

AEGIS European Conference on African Studies
Leiden, 11-14 July 2007

**NEGOTIATING DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA:
LESSONS FROM UGANDA AND ZIMBABWE**

Diana Conyers

Institute of Development Studies
University of Sussex

and

Arthur Larok

Uganda National NGO Forum, and
Institute of Development Studies
University of Sussex

Panel 44
Negotiating Statehood in Africa

INTRODUCTION

In European history, state formation processes often re-started in new directions and in new constellations following the demise of a previous order. Today in various settings in the South it is important that political re-starts should be given a realistic chance of succeeding, as well as the space they may require for working out new and viable arrangements. .. [A] key point of departure must be that internal social and political actors and dynamics play a central, not a spectator's role. (Doornbos 2002:812).

Much of the current literature and policy discourse on the state in less developed countries is 'technocratic' in nature. The state is regarded as something that can be constructed relatively simply and quickly; all that is needed is the 'right design' and sufficient 'political will'. This is reflected in the terminology used. The most obvious examples are the concepts of 'state building' and 'state failure'. The former, which was introduced by Fukuyama (2004), is now widely used, while the latter has spawned a plethora of equally inappropriate terms, such as 'strong' and 'weak' states, 'fragile' states and 'collapsed' states. A classic example is the introductory chapter of a book on 'state failure' edited by Rotberg, titled: 'The failure and collapse of nation states: breakdown, prevention and repair' (Rotberg 2004: 1). This conception of the state is also reflected in bilateral and international aid policies. Most aid agencies have programmes to support various aspects of 'state building', such as 'good governance', 'democratisation' and 'transparency and accountability', and many have divisions devoted to 'fragile states' and 'state reconstruction' programmes in a number of 'post-conflict' countries. The UK's Department for International Development (DFID), for example, employs 150 'governance advisers' and 35 'conflict advisors', has teams responsible for Fragile States and Effective States, and in February 2007 launched a £100 million Governance and Transparency Fund. As the introductory concept paper for this panel (Hagmann and Péclard 2007) suggests, this approach to the state has serious implications for sub-Saharan Africa, since it is regarded as the region in which there are the most formidable 'governance' problems and the largest number of 'fragile', 'collapsed' or 'failed' states¹ – and thus the major target of the west's 'state building' efforts.

This paper maintains that the dominant discourse today is both inaccurate and counter-productive. Its main weaknesses lie in the failure to fully appreciate the historical and political nature of the process of state formation. We argue that 'the state is ... the product of circumstances over which individuals have at best only limited control' (Clapham 2004:92), and so cannot be 'engineered'. And we believe that states evolve through a long-term process of 'interaction, bargaining and competition between holders of state power and organised groups in society' (IDS 2005:3) – in other words, through a process of *negotiation*. We demonstrate this by examining the process of 'democratisation' in two sub-Saharan African countries: Uganda and Zimbabwe.² In both countries, experience over the last twenty-five years demonstrates the weaknesses of 'mainstream' thinking about the state. After many years of what would now be called 'state collapse', Uganda experienced a dramatic political and economic 'turnaround' after Museveni came to power in 1986 and was until recently held up as a model by external aid agencies. However, it is now evident that the transition was not as profound as it was made out to be and the country is struggling to live up to its external reputation. Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980 and at first was also widely upheld as a

¹ The latest Failed States Index - http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3865&page=7 has 8 out the top 10 failed states from Africa, with Afghanistan and Iraq taking up the other two slots.

² Uganda and Zimbabwe are ranked 15th and 4th respectively in the Failed States Index for 2007.

success story. However, in the mid-1990s political and economic problems began to emerge and it is now regarded as one of the most obvious examples of a ‘failed state’.

The rest of the paper is divided into four sections. The next section provides a brief critique of mainstream discourse on the concept of ‘democratisation’ and suggests the need for a more historical and political approach. This is followed by case studies of the process of democratisation in Uganda and Zimbabwe. The final section draws some tentative conclusions. It suggests that the vacillations experienced in both countries are part of an ongoing process of ‘negotiating democracy’ and that, even in Zimbabwe at present, there are some positive developments taking place.

DEMOCRATISATION

Democratisation ... is a process that spans decades and generations; and by its nature, it is a protracted process. A country’s history and culture have an intricate bearing and imprint on the pace and content of democratisation. (Sachikonye 2005: 9)

‘Democratisation’ is part of the wider ‘good governance’ agenda that emerged in ‘mainstream’ development discourse during the last decade of the 20th century. Although definitions of ‘good governance’ vary, it is generally regarded as having the following components: a ‘democratic’ political system; a public service that is able to deliver services efficiently and effectively; respect for the rule of law; and transparency and accountability (Turner and Hulme 1997). The significance of democratisation in mainstream development discourse is reflected in the large amount of literature on the subject, including two specialised journals³ and a number of websites⁴. It is also reflected in the attention given to democratisation in bilateral and international aid programmes – especially, but by no means only, that of the United States (Carothers 2002; Bastian and Luckham 2003).

Given its prominent position in current development discourse, it is hardly surprising that mainstream thinking about democratisation reflects the ‘technocratic’ concept of the state and ‘state building’ discussed above. It is based on three critical assumptions:

1. Democracy, like good governance, is defined in western terms. It is defined as a political system in which ‘binding rules and policy decisions’ are made ‘not by entire communities but by representatives’, elected ‘through free, fair and competitive elections’, and in which citizens have the right of free speech and the right to organise and mobilise politically (Potter 1997: 4). In other words, we are talking about a ‘liberal democracy’, modelled on North American and Western European lines.
2. Democratisation is seen as a one-way transition from ‘non-democratic’ to ‘democratic’ that, once achieved, is unlikely to be reversed. It is regarded as a ‘natural’ process of evolution, consisting of a number of stages through which countries pass. It is also seen as something that can be ‘engineered’, the main requirements being the establishment of appropriate institutional structures and ‘political will’. Consequently, it can occur relatively quickly in a variety of socio-economic contexts, and elites (especially

³ The US-based *Journal of Democracy* and UK-based *Democratization*

⁴ See, in particular, Freedom House’s Democracy Score (<http://www.freedomhouse.hu/nitransit/2006/NIT%2006%20Democracy%20Score%Explanation.pdf>) and the Polity IV Project (<http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/polity/>).

individual political leaders) can and do play a dominant role. This concept of democratisation is often known as the 'transition' approach (Luckham and White 1996; Potter 1998; Carothers 2002). It draws on the work of Huntington (1991), who suggested that there have been four historical 'waves' of democratisation in the world, and scholars such as Rustow (1970), O'Donnell et al. (1986) and Mainwaring et al. (1992), who introduced the idea of 'transition' and elaborated the stages involved therein.

3. Democratisation can be externally driven; in other words, forces outside a country can, through the provision of appropriate 'carrots and sticks' influence the speed and direction of change. This assumption has been used to justify a wide range of interventions by western states and international agencies, ranging from 'quiet diplomacy', aid conditionalities and clandestine support for opposition parties, to the promotion of civil society, financing and monitoring of elections, and in a few cases (notably Iraq and Afghanistan) military intervention.

These assumptions have underlain mainstream approaches to democratisation in Africa over the last decade and a half. In the 1990s, many African nations moved from military or one-party rule to multi-party, elected systems. These were seen as part of Huntington's 'third wave' of democratisation and heralded as a sign that Africa was at last 'moving in a democratic direction'. Western states saw this as an opportunity to get in on the act, using aid to provide support for those states where the transition appeared to be progressing well and more clandestine measures to influence those that appeared to be lagging behind.

However, in recent years, progress towards democratisation, in Africa and elsewhere, has, in terms of conventional mainstream criteria, been disappointing (Carothers 2002). Many nations that made the transition from authoritarian to 'democratic' regimes in the 1990s are democratic only to the extent that they hold regular elections. In terms of the quality of elections and other democratic criteria (such as freedom of speech and association), they have continued to demonstrate strong authoritarian characteristics and in some cases these characteristics have strengthened rather than weakened. The problem is particularly acute in countries where there have been major internal conflicts. As cases such as Liberia, DRC, Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq have painfully demonstrated, the establishment of an elected government following the formal cessation of hostilities may hamper rather than help the peace-building process. Moreover, there are some countries (such as Somalia) that are still engulfed in internal conflict and show no sign of becoming even nominally 'democratic'.

This has necessitated some revision of mainstream thinking. Most writers on democratisation now acknowledge that 'democracy' is a more complex concept than was at first thought. It cannot be defined purely in terms of electoral procedures. The result has been a plethora of criteria of democracy (reflected most obviously in the various 'democracy indices' that have been established), and to the introduction of concepts such as 'partial democracies', 'weak democracies' and 'quasi-democracies'. Most also recognise that the process of democratisation is not as simple as it appeared to be. The initial 'transition' to democracy has to be 'consolidated', and this can be a 'protracted' process; moreover, there can even be 'democratic reversals'. As Luckham and White (1996) suggest, the 'third wave' of democratisation is a 'jagged wave'. This has resulted in much debate about the process of transition and the conditions under which each stage of the process occurs, and in the case of Africa, to many attempts to explain why the process of 'consolidation' is proving to be so 'protracted' (for example: Ake 1996, 2000; Barkan 2000; Bratton and Walle 1997; Salih 2001). But in most cases, the result has been merely to qualify the three basic assumptions outlined above, not to reject them.

There is, however, a small but significant counter-current of thought that challenges these assumptions. Thus, in relation to the first assumption, a number of writers question the appropriateness of the liberal democratic model. For example, Salih (2001:3) argues that: 'Democracy is not about the mechanical transfer of political experiences from one society to another. It is about political participation.' In 1996 Luckham and White suggested that 'it is time for Western observers to examine the limitations and problems of democracy in their own societies before hastening to question the credentials of fledgling democracies in the South' (Luckham and White 1996:277). In so doing, they perhaps foresaw the major debate about the need to 'deepen democracy' that has since emerged in North America and Europe (Fung and Wright 2003; Gaventa 2005; Power Commission 2006), but which appears to have had little effect on aid policies in these countries.

Some writers also question the validity of the 'transition' approach to democratisation. Carothers (2002:17) concludes that 'it is time for the democracy promotion community to discard the transition paradigm'. He suggests (2002:18) that, 'aid practitioners and policy makers' should not be asking "How is [a country's] democratic transition going?" but "What is happening politically?" Luckham and White (1996:278) warn that focusing on the role of individual leaders underestimates the impact of 'broader social and political forces', while Carothers (2002) emphasises the importance of 'dominant-power' groups, rather than individuals. Bastian and Luckham (2003:304) question the assumption that 'constitutional experts, political scientists, donor agencies or even national decision makers can assure democracy...by designing institutions'. They emphasise (2003: 306) the need for 'a proper understanding of shifting power relations and social transformations' and 'a historical perspective', and they suggest that the latter can help to 'counter pessimism over conflict and state failure'. Ake (1996, 2000) and Salih (2001) provide good examples of the application of this sort of political and historical approach to the analysis of democratisation in Africa.

With regard to the third assumption, a number of writers have warned about the limits and risks of external intervention. In 1996, Whitehead argued that 'even in the apparently relatively favourable conditions of the post-Cold War era, explicit international support for democratisation seems likely to have no more than a fairly limited impact, confined to a select sub-set of countries' (Whitehead 1996:268). More recently, Bastian and Luckham (2003:314) warn that 'externally driven conflict resolution and democratisation have important dangers and limits'. They go on to explain that such intervention 'weakens domestic political processes, leaves too little space for the emergence of political alternatives ..., and discourages domestic constitutional innovation' (ibid). However, as Carothers (2002:16) points out, 'it has been hard for the democracy-promotion community to take this work on board' because there are too many vested interests in the current democracy promotion and development assistance institutions.

In the rest of this paper, we seek to demonstrate, through the case studies of Uganda and Zimbabwe, the need for a historical and political approach to the study of democratisation in Africa. We seek in particular to show how, as Bastian and Luckham (2003:314) suggested; such an approach presents the current situation in Africa in a more positive light.

THE UGANDAN CASE

Democratic development in multi-ethnic societies as in Africa depends upon the contingent interaction and adaptations of both indigenous and exogenous institutions and cultural elements. Successful democracies in Africa will probably neither look like nor function like facsimiles of familiar forms of Western Liberal democracy, but rather produce distinctive variants as the fundamental issues are argued and negotiated in each state. (Bruce et al. 2004: xiii-xiv)

The Current Paradox

Uganda is one of those African nations whose recent experience has raised questions about the validity of mainstream thinking on democratisation. In the 1990s it was widely regarded as a success story, particularly by bilateral and international aid agencies. When Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM) government came to power in 1986, the country had experienced more than 25 years of authoritarian rule and civil strife and both the economy and the government were in a state of virtual collapse. However, over the next 15 years there was a dramatic 'turnaround' (Robinson 2006; Rosser 2006). The economy began to grow, security was restored in most parts of the country, a new constitution was enacted and basic institutions of public administration re-established, and substantial powers were devolved to a hierarchy of local government institutions extending right down to the village level. Furthermore, donors played a significant role in this transformation. In return for the adoption of IMF policies, the government received large amounts of aid and was the first African country to benefit from debt cancellation under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) scheme.

However, in the last few years, doubts have begun to be expressed, within the country and outside, about the extent and sustainability of Uganda's success. The main concerns relate not to its economic recovery but to the depth of its democratic 'transition' (Francis and James 2004; Mwenda and Tangri 2005; Tangri 2006). The first concern was the apparent reluctance to move from the 'Movement' system, which was initially seen as a transitional arrangement but had in effect turned Uganda into a one-party state, to a system of competitive multi-party politics. In 2005, it was finally agreed to establish a multi-party system, but the 'problem' then became Museveni's reluctance to stand down as president. Following a constitutional amendment that allowed him to stand for a third term of office, he was re-elected president in the first multi-party elections in 25 years, held in 2006, amid accusations that the elections were not entirely 'free and fair'. Meanwhile, concerns have also been expressed about other matters, including high levels of corruption, the NRM's domination of politics at the sub-national level, continued civil unrest in the north of the country, and the government's role in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and to an extent in South Sudan.

Alternative Explanations

In terms of mainstream thinking, Uganda may be regarded as a country where the initial 'transition' to democracy, which occurred when Museveni came to power in 1986, has not been 'consolidated'. It is a classic example of what Barkan (2000) describes as the problem of 'protracted transition' in Africa. Museveni's role is seen as critical, in both a positive and a negative sense (Tangri 2006; Melo et al. forthcoming). His strong leadership was a major factor behind the success of the initial transition, but his reluctance to relinquish power – regarded as a common characteristic of African leaders – is now delaying the consolidation. In other words, Museveni's personal contradictions are seen as a major cause of Uganda's democratic paradox.

Our own explanation of the paradox is rather different. We do not deny either that the current state of democracy has many weaknesses or that Museveni has played a major role, positively and negatively. However, we believe that it is necessary to see events over the last twenty years in a broader historical and political context. We argue that Museveni's accession to power in 1986 should not be seen as the moment when democracy was established, but as just one event in a much longer, ongoing attempt to negotiate a form of democracy that represents some form of consensus amongst key players in the country's political arena. We suggest that, during this process, there have been a number of 'waves' of democratisation, punctuated by spells of dictatorship and military rule.

In order to support this argument, we present a brief overview of the country's democratic history. We identify five main historical phases: the pre-colonial period; the colonial era and the struggle for independence, which we regard as the first wave of democratisation; the immediate post-colonial period, which was characterised by dictatorship and military rule; the period of 'no-party' government from 1986 to 2005, which may be seen as a second wave of democracy; and finally the current phase of multi-party democracy, which constitutes a third democratic wave. The first four of these phases are described in turn below and the main historical milestones summarised in Box 1. It is too soon to draw any conclusions about the fifth phase, but in the final section of the case study we consider some possible scenarios.

Box 1: Uganda's Political History at a Glance

- 1962: Independence from Britain
- 1966: Independence Constitution overthrown and Prime Minister assumes Executive Powers as President
- 1971: Apollo Milton Obote is overthrown by General Idi Amin in the 2nd Post Independence Coup
- '71-79: Military Dictatorship of Idi Amin
- 1979: Idi Amin is overthrown by a combined force of Ugandan Exiles, backed by the Tanzanian Army
- '79-80: Uganda is ruled by a transitional 'broad based' government of the United Liberation Front
- 1980: Apollo Milton Obote's UPC wins Uganda's first multi-party elections widely perceived to be fraudulent
- 1981: Museveni launches a guerilla war against Obote's regime
- 1985: Apollo Milton Obote is overthrown by a military junta in Uganda's third post-independence coup
- 1986: The Okello Tito military junta is overthrown by Museveni's triumphant guerillas
- 1989: National Resistance Council (NRC) established
- 1995: Uganda's Republican constitution is completed
- 1996: Uganda's first 'democratic elections' held and Museveni wins under a no-party system
- 2000: Ugandans vote in a referendum to adopt the Movement system
- 2001: Museveni wins his 2nd and last constitutionally mandated term
- 2005: Ugandan's vote in another referendum to return to multi-party political system
- 2006: After amending the 1995 Constitution to remove Presidential term limits, Museveni wins another term

The Pre-Colonial Political Landscape

Uganda's pre-colonial political heritage has influenced all three waves of democratisation in the country. Justus Mugaju (2000), in his essay 'An Historical Background to Uganda's No-Party Democracy', depicts Uganda's pre-colonial democracy story very negatively. He observes that the modern state of Uganda was created out of a multiplicity of pre-colonial systems of varying degrees of complexity and sophistication, ranging from the centralized kingdoms and principalities in southern and western Uganda, through to the chiefdoms of the north and the decentralised polities in Eastern Uganda. All pre-colonial societies had similar forms of social organisation, based on patriarchal extended families, where clans were the principal instruments of socialisation, education and governance. Mugaju (2000:9) argues

that Uganda's pre-colonial political landscape lacked the basic democratic culture of compromise, tolerance, fair play, the rule of law and constitutionalism. After examining each of the major organizational and governance forms in pre-colonial Uganda, he concludes (2000:11) that, 'regardless of their scale or complexity, all pre-colonial social systems were rooted in varying degrees of authoritarianism, conformism and compliance...the basic ingredients of democracy did not exist'.

Colonial Misrule and the First Wave of Democracy

Britain's colonial rule of Uganda, which extended from 1890 to 1962, was, as elsewhere, largely undemocratic. Initially, the main preoccupation was the challenges of conquest, pacification and effective occupation. Once Uganda was pacified, the colonial authorities imposed a regime of seemingly detached or benign paternalism. However, under the mask of paternalism, colonial rule was authoritarian and devoid of any democratic pretensions; the colonial administration used draconian laws to silence dissent and manipulated the judicial system to secure desirable court verdicts against opponents of colonialism (Mugaju 2000:12-13). Despite their organisational subordination and especially their mystification by the gun, an increasingly agitated local population resisted this colonial misrule and this resistance formed the core of independence struggles, which today can be viewed as struggles for democracy and self-determination. As the pressure for decolonisation became irresistible in the 1940s and 1950s, the colonial administration grudgingly ceded some political space to the local population (Mugaju 2000:15). The dawn of independence led to a proliferation of political organisations and interest groups. Uganda's first political party, the Uganda National Congress (UNC) was formed in 1952, followed soon after by the creation of the Democratic Party (DP), the Uganda Peoples Congress (UPC) and Kabaka Yekka (KY). The rise of these political organisations created the platform for political contestations and debate about the future of democracy in Uganda.⁵

The Immediate Post-Independence Period

On attainment of independence in 1962, the future of democracy in Uganda looked quite promising. The undemocratic, authoritarian, archaic and gender discriminative pre-colonial political trajectory and the equally repressive and exploitative colonial regime were replaced by a seemingly functioning multi-party, democratic, Westminster system of government. The prime minister then, Apollo Milton Obote, was the head of a UPC-KY coalition government that controlled the majority of seats in the National Assembly, and there was a titular president (Mugaju 2000). However, this experiment did not last. Only four years after independence, the status quo was overthrown and eclipsed in a coup, in which Uganda's first president was forced into exile and replaced by Obote. The independence constitution was discarded and replaced with what became known as a 'pigeonhole' constitution, which gave immense power to an executive president and relegated the prime ministerial position to the periphery. The country degenerated into tyranny, chaos and civil strife, leading up to yet another coup in 1971, in which Idi Amin overthrew President Milton Obote. And Uganda effectively became a military dictatorship. In 1979 Amin himself was overthrown by the gun and Obote resumed power. Although the trappings of a democratic system of government were restored, the following period, from 1980 to 1986, was in practice anything but democratic and was correctly described as 'thuggery masquerading as multipartyism' (Mugaju and Oloka, 2000:4).

⁵ Although notable scholars like Mugaju have argued that the proliferation of these political organisations had little connection to the struggles for democracy, as they were with self interests

Why did the seemingly stable political system that was established with the support of the British collapse so soon? Why did Uganda degenerate into a military dictatorship after the hope that was raised by the multiparty experiment of the 1950s and 1960s? The answers to these questions lie in the country's pre-colonial heritage, the bad mannerisms learned by the political elite to whom political power was handed at independence, and the failure to establish a solid foundation for democracy. This will become clearer in the next sub-section, which looks at what can be considered as Uganda's second wave of democratisation.

The Second Wave of Democracy: The Movement System and 'No-Party' Rule

Following decades of colonial and post-colonial misrule, and at a time when most African countries had opted or been persuaded to adopt multiparty democracy, Uganda chose to follow the path of 'no-party' democracy – a model that was to become a major talking point in the country's political history. It was led along this path by Yoweri Museveni and his National Resistance Movement (NRM). After successfully leading a guerrilla war against the second Obote regime and assuming power in 1986, President Museveni announced a 'new' political roadmap that was meant to break away from the country's treacherous past under multi-party misrule. The 'movement system', as it came to be known, it was claimed, was dictated by the social, economic and political realities of 1986, rather than ideological dogmatism (Wapakhabulo 2000:82). It was marketed as an umbrella, 'non-partisan' political system, which was all-inclusive and broad-based. Party activities were suspended or severely curtailed, and all political players were invited to make a contribution to Uganda's political, social and economic recovery.

In the early phases of the new administration, every attempt was made to integrate as many political factions as possible in what initially appeared genuinely to be a broad-based government. The NRM negotiated with various political groups in order to create a national unity government and the most senior positions in the first cabinet, aside from the president, vice president and defence minister, were allocated to well-known figures in hitherto opposition political parties (Kasfir 2000:67). Other vital steps towards democratisation in the early years of the NRM regime included the formalisation of local 'resistance councils' (RCs) as cornerstones for local democracy and self-government, restoration of the rule of law, establishment of the National Resistance Council (a political assembly that served as a sort of Parliament), and the setting in motion of a constitution-making process, that eventually culminated in the enactment of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda.

However, despite all these obvious steps towards democratic consolidation, political contestations and debate continued. The main focus of debate was the question of what political system would best represent a political consensus as to how the country should be governed. Not surprisingly, this debate centred on the issue of no-party versus multi-party forms of democracy. The main arguments are summarised in Box 2. In brief, the advocates of no-party democracy argued that a poor and backward country like Uganda, recovering from a long history of state-sponsored violence, war and economic decay, could not afford the luxury of multi-partyism. They insisted that, when political parties had been allowed to operate, both in the 1960s and the early 1980s, they were simply breeding grounds for religious, ethnic and regional cleavages. On the other hand, critics of no-party politics insisted that the movement system was a negation of the fundamental human right of association; in as far as it banned political party activities. They argued that no-party democracy, the Movement style, was simply one party dictatorship by another name (Mugaju and Oloka 2000:2).

Box 2: Summary of the No-Party versus Multi-Party Debate

The Movement and No-Party Case

- Because of the turbulent past, in part due to multi-party politics, Uganda needed a no-party interlude to heal the wounds of the past and overcome religious sectarianism, 'Zionism', subversion and ethnic cleavages
- The Movement system and politics had created a system based on consensus, rather than confrontation and was thus much closer to typically African values of solidarity, reconciliation and consensus
- That the movement system was a unique and innovative shift from the dangerous syndrome of African always copying from the west as if they could not think on their own
- Furthermore that political parties in the west were based on class interests and differences and without significant class differentiation, as in Uganda, it was unimagined to have functioning parties

The Multiparty Case and Contention

- That the ills of multipartyism in the past were down to the pseudo nature of multipartyism, rather than its failure
- That political party organizing was a reflection of the inherent human right of association and cannot be taken away. Political parties are therefore the main vehicle through which the right to association is actualized and by which individuals and groups compete for political power to run government
- That political parties are platforms for different interests and alternative programs and were a barometer of interests, consciousness and differences in a country
- That it would be necessary to put on blinders to ignore the class divisions amongst Ugandan citizens and even peasants differed in the crops they grew and interests

Adapted from Barya 2000:29-32 and Kasfir 2000

This debate was not resolved immediately. It continued into the constitution-making process, but even the 1995 Constitution could not resolve it. This impasse was highlighted by the Constitutional Commission's admission that:

The people of Uganda have important values they cherish in both systems and they have serious elements they fear in both. Large sections of our society would not want a re-introduction of a multiparty system to completely do away with the characteristics of the movement system, which they cherish, nor would they wish the adoption of the movement system to eliminate the important values of the multiparty system. (Cited in Oloka Onyango 2000:46-47)

Consequently, the 1995 Constitution provided for the extension of the lifespan of the Movement system until 2000, when there would be a referendum in which Ugandans would determine what system the country would adopt.⁶ Since then there have, in fact, been two referenda on this issue. The first referendum in June 2000 resulted in an overwhelming victory for the Movement protagonists, but in the second referendum, just four years later, Ugandans voted, again overwhelmingly, to return to multi-party politics, ironically with Museveni this time at the forefront in the campaign for multi-partyism.⁷

What explains this apparently dramatic change in direction? Was it the result of an intense process of genuine political negotiation between different political actors? Or was it the reflection of a regime in power seeking to consolidate its position? Is this state of affairs good or bad for democracy? What does the future hold as Uganda enters its third wave of

⁶ Article 271(2) and (3) and Article 269

⁷ It should be noted, however, that the main political parties boycotted both referendums, arguing that they could not participate in a process to legitimate the Movement dictatorship, in particular because political parties and organising are inalienable rights that cannot be voted upon

democratisation? There are no obvious answers to these questions, but the final part of this section attempts to provide some insights.

Conclusions and Implications for the Future

It is evident from the above overview that the political ‘ups and downs’ of the Museveni regime, which have caused concern among mainstream democracy promoters, are only one of a number of oscillations in Uganda’s democratic history - and, in fact, a relatively minor one. Independent Uganda has experienced multi-party politics, a one-party regime, military dictatorship, a no-party democracy and, since 2005, a return to multi-partyism. Advocates of the ‘mainstream’ approach to democratisation are likely to regard such political volatility as a sign of democratic immaturity and to argue that the switch from one political system to another is a hindrance to democratic consolidation. However, one can also argue that these experiences reflect a search for political consensus by the different actors in the country’s political scene and that, in the long run; they are positive rather than negative. The volatile political landscape is the outcome of the ongoing contestations and negotiations between these actors and is a healthy and necessary part of the democracy negotiation process. The historical overview presented above suggests that it is possible to negotiate forms of democracy that represent different political interests. For example, in the debate between movement and multiparty systems, some compromises were made between the different political factions and, had the political elites been more moderate and reasonable in their demands, a consensual political system might have been agreed.

So what does the future look like? Will Uganda’s recent adoption of a multi-party political system finally cast the spell off authoritarianism and usher in a period of irreversible democratic consolidation? It is too early to answer this question and a lot will depend on how the political process is managed and in particular whether the ruling party adopts a management style that is receptive to divergent views. However, three possible scenarios can be contemplated.

The *first* is that the multiparty political arrangement could transform Uganda’s politics and put the country on an irreversible path to democratic paradise. Our earlier analysis, of democratisation in general and of Uganda in particular, suggests that this is very unlikely.

The *second* is that Uganda’s pre-colonial heritage, highlighted earlier in this section, coupled with the historical propensities for political leaders to stay in power indefinitely, may return to haunt the country’s hopes of democratic consolidation. It is possible that Uganda will degenerate to the pseudo-multipartyism of the 1960s and 1980s and that the same ills that dominated Uganda’s political landscape during those periods will be repeated.

The *third* scenario, and in our view the most likely one, is that the promise of multiparty politics will not be fully realised, but neither will the country degenerate into the political depths experienced in the 1960s and 1980s. In the process, Ugandans will recognise that the widely talked about multi-party political dispensation is no magic bullet and that, as Uganda’s political history shows, dictatorships can flourish with or without formal multi-partyism. They will also realise that the problem of democracy in Uganda, as in other parts of Africa, is much more than a question of the formal system of governance under which the country is ruled. In other words, the third wave of democratisation will be part of the ongoing process of negotiating democracy.

THE ZIMBABWEAN CASE

Africa has come a long way with democratisation but there is still a long way to go.
(Ake 2000:74)

The Current Paradox

Zimbabwe is another country whose experience has necessitated a revision of mainstream thinking, not only about democratisation but about 'good governance' in general. The country became independent in 1980, following 14 years of minority white rule. In the 1980s it was widely regarded as a success story. Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF government was praised for its efforts to redress the racial imbalances of the past without alienating the white minority. Basically this entailed increasing access to infrastructure and services for the black majority while retaining the unequal distribution of land and other economic assets. The immediate result of these policies was a significant increase in agricultural production, especially from smallholder farmers (giving Zimbabwe the reputation of being the 'bread basket' of Africa), the maintenance of relatively strong mining and manufacturing sectors, and a dramatic increase in access to basic social services, such as education and health. The government was also praised for its policy of reconciliation with the white minority and, following the 1987 Unity Accord, with the opposition PF-ZAPU party, while Mugabe himself was hailed, throughout Africa and internationally, as a hero of the African liberation struggle.

However, the Zimbabwe of mid-2007 could not be more different. Real income per capita is less than half what it was in 1996⁸, in the last six years GDP has declined by 35% and production of tobacco, the main cash crop and a major source of foreign exchange, by 70% (DFID 2007). Annual inflation reached 4500% in May 2007 and the Zimbabwe dollar is literally worth a fraction of what it was in the mid-1990s.⁹ Poverty and unemployment levels are estimated at around 80%, and life expectancy declined from 58 years in 1994 to 35 years in 2006. It is estimated that up to a third of the population has fled the country over the last few years, including about 3.5 million to South Africa and 1.5 million to the UK.¹⁰

To all intents and purposes, Zimbabwe is what is generally regarded these days as a 'failed' state. Rotberg, writing in 2003, described Zimbabwe as 'moving rapidly from strength towards catastrophic failure' (Rotberg 2004:10). He went on to suggest (2004:16) that 'all Zimbabwe lacks in order to join the ranks of failed states is a widespread insurgent movement directed at the government'. In the four years since this was written, the economic and social situation has continued to decline and in June this year international aid agencies warned that 'economic collapse' is imminent and inevitable (Times 2007:40). Yet there is still no insurgency movement – a fact that in itself indicates the shortcomings of concepts like 'state failure'.

⁸ Davies (2004:20) estimated that it declined by about 50% between 1996 and 2004, and there is little doubt that it has declined further since then.

⁹ In the mid-1990s, US\$1 was worth about Z\$10. In 2006, the currency had devalued so much that the Zimbabwean government 'knocked three zeros off it'. Nevertheless, by June 2007, US\$1 was worth Z\$250 (\$250,000 in the 'old' currency) at the official exchange rate and more than Z\$50,000 at the 'parallel' rate, which is the rate that everyone except certain privileged state agencies has to pay.

¹⁰ The figures for migration to South Africa and the UK were obtained from *The Zimbabwean* vol.3, no. 21 (31 May-6 June 2007), p.8

The Zimbabwe of today is also undoubtedly an authoritarian state. Recent elections are widely regarded as having been neither 'free' nor 'fair',¹¹ the security forces control most strategic services, the judiciary is no longer independent, the activities of opposition parties, civil society organisations and the media are severely curtailed, and any sign of dissent is immediately crushed, either by intimidation or (increasingly) by force. In mainstream terms, therefore, this is clearly a case of 'democratic reversal'.

Alternative Explanations

It is not easy to explain this dramatic turn of events in mainstream terms. The most common explanation is to put the blame on Mugabe. The argument is that, if Mugabe had been willing to relinquish power, or someone else had been president, things would have been different, and that, if and when Mugabe goes, Zimbabwe will be back on the 'right path'. This explanation is evident in most discussions on Zimbabwe among aid agencies and in the international media. It is also reflected in a number of recent books and articles on Mugabe (Blair 2002; Meredith 2002; Chan 2003; Moore 2006),¹² which seek to explain why Mugabe has behaved in the way he has and how the man who was acclaimed as the country's hero in the immediate post-independence period has now become its main problem. More significantly, however, it is also the most common explanation voiced by opposition politicians and supporters and in the independent Zimbabwean media. For example, a recent editorial in one of the main opposition newspaper declared that 'an entire nation cannot be held to ransom by one man any longer' (Zimbabwean 2007:10). The main concern is how to get rid of Mugabe and how, when he has gone, to make institutional changes (for example, the adoption of a new constitution) to ensure that no other politician can ever exert such a stranglehold over the country again.

This explanation is characteristic of the mainstream approach, in that it emphasises the role of individual elites – in this case, that of Mugabe – and 'institutional design' in the democratisation process. We do not deny either that Mugabe's reluctance to relinquish power is a major cause of Zimbabwe's current problems, or that constitutional change is necessary. However, we maintain that Mugabe's behaviour is only one causal factor and is as much a symptom of the problem as the problem itself. We also suggest that this explanation creates misleading expectations regarding the future. It implies that, when Mugabe goes and a new constitution is in place, all will be well, and, as we have already noted, experience in other Africa countries - and in other parts of the world - suggests that, unfortunately, the 'democratic transition' is not as simple as this.

In order to understand the Zimbabwean situation properly, a deeper and, in particular, yet again, a more historical and political approach is required. A growing body of literature on Zimbabwe, much of it by Zimbabweans themselves, suggests that there are five interrelated reasons for Zimbabwe's current problems: the pre-colonial and colonial legacy of authoritarian government; the politics underlying the 1980 independence settlement; the colonial economic heritage; post-independence economic policies; and the country's regional political and economic relationships. These are discussed in turn below.

¹¹ This is the opinion of human rights organisations inside and outside the country and most international observers. However, it is disputed by the Zimbabwe government and (for reasons that are explained below) the governments of many SADC countries.

¹² Although all four of these works focus on Mugabe, they differ in approach. In particular, Chan and Moore go beyond a conventional mainstream approach, in that they examine the wider, historical and structural factors that have influenced Mugabe's behaviour.

The Legacy of Authoritarian Government

Prior to independence, Zimbabwe – like Uganda – had little experience of democratic government. As in most other parts of Africa, pre-colonial Zimbabwean political systems, although varying significantly over time and space, were predominantly clan-based, authoritarian and patriarchal in nature. The first part of the colonial period was also similar to that in other parts of Africa. The main objectives were control and resource extraction and the colonial administration was superimposed upon existing political systems, incorporating them where they were of use and overriding them where they were not. However, during the latter part of the colonial era, and in particular after the universal declaration of independence (UDI) by Ian Smith's white-dominated government in 1965, the situation changed. During the UDI period, Zimbabwe was ruled not by a colonial power but by an authoritarian, minority-led government that, as time went on, was forced to adopt increasingly draconian measures to remain in power. In other words, as Muponde (2004:191) says, 'Mugabeism is not a sudden eruption of neo-primitivism, but something that is deep-seated, something with roots within the social and political practices of a broader constituency'.

The Politics of Independence

When Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980, there was a great deal of unfinished political business (Raftopoulos and Savage 2004). Although independence followed a protracted civil war, Mugabe's ZANU-PF party did not win this war in the same way that Museveni's NRA won the Ugandan civil war in 1986. The capitulation of Ian Smith's government was due primarily to international economic and political pressure rather than the military supremacy of the liberation forces. Furthermore, the liberation movement was itself divided. The main division was between Robert Mugabe's Shona-dominated ZANU-PF and Joshua Nkomo's Ndebele-dominated PF-ZAPU, but there were also factions within each party, particularly ZANU-PF.¹³ The independence settlement was brokered from outside, the main actor being Britain, the former colonial power, and the two factions of the liberation movement were more or less forced to agree. Mugabe's ZANU-PF party went on to win the first elections, but probably only because there are many more Shona than Ndebele.

During the first seven years of independence, Mugabe attacked the opposition PF-ZAPU party in much the same way as he is now attacking the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). It was only after a long and to a large extent covert struggle, in which (it was later learned) an estimated 10,000 civilians were killed and many others persecuted in Matabeleland (CCJP/LRF 1997; Eppel 2004), that Nkomo gave in and agreed in 1987 to join ZANU-PF. Moreover, even after the Unity Accord, Mugabe was constantly struggling to suppress opposition from both within and outside his party. In other words, the present political problems are not new; they are the culmination of a long history of political conflict, the severity of which most Zimbabweans and outside observers chose to ignore during the first decade of independence.

The Colonial Economic Heritage

The newly independent Zimbabwe also inherited another form of unfinished business: an economy divided along racial lines. This legacy is better understood and has been well documented, especially the 'land problem' (Hammar et al. 2003; Sachikonye 2004), which is

¹³ ZANU stands for Zimbabwe African National Union and ZAPU for Zimbabwe African People's Party. The two parties had nominally united to form the Patriotic Front (PF), but in practice operated independently, each with its own army.

rightly seen as a major contributing factor to the current crisis. What is less well understood is the precise role that the land issue has played and, in particular, the way that it has been used by Mugabe to maintain power and win support both internally and externally.

Mugabe's so-called 'land reform', which has entailed the expropriation of the majority of white-owned land since 2000, has been used within the country as a means of retaining the support of several very different interest groups: the rural poor to whom the land was supposed to be allocated; the political and administrative elite to whom most of it has actually been given; veterans of the liberation war and lower-level party supporters, who played a major role in the actual seizing of the land; and intellectuals who felt that the ZANU-PF government should have done more to redress colonial inequities (Muponde 2004; Moore 2006). And externally, it has been used with considerable success, especially in southern Africa, to legitimise the ZANU-PF government and reinforce Mugabe's reputation as a liberation hero – a point to which we return below. In both cases, the 'land issue' has been combined with the 'reinvention' of the history of the liberation war and an attack on the current imperialist policies of western powers (including the invasion of Iraq) to create a powerful anti-imperialist ideology (Muponde 2004; Raftopoulos 2004a).¹⁴ This ideology has taken on hegemonic proportions, primarily due to its propagation through the state-controlled media (Chuma 2004).

Post-Independence Economic Policies

Zimbabwe's economic collapse, like its political crisis, is widely regarded as a relatively recent phenomenon, which began in November 1998 ('black Friday'), when Mugabe agreed to give lump sum payments and a monthly pension to the increasingly disgruntled veterans of the liberation war and was later exacerbated by the land reform programme, which decimated agricultural production. However, as a number of writers (Jenkins and Knight 2002; Campbell 2003; Davies 2004) have pointed out, the problems began much earlier. Although opinions differ regarding their relative importance, the main contributing factors were the high level of expenditure on infrastructure and services in the immediate post-independence period, quasi-socialist economic and financial policies during this period, and an inappropriately designed and only partially implemented structural adjustment programme in the 1990s, and the country's involvement in the war in the DRC.¹⁵

Regional Political and Economic Relationships

Zimbabwe's crisis has affected, and been affected by, its political and economic relationships with neighbouring countries (especially South Africa) and in the sub-continent as a whole (Phimister 2004; Phimister and Raftopoulos 2004; Freeman 2005; Moore 2006). Zimbabwe has become a source of embarrassment for other African governments, because its problems have come at a time when there has been a major effort to improve the region's international image. The birth of the African Union, the concept of an African Renaissance and the promise of increased aid to Africa made in 2006, all imply an assumption that African governments are now committed to the concept of 'good governance'. There is thus considerable pressure on the region's political leaders to condemn the Mugabe government

¹⁴ This ideology has been referred to as 'patriotic history', a term originally coined by Terence Ranger (2004).

¹⁵ There is, of course, a third school of thought, promoted by Mugabe and his supporters as part of the 'patriotic history', that attributes the economic collapse to a combination of drought and neo-colonial exploitation, including the imposition of economic sanctions against Zimbabwe. As with all Mugabe's arguments, there is some truth in this, in that drought is a recurrent problem in Zimbabwe and, although the formal sanctions are targeted only at individuals, virtually all government-to-government aid has been withdrawn.

publicly and apply overt political and/or economic sanctions. But they have not done so. The strategy has been one of 'quiet diplomacy', a term coined by Zimbabweans and used particularly, but not solely, to describe South Africa's approach to the Zimbabwean situation. So far this strategy has had very little impact. At the time of writing (June 2007) there are signs that the pressure on Mugabe is being increased, particularly by SADC countries, but the prospects of this having any significant impact at present appear slim.¹⁶

The reasons for this are complex, and vary somewhat from country to country and leader to leader. However, there are probably three main ones: the success of Mugabe's public relations strategy (described above), in which he is portrayed as a hero in the struggle against the forces of imperialism and neo-colonialism; the wish to present a united African front against the 'imperialist' powers; and individual leaders' fears that they themselves might find themselves in the same position one day and so need the support of their peers. South Africa's position is particularly complex, not merely because of its proximity to Zimbabwe, but because of its similar political and economic history, its powerful economic position, and Mbeki's key role in promoting the concept of an African Renaissance.

Finally, brief mention should be made of China's increasing role in Africa, which is adding to what is already a complex political situation (Karumbidza 2007). China has helped to prop up the Mugabe regime in a number of ways, including the provision of financial support to the government, the availability of low priced Chinese retail goods at a time of acute shortages, and its political and ideological impact as an alternative to western powers. However, the long-term costs to Zimbabwe could be high. As Karumbidza (2007:95) points out: 'Mugabe fought the 2005 elections on the argument that Zimbabwe must not become a colony again. But it is questionable whether he has not in fact simply replaced Western colonialism with Chinese imperialism.'

Conclusions and Implications for the Future

When one takes account of all these factors, it is easy to understand why the situation in Zimbabwe is as it is. In fact, the question that many people are now asking is not why there has been such a dramatic turn of events in the country, but why they did not see this coming. With the benefit of hindsight, it is evident that those individuals and organisations that were so optimistic about Zimbabwe in the 1980s failed not only to understand the broader historical and political context but also to appreciate the extent and significance of events (such as the massacre of citizens in Matabeleland), which were going on under their noses.

This conclusion may at first sight appear depressing. It suggests that there is little prospect of any immediate or dramatic change and that, even when Mugabe goes, the struggle for democracy will have a long way to go. This is particularly so, when one considers the extent of the economic collapse and the impact that both political and economic problems are having on the well being of ordinary Zimbabweans. However, the implications are not entirely negative. A closer analysis of current events reveals that, in the midst of this chaos, there are some positive developments. This section looks briefly at four such developments: the increased role and capacity of opposition parties; a similar increase in the strength of civil society organisations; the survival of an independent media; and the quality of intellectual debate.¹⁷

¹⁶ This opinion is based partly on personal judgement but also on the general tone of media reports.

¹⁷ Information in this section is, unless otherwise indicated, derived from personal knowledge and media reports

Opposition Parties

The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) is the first opposition party that has managed to effectively challenge ZANU-PF's political stranglehold on the country. It is the only party that has survived the Mugabe regime's concerted attacks and the only one to win a substantial number of parliamentary seats. Moreover, although it is currently split into two rival factions, it is the first political party to have widespread support from all ethnic groups, including whites and blacks, Shona and Ndebele. It has also been relatively effective in the extent to which it has penetrated the population. Despite constant harassment from ZANU-PF, it has branches throughout the country. Moreover, it has branches in all the countries to which Zimbabweans have fled, including South Africa, Botswana, UK, USA, Canada and Australia.

Civil Society Organisations

Although there is as yet nothing that would meet Rotberg's criteria of a 'widespread insurgent movement directed at the government', public resistance is increasing and much of this can be attributed to the work of civil society organisations (CSOs). Over the last few years, there has been a proliferation of CSOs engaged in one way or another in the struggle for political change, both within and outside the country. A comprehensive review of their nature, tactics and impact is beyond the scope of this paper. However, in order to give some indication of their diversity and role, Box 3 provides brief profiles of six of them.

Box 3: Some Civil Society Organisations Engaged in the Present Struggle

- The Zimbabwe Council for Trade Unions (ZCTU) has a longstanding role, since it was instrumental in the formation of the main opposition party, the MDC. Since the establishment of the MDC as an independent organisation in 1999, ZCTU has continued to work closely with it, but has also pursued its own resistance strategy, mainly in the form of periodic 'stay aways' in protest at deteriorating labour conditions. It has also built important solidarity links with trade unions in other countries, most notably those in South Africa and the UK. The latter link is particularly interesting, since, together with the UK-based organisation, ACTSA,¹⁸ it has played a major role in increasing awareness and understanding of the Zimbabwean situation in the UK.
- The National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) was founded in 1997. It is a collection of CSOs, including labour, human rights and religious organisations, which have come together to campaign for a new and more democratic constitution (Kagoro 2004). Like ZCTU, NCA played a major role in the formation of the MDC and, like ZCTU; it works closely with the opposition party but pursues its own strategy. It was a major force behind the public's rejection of the draft of a new constitution produced by the government in 2000, an event that surprised Mugabe and triggered off many of the policies that have led to the current crisis, including concerted attacks on the opposition and the controversial land reform programme. NCA's current strategy includes periodic demonstrations in support of a new constitution and efforts to increase public awareness about the need for constitutional change.
- Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) is a women's organisation, that was founded in 2003 to protest against the impact of the country's political and economic crisis on the lives of women. It has proved to be the most successful organisation in terms of organising public demonstrations, partly because it has been difficult for the government to use force against women, but also because of the bravery of its leaders. A men's branch of the organisation, known as Men of Zimbabwe Arise, was recently formed.
- The Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA) is an organisation founded in 1998 to defend the interests of Harare residents, who have not only suffered from the impact of the country's economic problems but also been persecuted politically because they are a major source of support for MDC. CHRA has been particularly active since 2004, when the government abolished the MDC-led Harare City Council and replaced it with an appointed commission. Its activities include

¹⁸ ACTSA (Action for Southern Africa), which was established in 1994, is the successor to the Anti-Apartheid Movement.

demonstrations, rates boycotts, and public awareness campaigns and its slogan is 'CHRA for enhanced citizen participation in local governance'.

- The Catholic Church in Zimbabwe and its human rights arm, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), have a long history of campaigning for social justice in Zimbabwe. A detailed account of their role is beyond the scope of this paper. However, significant activities include documenting and publicising the atrocities in Matabeleland in the 1980s (CCJP/LRF 1997), sponsorship of a small but surprisingly successful civic awareness and community organisation programme in the marginalized Binga District (Conyers and Cumanzala 2004), and the constant and fearless campaign of Pius Ncube, the Archbishop of Bulawayo. The Church has also worked closely with branches of the Catholic Church in other countries, particularly South Africa, in order to raise awareness and support, outside Zimbabwe.
- The Zimbabwe Vigil is a UK-based organisation, composed of members of the Zimbabwean diaspora living in the UK and UK citizens with links in Zimbabwe. Its main aim is to raise awareness of the Zimbabwean situation in the UK and, in order to achieve this objective, it has organised peaceful demonstrations outside the Zimbabwe High Commission in London every Saturday afternoon for the last five years. It works closely with the many other organisations that support Zimbabwean exiles in the UK and provides an important rallying point for many of them, especially those seeking political asylum.

The Independent Media

One of the Mugabe regime's most successful strategies has been to take control over the media (Chuma 2004). It has done this in a number of ways, including the suppression (by both legal and illegal means) of any independent source of public information that dares to speak out against the government. This has made it virtually impossible for the independent media to survive within the country. However, Zimbabweans have fought against this by establishing independent channels of information outside the country. Box 4 profiles three of the most significant examples.

Box 4: The Independent Media

- *The Zimbabwean* is a weekly newspaper that was established by Zimbabwean exiles in London in 2005. It started on a very small scale, but is now published simultaneously in London, Johannesburg and online and available in 85 countries, including Zimbabwe. It has become an invaluable source of information for Zimbabweans, both inside and outside the country.
- *SW Radio Africa* is a short-wave radio station that broadcasts from London to Zimbabwe. It was initially established in Zimbabwe in 2000, but almost immediately shut down by the government and so relocated to the UK. Despite constant attempts by the government to block its transmissions, it continues to broadcast daily news and current affairs programmes.
- *ZW News* is an online Zimbabwean news service. Operating from London, it provides a daily abstract of articles on Zimbabwe in the international media, a summary of which is also available by email.

Quality of Intellectual Debate

The fourth indicator of progress is the quality of the intellectual debate that is emerging in and about Zimbabwe. As the references in this section demonstrate, there is a rapidly growing literature on the current democratic struggle in Zimbabwe, much of it by Zimbabweans. Moreover, the quality of this work suggests that there is now a much better understanding, both of the complexities of democratisation and of the nation's historical and political context, than there was in the early years of independence.

In conclusion, therefore, it would be misleading to suggest that democracy in Zimbabwe is currently alive and *well*, but it would be equally misleading to suggest that it is dead. In the words of one of the country's most astute social scientists:

Enormous challenges await the development of new democratic structures and spaces in Zimbabwe. However, the crisis also presents new opportunities, for while living through the forms of extreme politics that have marked the Zimbabwean landscape over the last few years many Zimbabweans have also developed a new legacy of civic cooperation defined by a respect for the politics of constitutionalism and democratic accountability. (Raftopoulos 2004b:ix)

5. CONCLUSION

Five main conclusions emerge from these two case studies.

Firstly, 'democracy' must be seen not only as a complex concept, but as a relative concept, the nature of which each society must define for itself. Both Uganda and Zimbabwe are in the process of replacing imposed western democratic models with systems that are evolving from their own histories and reflect the political, social and economic configurations of their societies.

Secondly, 'democratisation' must be seen not merely as a protracted process, but as an ongoing process; it does not have a clearly defined beginning or end and the process of change is as important as the outcomes. In the case of Uganda, useful lessons for democracy have been learned not only from all three waves of democratisation, but also from the periods of dictatorship and military rule. And in the case of Zimbabwe, although the present crisis is having devastating social and economic effects, it is helping to build the country's democratic foundations.

Thirdly, democratisation occurs through a complex process of conflict, negotiation and bargaining between different interest groups; it cannot be 'engineered'. As Mugaju and Oloka (2000:7) observe, what is important 'is not the form of the system, but whether it enjoys general acceptance and has created in built mechanisms to cleanse and recreate itself, if and when necessary'.

Fourthly, individual 'agency' can play a major role, but it has to be understood in context. In both the Ugandan and Zimbabwean cases, it is tempting to focus on the role of individual elites – Obote, Amin and Museveni in Uganda, and Mugabe in Zimbabwe. However, our analysis has shown that, although these individuals have had a major impact on the course of history, they are, like the tip of an iceberg, the manifestation of a much more profound set of causal factors.

Finally, although external forces can influence the process of democratisation, they cannot 'drive' it; in the long run, the speed and direction of change are determined primarily by internal forces and reflect the history and culture of the society concerned. In the case of Uganda, external agencies found that they could influence the democratisation process during the period of no-party government, but not control it. Similarly, in the case of Zimbabwe, external forces, both within Africa and outside, have had an important impact on the course of events but have not been the decisive factor.

REFERENCES

- Ake, C., 1996. *Democracy and Development in Africa*. Washington DC: Brookings Institute.
- Ake, C., 2000. *The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa*. Dakar: CODESRIA.
- Barkan, J., 2000. 'Protracted Transitions among Africa's New Democracies.' *Democratization* 7(3): 227-43.
- Barya, J., 2000. 'Political Parties, the Movement and the Referendum on Political Systems in Uganda: One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward.' In J. Mugaju and O. Oloka (eds), *No Party Democracy in Uganda: Myths and Realities*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers.
- Bastian, S. and R. Luckham (eds), 2003. *Can Democracy be Designed?* London: Zed Books.
- Blair, D., 2002. *Degrees in Violence*. London: Continuum.
- Bratton, M. and N. van de Walle, 1997. *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bruce, B., D. Eyoh and W. Kymlicka (eds), 2004. *Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa*. Oxford: James Currey/Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Campbell, H., 2003. *Reclaiming Zimbabwe*. Cape Town: David Philip Publishers.
- Carothers, T., 2002. 'The End of the Transition Paradigm.' *Journal of Democracy* 13(1): 5-21.
- CCJP/LRF, 1997. *Breaking the Silence, Building True Peace*. Harare: Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) and Legal Resources Foundation (LRF).
- Chan, S., 2003. *Robert Mugabe: a Life of Power and Violence*. London: IB Taurus.
- Chuma, W., 2004. 'Liberating or Limiting the Public Sphere? Media Policy and the Zimbabwe Transition, 1980-2004.' In B. Raftopoulos and T. Savage (eds). *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*. Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. Ch. 7.
- Clapham, C., 2004. 'The Global-Local Politics of State-Building.' In R. Rotberg (ed). *When States Fail*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press. Ch. 3.
- Conyers, D. and F. Cumanzala, 2004. 'Community Empowerment and Democracy in Zimbabwe: a Case Study of Binga District.' *Social Policy and Administration* 38:383-98.
- Davies, R., 2004. 'Memories of Underdevelopment: a Personal Interpretation of Zimbabwe's Economic Decline.' In B. Raftopoulos and T. Savage (eds). *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*. Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. Ch. 2.
- DFID (Department for International Development), 2007. Zimbabwe Country Profile. Sourced at www.dfid.gov.uk/countries/Africa/Zimbabwe on 14 June 2007.
- Doornbos, M., 2002. 'State Collapse and Fresh Starts: Some Critical Reflections.' *Development and Change* 33(5): 797-815.
- Eppel, S., 2004. 'Gukurahundi: the Need for Truth and Reparation.' In B. Raftopoulos and T. Savage (eds). *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*. Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. Ch. 3.
- Francis, P. and R. James (2003). 'Balancing Rural Poverty Reduction and Citizen Participation: Contradictions in Uganda's Decentralization Program.' *World Development* 31(2): 325-38.
- Freeman, L., 2005. 'South Africa's Zimbabwe Policy: Unravelling the Contradictions.' *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 23(2): 147-72.
- Fukuyama, F., 2004. *State-Building*. London: Profile Books.
- Fung, A. and D. Wright (eds), 2003. *Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovation in Empowered Participatory Governance*. London: Verso Press.

- Gaventa, J., 2005. *Triumph, Deficit or Contestation: Deepening the Deepening Democracy Debate*. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies. Working Paper 264.
- Hagmann, T. and D. Péclard, 2007. 'Negotiating Statehood in Africa: Propositions for an Alternative Approach to State and Political Authority.' *AEGIS European Conference on African Studies 2007*. Leiden, 11-14 July. Draft introduction to Panel 44.
- Hammar, A., B. Raftopoulos and S. Jensen (eds), 2003. *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*. Harare: Weaver Press.
- Huntington, S., 1991. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- IDS (Institute of Development Studies), 2005. *Signposts to More Effective States*. Brighton. Centre for the Future State.
- Jenkins, C. and J. Knight, 2002. *The Economic Decline of Zimbabwe*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Kagoro, B., 2004. 'Constitutional Reform as Social Movement.' In B. Raftopoulos and T. Savage (eds). *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*. Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. Ch. 13.
- Karumbidza, J., 2007. 'Win-Win Economic Cooperation: Can China Save Zimbabwe's Economy?' In F. Manji and S. Marks (eds). *African Perspectives on China in Africa*. Cape Town: Fahamu Books. Pp.87-106.
- Kasfir, N., 2000. 'Movement Democracy, Legitimacy and Power in Uganda.' In J. Mugaju and O. Oloka (eds). *No Party Democracy in Uganda: Myths and Realities*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers.
- Luckham, R. and G. White (eds). 1996. *Democratization in the South: the Jagged Wave*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.
- Mainwaring, S., G. O'Donnell and J. Valenzuela (eds), 1992. *Issues in Democratic Consolidation*. South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Melo, M., N. Njuguna and J. Manor (forthcoming). *Against the Odds: Politicians, Institutions and the Struggle against Poverty*.
- Meredith, M., 2002. *Robert Mugabe: Plunder and Power in Zimbabwe*. Cape Town: David Philip Publishers.
- Moore, D., 2006. 'When I am a century old: Why Robert Mugabe Won't Go.' In R. Southhall and H. Melber (eds). *Legacies of Power: Leadership Change and Former Presidents in Africa*. Uppsala: NAI; Cape Town: HSRC Press. Ch. 6.
- Mugaju, J. and O. Oloka, 2000. 'Revisiting the Multi Party versus Movement System Debate.' In J. Mugaju and O. Oloka (eds). *No Party Democracy in Uganda: Myths and Realities*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers.
- Mugaju, J., 2000. 'An Historical Background to Uganda's No-Party Democracy.' In J. Mugaju and O. Oloka (eds). *No-Party Democracy in Uganda: Myths and Realities*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers.
- Muponde, R., 2004. 'The Worm and the Hoe: Cultural Politics and Reconciliation after the Third Chimurenga.' In B. Raftopoulos and T. Savage (eds). *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*. Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. Ch. 10.
- Mwenda, A. and R. Tangri, 2005. 'Patronage Politics, Donor Reforms and Regime Consolidation in Uganda.' *African Affairs* 104/416: 449-67.
- O'Donnell, G., P. Schmitter and L. Whitehead (eds), 1986. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.
- Oloka, O., 2000. 'New Wine or New Bottles? Movement Politics and One Partyism in Uganda'. In J. Mugaju and O. Oloka (eds). *No Party Democracy in Uganda: Myths and Realities*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers.

- Phimister, I., 2004. 'South African Diplomacy and the Crisis in Zimbabwe: Liberation Solidarity in the 21st Century.' In B. Raftopoulos and T. Savage (eds). *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*. Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. Ch. 15.
- Phimister, I. And B. Raftopoulos, 2004. 'Mugabe, Mbeki and the Politics of Anti-Imperialism.' *Review of African Political Economy* 101: 385-400.
- Potter, D., 1997. 'Explaining Democratization.' In D. Potter et al.' (eds), *Democratization*. Cambridge: Polity Press. Ch. 1.
- Power Commission, 2006. *Power to the People: Report of an Independent Inquiry into Britain's Democracy*. London.
- Raftopoulos, B., 2004a. 'Nation, Race and History in Zimbabwean Politics.' In B. Raftopoulos and T. Savage (eds). *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*. Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. Ch. 9.
- Raftopoulos, B., 2004b. 'Unreconciled Differences: the Limits of Reconciliation Politics in Zimbabwe.' In B. Raftopoulos and T. Savage (eds). *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*. Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. Introduction.
- Raftopoulos, B. and T. Savage (eds). 2004. *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*. Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation.
- Ranger, T., 2004. 'Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation.' *Journal of Southern African Studies* 30(2): 215-34.
- Robinson, M., 2006. 'Uganda', *IDS Bulletin* 37(2): 14-26.
- Rosser, A. (ed), 2006. 'Achieving Turnaround in Fragile States'. *IDS Bulletin* 37(2). Whole issue.
- Rotberg, R. (ed), 2004. *When States Fail*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Rustow, D., 1970. 'Transitions to Democracy', *Comparative Politics* 2: 337-63.
- Sachikonye, L., 2004. 'The Promised Land.' In B. Raftopoulos and T. Savage (eds). *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*. Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. Ch. 1.
- Sachikonye, L., 2005. *Political Parties and the Democratisation Process in Zimbabwe*. Johannesburg: EISA.
- Salih, M., 2001. *African Democracies and African Politics*. London: Pluto Press.
- Tangri, R., 2006. 'Politics and Presidential Term Limits in Uganda'. In R. Southhall and H. Melber (eds). *Legacies of Power: Leadership Change and Former Presidents in Africa*. Uppsala: NAI; Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Times, 2007. 'Zimbabwe "will collapse in six months"'. *The Times* 14 June 2007.
- Turner, M. and D. Hulme, 1997. *Government, Administration and Development: Making the State Work*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Wapakhabulo, F., 2000. 'Movement Democracy in Uganda: Origins, Progress, Challenges and Prospects'. In J. Mugaju and O. Oloka (eds). *No Party Democracy in Uganda: Myths and Realities*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers.
- Whitehead, L., 1996. 'Concerning International Support for Democracy in the South'. In R. Rotberg (ed). *When States Fail*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press. Ch. 7.
- Zimbabwean, 2007. Editorial. *The Zimbabwean*. 7-13 June 2007.