparty democracy
- Popular participation
- Transparency
- Gender equality
- Accountability
- Promoting electoral norms and standards

OBJECTIVES

- To nurture and consolidate democratic governance
- To build institutional capacity of regional and local actors through research, education, training, information and technical advice
- To ensure representation and participation of minorities in the governance process
- To strive for gender equality in the governance process
- To strengthen civil society organisations in the interest of sustainable democratic practice, and
- To build collaborative partnerships with relevant stakeholders in the governance process.

CORE ACTIVITIES

- Research
- Conferences, seminars and workshops
- Publishing

- Conducting elections and ballots
- Technical advice
- Capacity building
- Election observation
- Election evaluation
- Networking
- Voter/civic education
- Conflict management
- Educator and learner resource packs

PROGRAMMES

EISA's core business revolves around three main programmes namely: Conflict Management, Democracy and Electoral Education; Electoral and Political Processes; and Balloting and Electoral Services.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, DEMOCRACY AND ELECTORAL EDUCATION

This programme comprises various projects including voter education, democracy and human rights education; electoral observation; electoral staff training; electoral conflict management; capacity building; course design and citizen participation.

ELECTORAL AND POLITICAL PROCESSES

This programme addresses areas such as technical assistance for electoral commissions, civil society organisations and political parties; coordination of election observation and monitoring missions; working towards the establishment of electoral norms and standards for the SADC region and providing technical support to both the SADC-ECF and the SADC-ESN.

BALLOTING AND ELECTORAL SERVICES

The programme enhances the credibility and legitimacy of organisational elections by providing independent and impartial electoral administration, management and consultancy services. The key activities include managing elections for political parties, trade unions, pension funds, medical aid societies, etc.

EISA'S SPECIAL PROJECTS INCLUDE:

- Rule of Law, which examines issues related to justice and human rights;
- Local Government, which aims to promote community participation in governance; and
- Political Parties, which aims to promote party development at strategic, organisational and structural levels through youth empowerment, leadership development and development of party coalitions.

EISA'S SUPPORT SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Research
- Publications
- Library
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

EISA PRODUCTS

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- Election handbooks
- Occasional papers
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- Journal of African Elections
- Election database

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