

Introduction

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Namibia achieved its independence at a time when many other countries adopted democracy as an alternative form of rule to what at some point must have been regarded as firmly entrenched authoritarianism. This so-called “Third Wave” of democracy (Huntington 1991) started during the mid-1970s in southern Europe and spread to Africa during the 1990s.¹ On the African continent, the early 1990s were characterised by significant positive changes to existing non-democratic regimes. African politics after 1990 saw an increase in political competition and leadership turnover, as well as significant changes to the rules of the game (Bratton & Van de Walle 1997:7-8).²

Making a successful transition from authoritarian to democratic rule is but the first step toward consolidating it. Generally speaking, democracy must become institutionalised and among elites, organisations and ordinary citizens alike, it must become the “only game in town” (Lintz & Stepan 1997:15). As Diamond (1999:65) writes, –

[I]t is the deep, unquestioned, routinized commitment to democracy and its procedures at the elite and mass levels that produces a crucial element of consolidation, a reduction in the uncertainty of democracy, regarding not so much the outcomes as the rules and methods of political competition.

Namibia’s democracy is now ten years old. Against the backdrop of more than a century of colonial rule, democracy here is in its infancy. The fact that Namibia, as a modern political entity, has been under control of oppressive forces for a far longer time than that spent under democratic rule is a feature it shares with other Third Wave democracies on the African continent.

In this book, we take stock of Namibia’s progress towards a consolidated democracy. In doing so, we look at the influence of two forces on democracy: the Namibian State and Namibian society. These two loosely represent our independent variables, and democracy our dependent variable. We reflect on both the institutional and normative aspects of consolidation, doing so against the backdrop of the country’s colonial past.

¹ A *wave of democratisation* is defined as a “group of [democratic] transitions that occur within a specified period of time and significantly outnumber transitions in the opposite direction during that period” (Huntington 1991:15).

² Bratton and Van de Walle (1997:7-8) list the following evidence: Between 1990 and 1995, 38 countries in sub-Saharan Africa held competitive elections as opposed to the nine that did so before 1990. Secondly, ten leadership replacements in favour of opposition parties took place through elections between 1990 and 1994, compared with one such replacement before 1990; and finally, by 1994, not a single *de jure* one-party State remained in Africa.

The Three Key Concepts

State

A State requires citizens and a territory, as well as international recognition. A State exists because of its people and not the other way around. States regulate societies and societies interact with the State in either an organised or an unorganised format. Both States and societies are, hence, agents of social and political change and transformation. Most definitions of *State* emphasise three core elements: its institutional character, its functions and its recourse to coercion (see e.g. Migdal 1994:11). Rueschemeyer and Evans (1985:46-47) define *State* as follows:

[The state is] a set of organisations invested with the authority to make binding decisions for people and organisations juridically located in a particular territory and to implement these decisions using, if necessary, force.

Stepan (1978, cited in Skocpol 1985:7) goes a little further:

The state must be considered as more than the “government”. It is the continuous administrative, legal, bureaucratic and coercive systems that attempt not only to structure relationships between civil society and public authority in a polity but also structure many crucial relationships within civil society as well.

The State differs from the Government in several important ways. Firstly, the State is more permanent than the Government, as the latter is used to refer only to the elected part of the State (i.e. the legislature or the Government-of-the-day). In other words, the State’s tenure does not depend on the electorate. Secondly, the State is also much more than the Government: it includes the bureaucracy (from line ministries and central planning agencies to field offices), the coercive agencies (Police, army and courts) and, sometimes, even elements of society (e.g. traditional leaders, where they are paid to perform State functions).

The State is, however, neither omnipresent nor omnipotent. Migdal (1999:223) argues as follows:

No matter how vaunted the bureaucracy, police, and the military, officers of the state cannot stand on every corner ensuring that each person stop at the red light, drive on the right side of the road, cross at the crosswalk, refrain from stealing and drug taking, and so on.

Broadly speaking, States require different types of capabilities: symbolic, extractive, coercive and incorporative. These capabilities are more often than not assumed to be present when we define *State*, as Migdal (*ibid.*) reminds us.

Over the past two decades, much has been made of the weakness of African States. Indicators of their weakness include their suspended nature, neo-patrimonial rule, clientelism and felonious activities within the civil service.³ A student of the

³ The body of literature that deals with the African State (if there is indeed such a single entity) in one way or the other is voluminous. Some examples are Badie (2000); Bayart, Ellis & Hibou (1999); Bayart (1993); Chabal & Daloz (1999); Chabal (1986); and Hyden (1983).

African State would do well to find one that escapes the grip of what has now become a stereotypical set of weaknesses. This is because the main approaches to the study of the State in Africa suffer from at least three serious shortcomings.

The first of these shortcomings in the literature concerns treating the State in Africa as a homogeneous entity across all African countries, i.e. that all African States are essentially the same. Not only are scholars rarely selective in terms of the cases from which they derive their observations, they also tend to reach untenable conclusions based on those observations. A case in point is the volume by Chabal and Daloz (1999). Their primary concern involves what is usually called “Black Africa”. For Chabal and Daloz (1999:xxi), Black Africa comprises “the former European colonies lying south of the Sahara”, which excludes the countries of North Africa (from Morocco to Egypt). Chabal and Daloz (*ibid.*) also leave aside South Africa, “whose history is so distinct as to make comparison difficult at this stage”. Furthermore, they state, they are –

... aware that some parts of our analysis do not apply as well to the Horn of Africa, where areas like Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Northern Sudan have dissimilar social structures and have had a different political experience. We do not, therefore, intend the generic term “Africans” to be understood as a blanket statement about all the inhabitants of the African continent. Our use of the term “continent” thus refers to the area defined above.

After eliminating the obviously “difficult” or “different” cases from their scope, they conclude that (1999:162) “... *there prevails in Africa a system of politics inimical to development as it is usually understood in the West*” (emphasis added).

It is difficult to understand the ease with which these broad brushstrokes are applied. For example, the scope of institutionalised corruption in Nigeria is surely different from that in Botswana – or Namibia for that matter. Similarly, the collapsed States of central Africa are very different from those found in much of southern Africa. The States that preside over the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) or Rwanda and Burundi are in no way the same as those that preside over Namibia, Botswana or even Uganda. Why put them in the same (African) hat if they seem to share little more than the fact that they preside over societies and territories located on the African continent?

Even if they do indeed share some features with other States on the continent, such features should not be treated as the defining characteristics of all African States. Institutionally and culturally, States in Africa differ as much from each other in important respects as the States of Latin America, southern Europe or south-east Asia do.⁴

⁴ The Southern African Democracy Barometer is a recent endeavour that highlights important differences and similarities in the political cultures that prevail in six southern African countries (see Mattes, Bratton, Davids & Africa 2000).

A second shortcoming in the literature is that it treats the State as a monolith: solidly uniform in terms of all aspects comprising the institutional set-up. This approach assumes no difference in the motivations, methods or experiences among those at the top of the chain of command or among those at the bottom of it. In terms of this approach, the State is client-based as a whole, weak as a whole, or corrupt as a whole.

According to Migdal (1999), a third shortcoming is that many of those that study the State treat it as an isolated independent variable: they first study the State, and only then see how it fits in with other structures. Migdal (*ibid.*:211), for example, maintains the following:

If we are to understand the inherent limitations of states we must develop a focus on process, one that starts with the web of relationships between them and their societies.

At the heart of the modern state's successes and failures, especially in its ability to gain obedience, is the nature of its relationship to those it claims to rule.

To understand the relationships between State and society, one needs to disaggregate both: different strokes for different folks. One should look at who needs the State and why; and conversely, why the State engages with some bodies and groups but not others. It is also important to identify who in the State engages with whom in society, and vice versa. Hyden's (1983:16) acclaimed study on the peasantry in Tanzania is a good example of how a specific social grouping does not need to interact with the State:

The state is not linked to the system of production in the same way as it is in other modes. The basic units of production are not only socially independent of each other but also of the state. It plays no necessary role in production. Appropriations by other classes through such instruments as taxation are simple deductions from an already produced stock of values. The peasants do not need the state for their own reproduction. They would prefer to be without its interventions. On the other hand, it is impossible to conceive of other social classes reproducing themselves without access to state power.

Thus, not all segments of society interact with or need the State, whether in part or in its entirety. Similarly, the State does not interact with or need all of society, nor does it interact with or need certain parts of society. To disaggregate the State and to look at the various levels and components and their relations and networks with the society, as a whole or in part, is what Migdal (1999) refers to as the "State-in-society" approach.

Society⁵

The previous section establishes the importance of society for our understanding of politics. This is not a new idea. The notion of *society*, and the forces that regu-

⁵ For the first section, a very brief overview of Western thinking on the notion of (*civil*) *society*, I rely heavily on the excellent book by Steven DeLue (1997).

late and shape it, have occupied academic minds for a very long time. More specifically, it is the idea of a *civil society* that has filled the pages of many scholarly pursuits in this regard. As a backdrop to our discussion and application of this important concept, an overview of the dominant (classic Western) tradition is provided, followed by the responses to this tradition. In a later section, the notion of *society* as it used in this volume is clarified.

(Civil) Society: The Classic Western Tradition

As far back as Plato's *Republic* (see DeLue 1997:33), we find evidence for the need among individuals to form societies. People cannot secure their survival on their own, nor can they provide for all their needs. For shelter, they need builders; for food and other produce not found in their immediate circles, they need markets.

However, there is more to the development of societies than the mere need to survive. According to DeLue (*ibid*:52), Aristotle argued that individuals on their own are unable to create the basis for their own happiness, i.e. to provide for their own and others' moral well-being. It is through society that individuals learn to live a morally good life, and it is through society that they learn to live for the common (as opposed to the individual) good. For Aristotle (*ibid*:54), friendship was at the core of the notions of *society* and *community*, because it brought people together and inspired them to collaborate for common purposes and the "large questions" that they might face.

It was the Enlightenment thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke (cited in DeLue 1997:137) that introduced such key notions as *liberty*, *rights* (especially property rights) and *limited government* into our understanding of what constitutes the basis of society. Furthermore, the idea of a *social contract* (between the ruler and the ruled, and among the ruled themselves) was introduced by Hobbes and refined by Locke. According to this social contract, the (limited) State must protect the rights of individuals; Locke's refinement introduced the notion of (religious) *tolerance* as a further civic virtue that would ensure the rights of individuals were respected.

DeLue (*ibid*.:167) reminds us it was Emmanuel Kant's argument that, for society to exist and function in a manner that is "right", individuals are obliged to accept the authority of the State. Such a society is based upon the existence of laws, a constitution, and a State that upholds those laws in order to protect the rights of its people. Kant also saw the need for the proper use of coercion (*ibid*:166), whose aim was to ensure that freedom was unfettered. Again to ensure that individual freedom was protected, Kant identified the need for individuals to treat each other as "ends" and not as "means to an end". Thus, like Locke, Kant was emphasising mutual respect as a civic virtue.

Over time, as production became more specialised and needs more specific, those providing the goods and services developed into classes of their own. Modernity, and its economic manifestation, industrialism, introduced new standards for productivity. With those new standards came new roles and a far more complex and sophisticated division of labour (Gellner 1986:24). This change, more than anything else, had a fundamental influence on our understanding of society. Firstly, interests became more specific and much more organised. This resulted in a sphere of activity developing between the State and the individual/family. This sphere consisted of organisations whose purpose it was not to rule, but to represent.

Secondly, the sphere was characterised by great inequality; it became a zone of conflict, where “everyone’s private interests met everyone else’s” (DeLue 1997:182). This formed the basis of Hegel’s notion of *civil society* (cited in DeLue 1997:182), namely, a separate sphere of interests existing outside the State. Hegel’s notion of *civil society* is closely tied to the idea of a market: individuals are driven to create new needs and these demand new products. Work is the entity through which we produce the goods to satisfy our needs, and greater specialisation and a more complex division of labour is required to produce effectively. This resulted in the development of a division of classes, which division became the defining characteristic of Hegel’s *civil society* (and, subsequently, Marx’s critique thereof).⁶

Civil society, as we came to know it through the Western tradition, does not only develop in congruence with the liberal market economy, but is also strongly associated with the development of political liberalism. This is clear from the views of Hobbes and Locke. John Rawls (cited in DeLue 1997:225) is very explicit about this when he argues that society can only continue to exist if people uphold the values of overlapping consensus. Constitutional democracy, Rawls (ibid.) maintains, can only exist where and when people honour the principles of consensus. For Rawls (ibid.), liberal political values are best at facilitating overlapping consensus; overlapping consensus in a society, he argues, is produced by civic education, non-interference by the State (the State must be neutral), and public reasoning about public issues.

The Western tradition emphasised two aspects of civil society. Firstly, civil society differs institutionally from the State, and is autonomous in relation to the State, the family, the clan and the locality. Secondly, civil societies contain “civil manners” that regulate the conduct of relations among individuals and groups within a society, and between individuals, groups and the State (Du Toit 1995:36). Shils (1991) uses the prevalence of *civility* to distinguish “civil” society from “uncivil” society. The notion of *civility* encapsulates such norms as tolerance, cooperation, accountability, openness, trust and respect for the rule of law (Du Toit 1995:38).

⁶ I do not include Marx and others’ critiques here because of the risk of drawing attention away from the liberal (Western) roots of the concept of *civil society*, which is used in much of the literature today and remains entrenched in the liberal (Western) tradition.

(Civil) Society: Alternative Views

Antonio Gramsci (1991:12), perhaps the most influential Marxist theorist on the subject, locates *civil society* at the superstructural level, and uses the concept to refer to those organisations commonly called “private”. Civil society coexists at that level with “political society” (or “the State”). Civil society is perceived to be the result of social practices and social relations (other than coercion) among a great many groups and organisations (other than the State). Civil society is the sphere of ideology (and, hence, where intellectuals are most active), where rule-through-consent or hegemony is established in order to maintain the political order by means other than naked coercive force.

According to Simon (1991:70-71), Gramsci’s notion of *civil society* includes the family, for it is here that women are employed in performing domestic labour and reproducing labour power – economically and biologically. The political order of the day can only survive if the working class (which clearly includes women) and women in general give active consent to their oppression, i.e. when the bourgeoisie achieves hegemony. Civil society contains, almost by definition, the class struggle; but here, the struggle is primarily an ideological one.

Feminists attacked the mainstream notion of *civil society* by highlighting the tension between the individual as a holder of rights, i.e. one who has the freedom to determine his or her own way of life, and the individual as the citizen, one who must accept the guidance of the norms of civic virtue (DeLue 1997:313). The first component emphasises freedom, while the second contains oppression. Furthermore, a distinction is made between a public and a private realm. The public realm contains the market, the workplace and the political setting; the private realm is the setting of friends, family, religion, sexual relations and voluntary associations (ibid.). Oppression occurs when values belonging to the private realm (e.g. religion) are carried into the public realm to prevent all or some – but especially women – from participating in the business of the public realm (e.g. to influence policy).

This type of civil society exists when all respect the rights of all others and, hence, when individuals or groups accept the limit to which they can exercise their private values in the public realm. Thus, the onus is on the private realm to teach individuals to conform to the norms of public life (DeLue 1997:314).

A third alternative to the mainstream tradition is derived mainly from sources (e.g. Harbeson 1994, Hann 1996) that study societies and States other than Western ones, i.e. the so-called area studies, which include Latin America, Africa and former Eastern Europe. The adherents of this approach have to come to grips with whether or not to use the concept of *civil society* at all. The key problem in this regard is that these non-Western societies are not organised to the same extent and along the same lines as their Western counterparts. Furthermore, unlike in the

West, the market does not dominate many of these societies, and they contain a great variety of values or core notions of *civic virtue* that differ from those in the West.

Harbeson (1994:14), for example, argues that the concept of *civil society* is useful for understanding how political processes in African societies emerge to shape and be shaped by governmental institutions. The notion allows the nature of the interfaces and interdependency between the State and society to be studied. In their conceptualisation of *civil society*, all the authors in the volume edited by Harbeson (1994) distinguish between *civil society* and *society in general* on the basis of civil society's political functions.

Writing about former Eastern Europe, Hann (1996:14) argues for a need to shift the debates around *civil society* away from formal structures and organisations and toward values, beliefs and everyday practices. Like in Africa, life in Eastern Europe is fairly unorganised and much of what happens between the State and the citizens is not necessarily channelled through formal associations.

How do we then move the concept of *civil society* forward, out of the Western, moralistic mode, and make it useful for our understanding of how African (and other non-Western) States and societies interact? Harbeson (1994:26) proposes that the concept be transformed from a prescriptive one into an empirical, operationalised one. Hann (ibid:2) calls for more ethnographic investigation that "... would focus on how these ideas are manifested in practice, in everyday social behaviour". In this regard, Harbeson (1994:21-26) provides a useful set of research questions:

- Who makes up civil society?
- Whose and what interests are being pursued?
- What is the function of civil society in its relationship to the state?
- How well is civil society institutionalised?
- What are the forces that strengthen and/or weaken civil society?

The current volume reflects on some of these questions in the Namibian context. Furthermore, as outlined earlier, there is more to society than the "civil" or organised part. For this reason we also look also at aggregated, individual-level opinions. We do not restrict ourselves to the organised form of interaction between the Namibian State and society (for example, voters in Namibia can hardly be described as "organised"). The focus, hence, is not only on those with explicit political goals (civil society), but also on the average citizen (society).

Democracy

For many, the slogan "Government for the people, by the people" encapsulates what *democracy* is all about. However, that very slogan has been used to defend the actions and operations of a range of political orders: from the United States of America to the former Soviet Union and Uganda, under Idi Amin. How do we

distinguish democratic systems of rule from non-democratic ones? From the above examples such a distinction clearly cannot rely on the names or descriptions that States give themselves. Most people understand *democracy* to mean two things: “rule by many” (as opposed to rule by one or a few) and “regular elections”. This, however, is not enough: the former communist regimes also had “rule by many” and held “regular elections”. May (1978, cited in Saward 1994:13) argues that –

... there should be necessary correspondence between the acts of government and the equally weighted express wishes of citizens with respect to those acts.

Responsive rule or *democracy*, as May (ibid.) defines it, requires basic freedoms such as those of association, speech, movement and worship. It further requires citizenship and the right to participate in all public affairs, such as the right to vote, the right to run for public office, and the right to be a legal part of the polity. Finally, it requires a number of social rights, such as the right to an adequate education and adequate health care. When brought together, these rights and freedoms constitute the ideal democracy or what Dahl (1971) has termed a *polyarchy*.

Why democracy? What makes democracy so special? Why not another type of regime? Niebuhr (1950, as cited in Huntington 1997:13) presents a moral argument in favour of the choice of democracy:

Man’s capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man’s inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.

The venerable Winston Churchill (1947, cited in Rose, Mishler & Haerper 1998), on the other hand, argues from a realist’s point of view:

Many forms of government have been tried and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect and all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government, except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.

Echoing Churchill to some extent, Schmitter and Karl (1996) point out that although democracy is better than any other system in delivering political goods such as electoral competition, freedom, majority rule and cooperation, it is not necessarily better at delivering economic goods such as growth, administrative efficiency, order and stability.

If one goes ahead and chooses to establish a democracy, one first has to get rid of any existing non-democratic political order. The period during which this is done is referred to as the *transition to democracy*. Once established, the democratic order must be maintained, i.e. consolidated. As was made clear right at the beginning of this chapter, Lintz and Stepan (1997:15) maintain that it is only after such transition and subsequent consolidation that democracy becomes behaviourally, attitudinally and constitutionally the “only game in town”.

However, there is nothing to suggest that all attempts at consolidation will necessarily be successful. The dynamics of democratisation are unstable precisely because the process is one of learning, and trial and error. Both the ruler and the ruled are amateurs at democracy (Rose, Mishler & Haerpfer 1998:21). Rustow (1970, cited in *ibid.*:5) reminds us that the factors determining the stability of a democracy might not be the same as those that brought it into existence. Young democracies, especially the ones that emerged from prolonged periods of non-democratic rule, cannot rely on the habitual support of their citizens; those very citizens were, after all, born and raised under an authoritarian dispensation.

So what, then, are the conditions that will promote the consolidation of democracy? Lintz and Stepan (1997:17) argue for five such conditions (and where absent they will have to be crafted):

1. Conditions must exist for the development of a free and lively civil society.
2. Political society must be relatively autonomous.
3. All (leaders and followers) must be subject to the rule of law.
4. There must be a state bureaucracy that is usable for the government-of-the-day.
5. Economic society must be institutionalised.

In addition to these, Dahl (1997:34) mentions the need for a strong democratic culture that can provide emotional and cognitive support for adherence to democratic procedures. In Putnam's (1993) view, such a culture will be tolerant of conflicting views and beliefs and will supply sufficient amounts of social capital.

Whether or not these conditions exist in Namibia is the subject of the papers in this volume.

The Scope of this Book

Namibia's transition to democratic rule was a rapid one, which followed a prolonged anticolonial freedom struggle. However, neither colonialism nor the freedom struggle itself can be characterised as democratic processes. This is clear from Melber's and Du Pisani's contributions discussing colonial rule by Germany and South Africa, respectively. Colonial rule not only denied the majority of Namibians their basic rights and freedoms, it also used brute force to suppress any political activity that did not benefit that rule. Hence, white society enjoyed substantial freedom and was allowed to prosper, whilst black society had to resort to armed conflict to secure those rights. Herein lies the key to unlock postcolonial developments.

When the SWAPO Party won over the Namibian nation in 1990 in the first general elections ever held in the country, both the ruler and the ruled had little experience with democracy. Saul and Leys (1995) show that, within the liberation movement in exile, little existed that could resemble a democratic culture. The abhorrent nature of colonial apartheid is by now well known and well documented. Thus, after the transition to democracy and the drafting and adoption of a liberal

democratic Constitution (during which process ordinary Namibians played no active part and in which they had very little say), the country had precious little to draw on to secure its democratic future. Therefore, the conditions for consolidation had to be, and in some instances still have to be, crafted.

In this volume, therefore, we will be looking at the progress toward crafting a consolidated democracy in Namibia. Erasmus's chapter on the Namibian Constitution serves as the starting point for this exercise. He argues that the Constitution paves the way for a liberal political dispensation in which core rights and freedoms are entrenched for all Namibians. Furthermore, the Constitution creates the institutional framework for democracy to be realised: it separates the powers of Government, provides for regular elections by means of a proportional representation system, and entrenches a system of checks and balances on policy-making. However, in Erasmus's view, this might not be enough to secure a consolidated democracy. Much depends on how this Constitution is used by ordinary citizens, and on the political will of its leadership. In this respect, he concludes, Namibia's record is mixed: not only with regard to the conduct of the leadership, but also as regards the citizen's inability or unwillingness to invoke the Constitution.

In the subsequent chapters by Töttemeyer and Keulder, the discussion concerns postcolonial attempts at expanding and strengthening the State at sub-national levels. Töttemeyer's chapter is particularly useful in terms of the insight it gives into the State's possible future, since the process of decentralisation is only a recent development. He argues that, once decentralisation is complete, ordinary citizens will have several more channels through which to participate in, and thereby shape, public policy. Hence, society's influence will be strengthened. Keulder touches on a similar theme in his chapter on how the Namibian State penetrates into the predominantly rural society through its legal arrangements with traditional leaders. Functioning under State law and performing prescribed State functions has made traditional leaders part and parcel of the State, but not completely so. They also remain active agencies operating in the sphere of civil society – supporting a point made earlier (by Harbeson 1994) that, in Africa, some actors can be part of both spheres. Here, the chances of democracy's success are less clear: traditional authorities need to develop a democratic value system that promotes greater gender equality, a point that is stressed by Becker in her contribution. Both Becker's and Keulder's chapters show that there is more than one value system present in Namibia and, hence, especially in rural Namibia, that democracy is not "the only game in town".

Becker's article shows that part of the success in creating greater gender equality, as intended by the Married Persons' Equality Act, 1996 (No. 1 of 1996), can be ascribed to civil society. Organised interests and pressure groups influenced State policy by exposing non-democratic private values in the public sphere, and by gathering sufficient evidence to denounce such private values and have them

changed by way of legal intervention. Unorganised women in rural Namibia are not benefiting from the new Act, however: they continue to carry the brunt of existing inequalities.

Sycholt and Klerck, in their discussion of the labour regime that has been developed since Independence, highlight the tension between labour interests (as embodied in the right to strike) and “national interests” (as presented by the Government or State apparatus). The existing labour regime is a rather imprecise blending of corporatist and liberal tendencies. They show that organised labour is not always consulted where and when it counts, and that Government lacks the commitment necessary for a corporatist regime to develop.

The chapter by Keulder *et al.* and Keulder’s chapter on voting use survey data to measure the State’s legitimacy and support for the State. Their findings show that the Namibian State enjoys sufficient levels of both. Voters demand more change in their material well-being, but do so removed from the potentially powerful force of ethnicity. This is a positive development for the process of consolidating Namibia’s democracy. What is more worrisome, however, is the absence of an outright democratic value system among ordinary Namibians. Given what was said earlier herein, this is to be expected. A lot more crafting of the conditions that give rise to a consolidated democracy will, therefore, have to be done before democracy in Namibia becomes “the only game in town”.

The closing chapter by Du Pisani shows that a civil society is almost completely absent from the currently State-driven foreign policy process. Given that Namibia has recently joined two foreign wars (one in the DRC and one on Namibia’s border with Angola), the absence of societal actors in the arena of foreign policy is of particular concern.

We hope that the body of research presented in this volume will contribute to opening up, for Namibians, some of the larger debates on the consolidation of democracy. Also, since Namibia is not unique, there is no reason why other States cannot learn from our experience.

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