Pacted Transition to Democracy: The Case of Mozambique

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Abstract: The findings of "third wave" studies on democratic transitions in Southern Europe and Latin America from the 1970s suggested that a democratic outcome is most likely when contending parties are relatively equal and elites make a pact to navigate the transition process. However, later studies of post-communist transitions do not support this inference. This paper analyses the transition process in Mozambique, a former "Afro-communist" regime, during the early 1990s. The findings show that – contrary to the conclusions drawn from the "third wave" studies – in Mozambique the pact concluded in the context of the peace accord of 1992, which ended a sixteen-year civil war, had contradictory results in terms of democratisation. While the political situation has been relatively stable until recent years, the country has moved toward competitive authoritarian rule instead of full democracy. The main explanatory factor for this trend appears to be the cohesion of the ruling party, which in the case of Mozambique derives from its origins in armed liberation struggle. Renewed incidents of political violence over the last few years also cast doubt on the durability of political stability.

Keywords: *Africa, Mozambique, post-communism, democratisation, pacted transitions*

Introduction

A "third wave of democratization" (Huntington 1996: 3), which begun in the mid-1970s from Southern Europe and moved on to Latin America, penetrated communist Europe in the late 1980s. Comparative analyses of the first phase indicated that a democratic outcome was most likely when contending parties were relatively equal and elites made a pact to navigate the transition process (Karl and Schmitter 1991; cf. Bunce 2003). However, some researchers have argued that

the transition process that took place in the post-communist countries after the Cold War has actually been quite different, and should be called the "fourth wave of democracy and dictatorship" (McFaul 2002: 213). In particular pacted transitions between equals have led to protracted and often violent confrontations resulting in competitive authoritarianism (McFaul 2002; Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Levitsky and Way 2010; Linz and Stepan 1996).

The wave of democratisation reached Africa in the 1990s, but assessments of the progress made there have been pessimistic as the process has in most cases stopped at the level of electoral democracy (Bratton 2013; Cheru 2012; Lynch and Crawford 2012). In Mozambique the transition from state-socialist to liberal-democratic system during the 1990s was based on a pact between the ruling Frelimo (*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique)* party and the main armed opposition movement Renamo (*Resistência Nacional Moçambicana*) – following the model of the negotiations for independence between Frelimo and Portugal's Armed Forces Movement in 1974 (Carbone 2003; Virtanen 2003). While the 1992 peace agreement created the formal conditions for democracy, the current regime is better characterised as competitive authoritarian (Levitsky and Way 2010: 246–251).

In the early "third wave" literature based on experience from southern Europe and Latin America, it was envisaged that a democratic outcome is most likely when soft-liners and moderates enter into pacts that navigate the transition from dictatorship to democracy (Karl and Schmitter 1991: 281). Democracy-enhancing pacts are interim arrangements between a select set of actors that seek to (1) limit the agenda of policy choice, (2) share proportionally in the distribution of benefits, and (3) restrict the participation of outsiders in decision-making (McFaul 2002: 217). As noted by Karl and Schmitter (1991: 281), "they are anti-democratic mechanisms, bargained by elites, which seek to create a deliberate socioeconomic and political contract that demobilizes emerging mass actors while delineating the extent to which all actors can participate or wield power in the future." However, in the post-socialist countries of Europe and Central Asia, where the distribution of power was equally divided, most processes involving pacted transitions have led to partial democracy, or protracted and often violent confrontations resulting in either partial democracy or partial dictatorship. In addition, the mass actors so damaging to

democratisation in the third wave were instrumental in the successes of the fourth wave (Bunce 2003; Linz and Stepan 1996; McFaul 2002).

According to a scenario developed by Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way (2010: 23–25), the future of the authoritarian incumbents facing a democratic transition depend on both internal and external factors. Of the external factors, linkage to major global actors through different kind of ties (economic, political, diplomatic, social and organisational) and cross-border flows (of capital, goods & services, people and information) is the most important. Where the linkage to main liberal-democratic proponents (the USA and EU) is extensive, competitive authoritarian regimes tend to democratise. However, where linkage is low, external democratic influence is also low and regime outcomes depend mainly on domestic factors, such as the organisational power of the incumbents. If the state and/or the governing party is well organised and cohesive, the old ruling group is often able to manage elite conflict and survive even serious opposition challenges; where they are underdeveloped and lack cohesion, the outcome is open to external leverage in the form of political pressure.

Pacted Transitions in Mozambique

Independence and Authoritarian Single-Party Rule

Understood in the broad sense, most decolonisation processes in sub-Saharan Africa during the late 1950s and 1960s took the form of bargained settlements or "pacts" between a small elite representing the colonial power and another relatively small elite representing the colonised people, usually consisting of members of emerging political parties based in the respective colonies. Both tended to consist of the moderate elements of the sides they represented. As noted by Crawford Young (Young 2012: 115):

"For the withdrawing colonizer, departure with dignity necessitated leaving behind an institutional frame reproducing the formal arrangements and political values of the metropole. For the nationalist successors, the ostensibly democratic terminal colonial arrangements assured initial international respectability, especially with the Western world, from which aid expectations were at that juncture highest".

However, by the time the conservative state-corporatist Salazar-Caetano regime was ready to start negotiating decolonisation of the Portuguese "overseas territories" in the early 1970s, the external environment was radically different. In the 1960s the Soviet Union had been a rather marginal actor in sub-Saharan Africa, offering support to various "African socialist" governments and liberation movements, often in competition with China and/or the USA (Maxwell 1982: 351–355). By the 1970s the Cold War had reached a new stage, in which the West was increasingly divided over issues like collaboration with authoritarian regimes, and the Soviet Union was actively expanding to sub-Saharan Africa. The latter claimed to represent the only legitimate model of Marxism-Leninism, which the newly independent countries and still struggling liberation movements should emulate. On the other hand, the long struggle under repressive conditions in Portugal's African colonies had produced a new type of radical nationalist movements, which gradually turned to Marxism-Leninism (Byrne 2013: 110–111; Maxwell 1982: 351–355, 385). Instead of the previous pacts between elites and subsequent electoral-democratic regimes, which were now condemned as representing neo-colonial interests, the new movements claimed to be the only true representatives of the colonised people (Mittelman 1981: 21).

A trend to single-party rule was already prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa during the 1970s, as legislatures were marginalised and other institutions providing checks and balances to the executive were eliminated. To some extent, the trend reflected the legacy of the colonial state, whose structures, practices, and bureaucratic norms were reproduced by its successors. The postcolonial polities created in pacts following "the code of decolonisation" were thus hybrid creatures in which the autocratic colonial heritage mixed uneasily with the constitutional democratic structures introduced at independence (Badie 1992; Young 2012: 119). In Portugal's African territories the colonial legacy was particularly repressive and authoritarian. The expressly anti-liberal state-corporatist regime in power since the late 1920s had effectively eradicated any anti-colonial political movements within the African colonies, making armed liberation movements based in the neighbouring African countries the only viable option (Newitt 1995: 477–478, 520–523; Virtanen 2003: 241–243).

In Mozambique, the ruling party Frelimo continues to claim that independence was a direct result of its military victory over the colonial forces in the armed liberation struggle (Bragança 1988; Vieira 1990). A more plausible version says that by the time of the Revolution of the Carnations by the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) in Portugal in 1974, the war had reached a stalemate (Pélissier 1979: 271–284; Hall and Young 1997: 19–35) and Mozambique's independence was achieved after a long process of negotiations where external powers played an important role, either by remaining passive (the USA and South Africa) or by actively facilitating the negotiations process (e.g. Zambia and Algeria). Ousting the Caetano regime in Portugal opened the way for a negotiated settlement, while the rapidly changing political situation in Lisbon defined what was acceptable for both sides (Maxwell 1982: 362–371; Newitt 1995: 535–540).

Initially, the process was guided from the Portuguese side by the new head of the government, General António de Spínola. Spínola was a conservative senior officer, who had served as governor of the Portuguese Guinea-Bissau and had become convinced that the colonial wars could not be won militarily. In a book published in 1974, he proposed a gradual programme for giving the colonies independence within a relatively loose Lusophone "commonwealth" (Spínola 1974). He thus represented a moderate faction among the extremely fractured and confused new rulers of Portugal, and sought to agree on a cease-fire with the liberation movements, promising self-determination and suggesting a referendum to choose between independence and federation with metropolitan Portugal. While Spínola was willing to negotiate with the representatives of the liberation movements, he insisted on also including other, more moderate sectors of the colonial population. In Mozambique the proposed referendum was later changed into holding democratic elections and setting up a parliament, but Frelimo did not accept the proposal and insisted on being recognised as the only legitimate representative of the Mozambican people[1] (Maxwell 1982: 362–367; Mittelman 1981: 81–

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1   Frelimo wanted to know why elections should be imposed on Mozambique even though the current MFA-led government in Portugal resulted from a coup, not elections (Mittelman 1981: 86). However, the argument was actually lame as the MFA had at the very beginning agreed to hold general elections within a year. They kept the promise, which gave the citizens an opportunity to choose the direction of political development they wanted – even though it was different from what the MFA leadership coveted (Linz and Stepan 1996: 116–121).

101). Both sides sought to influence the internal political development of the other side, the Portuguese to strengthen alternative opposition movements, and Frelimo to strengthen the position of the radical wing of the MFA. In the end, it were the radical elements of each side – the MFA and Frelimo – who concluded the final agreement that brought a cease-fire and eventually independence to Mozambique under Frelimo rule after a ten-month transition period of joint government, but without the commitment to hold democratic elections (Mittelman 1981: 87–101; Adam 1991: 40–47). While a desperate attempt to thwart the transfer of power to Frelimo without a democratic process was eventually made by members of other opposition groups (involving both Portuguese settlers and Africans) during the transition period,[2] this effort was effectively suppressed by the joint Frelimo-Portuguese troops leaving Frelimo alone in power (Hall and Young 1997: 43–49; Virtanen 2003: 244–246).

While the international political climate described above made the transition from a state-corporatist to a state-socialist authoritarian regime in Mozambique possible without external intervention to prevent it – despite the high level of linkages to Portugal and South Africa in particular – the Portuguese authoritarian institutional legacy was probably even more important. After a military coup had toppled the Portuguese First Republic (1910–1926), a semi-presidential authoritarian single-party regime, known as *Estado Novo* (the New State, 1932–1974), was established by António Salazar. The regime was highly centralised and repressive, and did not tolerate any local political movements in the "overseas territories" such as Mozambique, where even the centrally directed corporatist institutions were weak and limited to the Portuguese and a small *assimilado*[3] population (Cahen 1983 and 1984; Newitt 1995: 445–481).

Different political movements were created abroad in the neighbouring countries and in Europe, where a few Mozambicans had moved, while political activities inside Mozambique remained clandestine. The separate movements were united under a liberation front called Frelimo in Tanzania in 1962, and gradually the front adopted an

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2   In addition to protest and violent confrontations by opposition groups, there was also mutiny among Frelimo's own forces soon after independence, albeit the details remain obscure (Hall and Young 1997: 48; Lundin 1995: 443).

3   A legal status for black Africans "assimilated" to Portuguese culture.

increasingly radical political direction and centralist structure, officially embracing Marxism-Leninism (albeit with a particular national reading) after independence in 1977 (Newitt 1995: 520–542; Virtanen 2003: 241–246). The combination of high modernism with a deep aversion to political liberalism shared by both sides made possible the convergence of views between the radical wings of MFA[4] and Frelimo leaderships during the crucial period of negotiations, and led eventually to the non-democratic transition to independence (Maxwell 1982: 360–361).

While Frelimo initially had broad support among the population, due to its leading role in the national liberation struggle, the increasing authoritarianism of its "dictatorship of the proletariat," its controversial economic policies and failure to respect and recognise the socio-cultural diversity of the essentially rural population soon gave rise to dissident voices (Newitt 1995: 61–88; Virtanen 2003: 235, 246–247). Although the party leadership insisted on national unity (Machel 1975: 20–23), the country was divided: discontent was particularly strong among the Shona and Makua peoples of the central provinces (Sofala, Manica, Zambezia and parts of Nampula), where the population had had only limited contact with Frelimo before the transition period, while the front had relatively broad support among the Makonde in the north and the Shangaan in the south of the country (Brito 1995: 488–495; Carbone 2003: 4; Weinstein 2002: 146–147). The lack of room for divergent views eventually led to the creation of "re-education camps" for those who disagreed with Frelimo's programme – or the means to achieve it – and to desertions from the party/front. By 1976 approximately 90 per cent of the Portuguese, as well as a large number of literate black Mozambicans had left the country depriving it of a crucial skilled labour force (Hall and Young 1997: 46–50, 117–119, 132). Some of the deserters, along with those of the opposition groups created during the political opening of the early 1970s, ended up founding new resistance movements and opposition groups, which initially operated from abroad and often with support from conservative right-wing groups in Portugal and/

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4   The negotiations were concluded at a point when the radical wing of MFA was in power and lacked a democratic counter force; soon after that the situation changed, and after democratic elections in 1975 Portugal moved rapidly toward liberal democracy, although some vestiges of military veto right remained until the Constitution was revised in 1982 (Linz and Stepan 1996: 119–127).

or the white regimes of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and South Africa (Nilsson 1999: 130–143; Vines 1991: 7–39; Virtanen 2003: 247–249).

Moving toward Market Economy and Liberal Democracy

Mozambique's application to join the Soviet-led Council for Mutual Economic Assistance was turned down in 1981, and the economic decline, which had already started in 1974 with the exodus of skilled work force, turned worse in the mid-1980s. By then the civil war fought against Renamo, the main armed movement, a severe drought in 1982–1983 and the failure of the economic policy adopted by the government had resulted in economic collapse (Hall and Young 1997: 105–137). The year 1984 marked Mozambique's turn away from the Soviet bloc and towards the West, as it joined the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the USA started to provide bilateral aid. Three years later, the government embarked on an IMF-directed Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), which sought to restore markets, privatise public enterprises, eliminate price controls and reduce state subsidies for social services. During this period the increasing western aid provided by bilateral donors and over one hundred international NGOs, which quickly established themselves in the country, focused primarily on emergency relief to support recovery from the drought and the war (Eronen et al. 2007: 103–112; Manning and Malbrough 2010: 149–150).

In the early 1990s Mozambique was – relative to the size of the formal economy – the most heavily indebted country in the world (Plank 1993: 412), as well as one of the poorest countries with some 70 per cent of the population living below the poverty line (Eronen et al. 2007: 155). As the country was of little strategic political or economic importance for major western donors, the latter were able to wield strong leverage over it even though economic and cultural linkages were relatively undeveloped. Donor influence was further strengthened by the coordination mechanisms they had established during the humanitarian emergency. In this context, the leverage was also used to press for political transition to liberal democracy (Manning and Malbrough 2010: 149, 158, 165).

In addition to the adoption of democracy as a condition to aid by the major western donors, the first step towards negotiations for ending the war in Mozambique coincided with a series of international

changes: the end of the Cold War, the wave of transitions in the post-communist countries of Europe and Central Asia, and the fall of the apartheid regime in South Africa. Support provided by the USA to Renamo had stopped after the publication of an incriminating report on its human rights violations in 1988, and other external supporters of either side were neutralised or integrated into the peace process under international pressure (Bekoe 2008: 27). Formal peace talks between the Frelimo government and Renamo began in 1990,[5] hosted by Italy and observed by Mozambique's main donors (the USA, the UK, Portugal and Germany), and in 1992 the belligerents signed the General Peace Accord (GPA), which marked the end of the civil war (Manning and Malbrough 2010: 148; Rocca 2012: 53–113).

We should, however, not exaggerate the role of external actors in the war – or the peace process. As noted above, the centrally imposed and culturally insensitive policies of the Frelimo government had created a widespread resistance among the population, particularly among the rural poor in the centre-north of the country, who had suffered from the failed collectivisation programmes (Brito 1995: 486–487). By the 1980s Renamo was no longer primarily a proxy organisation created by Rhodesia and South Africa to serve their neo-colonial purposes. Despite the vagueness of its political project, for parts of the marginalised rural population it offered an alternative political agenda, which would allow them to distance themselves from the central state's control and interference in daily life (Lubkemann 2007: 147–156; Nilsson 1999: 136–143). However, due to Frelimo's thorny relationship with the rural population in the central provinces, it was only the spread of popular discontent to the cities (manifested in a wave of strikes in 1989 and 1990), which had become Frelimo's strongest power base, that finally induced the government to change the constitution to accommodate multi-party democracy and reduce state tutelage (Mazula 1995: 39). At least in part, however, the impetus for the popular struggle for democracy came from resistance to the structural adjustment policies adopted by the government – not in support for economic liberalism (Cheru 2012: 272–274). In Mozambique this was evident in the riots that erupted in Maputo in 1993 over the hike of public transport fares prescribed by the SAP (Kalley et al. 1999: 290).

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5   Informally the process had started already in 1988, using the good offices of the Vatican (Zuppi 1995: 118–122).

The GPA incorporated two key principles of modern democracy, namely that (1) the legitimacy of a political party or coalition in power is established through multi-party elections and respect for democratic institutions, and (2) democracy requires respect for different ideas, opinions and cultures (Mazula 1995: 30; cf. Mouffe 1999: 755–756). However, in addition to the basic rules of liberal democracy, the GPA reflects its origin in closed negotiations with a limited number of representatives from key elite groups. The process leading to the pact left out all other political forces except Frelimo and Renamo, as they had no place in the peace negotiations in Rome – not even as observers – and the GPA excluded them from all eight politically balanced commissions (Brito 1995: 484–485), which were essentially an extension of the Rome negotiation process. While excluding others, the pact also included accepting the dialogical method, based on collaboration and regular consultations between the two signatories for the resolution of any type of conflict. Work and decisions in the commissions were to be based on consensus, rather than majority vote. The GPA thus put the two former enemies on an equal footing in the negotiations, prescribing political balance and consensual decision making as the basis of interaction (Mazula 1995: 30; Manning 2002: 70).

The pact was negotiated in an atmosphere of deep distrust. Renamo's point of departure was that no initiatives or agreements done outside the Rome peace negotiations would be recognised as binding elements of the final pact, and the agreements reached in Rome should not be subject to approval by the all-Frelimo parliament, which it did not acknowledge as legitimate (Rocca 2012). This was the basis for Renamo's refusal to acknowledge the constitutional changes made in 1990, and several decisions taken during the negotiations actually were in discord with the constitution, such as choosing the proportional instead of the majoritarian electoral system,[6] or the refusal of the special status granted to Frelimo in the controversial preamble. For Renamo, the significance of the pact was in the political reform that recognised it as a legitimate political party, and in the jointly

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6   Renamo insisted on changing the majority type system, which was set in the 1990 Constitution, to a proportional system, which was agreed in the GPA; with the results of the 1994 elections, Renamo would have gained absolute majority in the parliament if the majority system had been used (Carrilho 1995: 142–146; cf. Brito 1995: 484–485).

agreed electoral and administrative rules that guaranteed its future as an effective political party. In exchange, it agreed to stop military operations against the government (Bekoe 2008: 28–29, 35; Mazula 1995: 34–35).

Even though the terms of the Rome accords clearly stipulate that the AGP and the electoral law prevail over all legislation in force in the country, the issue remains contested between the parties (Mazula 1995: 35–36). According to Frelimo's legal representative, the 1990 Constitution was *de jure* above the AGP, although initially the latter was *de facto* above the Constitution. He also maintained that the AGP was approved as a law by the single-party parliament in 1992, and thus the commissions established through the pact (including the National Elections Commission, CNE) were legally constituted by the Frelimo government (Carrilho 1995: 132–134, 147–148). This interpretation reflected the government's view that the elections derived from the changes brought about by the 1990 Constitution, which introduced political pluralism and entrusted the government to elaborate the respective electoral law. From Renamo's point of view, however, the government's pre-emptive change of the political system did not provide an acceptable legal basis to the new liberal democratic system, which Renamo had demanded for more than a decade (Mazula 1995, 34–38; Rocca 2012: 93–95).

Another contested issue was the composition of the CNE. Originally the Frelimo government proposed to nominate two thirds of the commission according to technical criteria, which was suspected as favouring Frelimo sympathisers. The proposal was rejected by the opposition in the Consultative conference between all political parties held in 1993.[7] After subsequent bilateral discussions between Frelimo and Renamo, a compromise formula, which allocated three places to non-armed opposition, was approved, resulting in a politically balanced commission with an independent chairperson (Mazula 1995: 40; Turner 1995: 644–646, 660). While the non-armed opposition parties eventually managed to get their representatives to the CNE, this was not based on the GPA. With other decisions taken in Rome, such as the high (5%) threshold of total vote required for entry to parliament, which was contested by the other parties in the

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7 The conference was the first open debate between the opposition parties and the government on legal issues (Mazula 1995: 37).

Consultative conference but maintained, it reflects the pact signatories' narrow view about noteworthy political actors in the country (Brito 1995: 484–485).

As the pact involved the demobilisation of Renamo forces and the integration of part of them into a new national army, Renamo needed concrete assurance that it would get the financial assistance required for its transformation into a functioning political party with a credible presence all over the country. Essentially, it demanded a levelling of the playing field. Thus the GPA bound the government to assist Renamo in obtaining infrastructure and logistic facilities it needed to carry out political activities in different parts of the country; in practice, this assumed a trust fund for political campaign capitalised by the donors. A group of major bilateral and multilateral donors formed a coordination group in 1992 to monitor support for the implementation of the Rome accords. The trust fund created by the group eventually allowed the almost exclusively rural-based Renamo to establish itself in the main cities, but also to prevent it from splintering and maintain its leader in control through a system of patronage (Bekoe 2008: 31–41). In addition to funding needs arising directly from the GPA, the group was highly important in filling gaps left by the original agreement, as well as solving coordination problems among donors (Manning and Malbrough 2010: 158). For example, the pact anticipated a trust fund to support the transformation of Renamo, but not for the non-armed opposition; to remedy this a trust fund for all political parties was created (and funded) by the donor group in 1994 (Turner 1995: 645–669).

The rules stipulated by the pact, and the way they were implemented, had two important consequences: (1) they solidified the regional bipolarisation of the country, and (2) created two different tracks for the management of political conflict. It was estimated that in 1992 Renamo controlled about 25 per cent of the Mozambican land area and six per cent of the population. While fragments of Renamo-controlled territory were all over the country, the main areas were in the central provinces of Manica, Sofala and Zambézia (Bekoe 2008: 35). Eventually the result of the elections was a close balance between Frelimo (44% of valid votes) and Renamo (38%), with the former consolidating its dominant position in the south and the north while the latter gained the majority in the five provinces (Sofala, Manica,

Tete, Zambézia and Nampula) of the centre and centre-north (Brito 1995: 484, 488).

Of the two tracks, one follows the formal processes and institutions of liberal democracy, while the other consists of informal negotiations and agreements between the top leadership of the two major parties. Interestingly, both tracks were instituted as part of the 1992 pact (Manning 2002: 63). It has been argued that conflict did not resume in Mozambique after the GPA because the actions and concessions included in the pact created mutual political and military vulnerabilities between the main parties. Because credible impartial institutions did not exist, credibility had to be based on constant renegotiation – on a pact to make pacts (cf. Karl in Diamond et al. 2002: 24–25). This approach persisted even after the formation of electoral institutions had begun as the rules and vested interests continued to create mutual political vulnerabilities, which governed the relationship (Bekoe 2008: 26; cf. Mazula 1995: 51). At the same time, it created an essentially anti-democratic pattern whereby the outcomes of formal democratic processes were subjected to extra-parliamentary elite bargaining (Manning 2002: 63; cf. Adebanwi and Obadare 2012).

Beyond the Founding Elections: The Structure of the New Regime

Based on the 1990 Constitution and the General Peace Accord, Mozambique's system of government is a centralised presidentialism, in which the president forms the cabinet and appoints provincial governors (as well as judges of the highest courts), who in turn control appointments to the lower administrative posts down to the district level in rural areas. In practice, the president appoints members of his own party; as a consequence, the ruling party has control over the entire administrative system except for those urban municipalities (currently 53) subject to local elections. Choice of party is also limited for state officials, as Frelimo cells in public institutions ensure that only party members are recruited. At the same time the rural population, who are frequently illiterate and cut off from information by poor infrastructure and lack of access to independent media, have few effective channels for political participation apart from the periodic national elections (APRM 2009: 88–132; Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012: 9–11; Weinstein 2002: 152). The close overlap between the ruling

party and the state allows for a system of patronage rather than party competition, effectively impeding the aggregation of interests by the opposition parties and relegating their role in politics to periodic electoral campaigning. The highly centralised dual structure – which derives from the Portuguese colonial state, albeit with new elements of "democratic centralism" added on top – has provided a major challenge to democratic transition (APRM 2009: 116, 129, 374–375; Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012: 6–13; cf. Ostheimer 2001).

While the constitution formally provides for checks and balances through the separation of powers, the domination of the state by the ruling party severely limits their functioning. In practice, both judicial institutions and administrative procedures are exposed to political intervention and corruption, which has become widespread. Mozambique also lacks strong intermediaries between the political system and society. The number of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) has increased due to external incentives, but the majority of the population are involved only in traditionally apolitical religious associations. Although Frelimo allows civil society participation, its independence is limited through direct or indirect linkage between the party and the majority of registered NGOs. Trade unions are the largest non-religious CSOs, but most are historically aligned with the ruling party and lack autonomy. The few independent CSOs and media involved in advocacy activities are viewed with suspicion, as their activities diverge from the tradition of party-aligned mass-based CSOs. During recent urban protests in 2008 and 2010, which turned into riots, no CSO, trade union or even religious organisation was able to channel the frustrations and interests of the demonstrators into the political system (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012: 9–32; Mosse et al. 2007: 59–62).

Frelimo's political rhetoric continues to be based on the liberation struggle, which is used to delegitimise political opposition and internal dissent. Even the party statutes suggest party supremacy over the representative state institutions, while decision-making inside the party continues to be top-down (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012: 12–13, 28). However, it should be noted that both Frelimo and Renamo emerged out of armed struggle, and their internal structures still remain undemocratic and centralised (Carbone 2003: 3–14). While the track record of African armed liberation movement governments in

terms of democracy is rather poor (Melber 2009; Salih 2007), parties originating in such movements have proven to be particularly cohesive and durable. Levistky and Way (2012: 870, emphasis in original) have argued that "the identities, norms, and organisational structures forged during periods of *sustained, violent, and ideologically driven conflict* are a critical source of cohesion – and durability – in party-based authoritarian regimes." Such origins enhance party cohesion by creating enduring partisan identities and hardening boundaries between "us" and "them," particularly when the opposition can be linked to a historical enemy. The struggle also forces parties to create militarised structures and internal discipline, which makes use of coercive measures acceptable and effective. The "founding leaders" invariably enjoy high legitimacy and unquestioned authority, which they can use to unify the party and impose discipline during crises (Levitsky and Way 2012: 870–872). This seems to apply well to Frelimo leadership, which has remained constant after the internal conflicts experienced during the liberation struggle (Virtanen 2003: 247–251), while Renamo has suffered significantly from the flight of key party members (Carbone 2003: 14; Guilengue 2014b).

Failure to Agree on Shared "Rules of the Game"

In the long run, the relationship between competing parties must depend on predictable and durable rules, which are mutually accepted and maintained. This requires that the rules are supported by vested interests of the parties (Bekoe 2008: 41–42). Since the founding elections in 1994, Mozambique has held regular presidential and parliamentary elections at the national level, as well as local and provincial assembly elections since 1998. In 1994 the GPA, supported by heavy involvement from the donor community, helped to level the playing field regarding both the planning and the administration of the elections. However, for the 1998 local elections the consensus-based model of electoral administration (based on the GPA) was changed by the ruling party, which had a majority in the new parliament. This change proved disastrous (Manning 2002: 81).

In the context of the centralised presidential system and continuing intimate linkage between the state and the ruling party, Renamo insisted on continuation of the consensus-based model of electoral administration to ensure that the elections would be free and fair. In

addition to electoral administration, which had been moved to Frelimo-controlled state authorities (Manning 2002: 76), the dispute about the 1998 local elections concerned the coverage, which in the revised law of 1997 was restricted to 33 larger municipalities, thus significantly reducing the scope of democratic government from the original 1994 law on municipalities (Brito 2008: 4–5; Virtanen 2003: 251–252). Renamo's demand to participate in the nomination of governors to those provinces where it had won a majority in 1994 was based on a similar concern. The issue was crucial as the government system concentrated all power in the executive, which had no legal obligation to seek consent from the opposition – or even local communities. The main opposition parties eventually boycotted the 1998 elections, and only 15 per cent of the voters turned out. The elections were widely criticised as disastrous: with abundant evidence of irregularities they embarrassed Frelimo and prompted a return to the more consensual model of 1994, which was based largely on identical bills by Renamo and Frelimo (Bekoe 2008: 26; Manning 2002: 72, 77).

Even though based on the revised electoral law, the electoral administration of the 1999 national elections was technically flawed (Cahen 2000: 119–121). In the parliamentary elections the two main parties maintained their positions practically intact, but in the presidential elections the Frelimo incumbent's margin of victory was extremely slight, leaving room for legitimate suspicion regarding the results as there were serious flaws in the counting process and a substantial number of votes were rejected on dubious basis. The Renamo-based alliance refused to accept the election results and take up its seats in parliament. It presented a formal complaint to the supreme court, and when that failed, it sought to initiate informal negotiations with Frelimo to discuss shared provincial governorships and complaints regarding the elections. Eventually a number of bilateral working groups, following the model of the commissions responsible for implementing the GPA, were established (Brito 2008: 6–7; Manning 2002: 77–80). The dialogue about the power sharing and local governance then continued on an intermittent basis during the president's second term (Weinstein 2002: 153).

In the subsequent elections Renamo resorted to the same extra-parliamentary tactics in its bid to level the field against the increasingly omnipotent ruling party, using a withdrawal from the "democracy

game" in order to initiate informal bilateral bargaining between the party leaderships. This strategy has worked to the extent that Frelimo wanted to preserve among western donors and potential investors the perception that Mozambique is a stable democratic regime. The channels of informal elite bargaining have included the formation of bilateral working groups, the holding of direct discussions between the party leaders, and appeals to representatives of the international community (Manning 2002: 73–74). However, in 2000 Renamo's verbal threats expanded into minor incidents and then nationwide demonstrations by its supporters, some of which resulted in violent clashes with the Mozambican police, leading to more than 100 dead (Cahen 2000: 122; Ostheimer 2001). Alarmed by the possibility of electoral defeat Frelimo, now under a new party leader and presidential candidate set to revitalise the local party structures, but also to reinforce the party's grip over the state apparatus. The results of the 2004 national elections brought a clear victory to Frelimo, but also indicated a drastic fall in the citizens' trust in the political system: 64 per cent of the registered voters abstained while the process was marred by more or less open cases of fraud. Despite strong criticism from the donor community, and even the Frelimo-dominated Constitutional Council, the results were declared valid and the new president decided to stop the tradition of a dialogue with Renamo maintained by his predecessor since 1992 (Brito 2008: 7–10; Guilengue 2014b).

In the 2009 elections Renamo, weakened by defections of key party members and the emergence of a credible second opposition party, the Democratic Movement of Mozambique (MDM), saw its parliamentary seats reduced by almost one half. Turnout had remained low at 45 per cent of the registered voters, and the elections were again tainted by serious misconduct and lack of transparency, which invoked sharp criticism from both domestic and international observers (Hanlon 2010). Facing still another defeat in elections it perceived as manipulated, and being refused the traditional option of direct bilateral discussions, Renamo leadership amplified its rhetoric of returning to violence and renouncing the validity of the GPA. In 2010, the head of Renamo retreated to Nampula, where he met the new president twice (in 2011 and 2012). The talks failed, and in 2012 he moved to the movement's old headquarters in Gorongosa, Sofala Province (Guilengue 2014b). Subsequently Renamo decided to boycott the 2013 municipal elections, which gave MDM an opportunity to

raise its profile as a credible opposition party – some observers even envisaged "the end of liberation movement politics" (Guilengue 2014a). This was not to be: in late 2013 the government invaded the Renamo headquarters in Gorongosa, which prompted the Renamo leader to annul the General Peace Accord. This started a low-level insurgency, or rather war, between the military wing of Renamo and the government forces, which resulted in a significant number of casualties as well as serious problems in road traffic between the north and the south of the country (Guilengue 2014b; Mazula 2014). A prolonged series of bilateral negotiations eventually led to another revision of the electoral law, strengthening the role of Renamo in the National Elections Commission (CNE), the technical secretariat for elections, and some other electoral organs (Boletim 2014: 4–5). Agreement was also reached on providing more equal opportunities for former Renamo fighters serving in the national armed forces, and integration of former Renamo fighters to the police force. A joint government/Renamo/international military team was established to observe the cessation of hostilities and the integration process (*allAfrica* 2015a).

The 2014 elections, which had served as an important inducement for a new pact between Frelimo and Renamo, brought more of the same. While Renamo re-established its position as the main opposition party, and MDM managed to maintain its position, the elections suffered from violence, ballot box stuffing, delays in administrative procedures, deliberate spoiling of votes to invalidate them, and other malpractices. Frelimo also used its privileged access to state resources and public media for political campaigning, which was strongly criticised by international observers while the politically more representative CNE only approved the results after a close vote (Boletim 2014: 1–3, 6–12). The reaction of Renamo was equally familiar: after contesting the election results without success, it started to demand the creation of a "caretaker government" to run the country for the next five years (*allAfrica* 2014); after the proposal failed Renamo decided to boycott the new parliament which was inaugurated in January 2015, while the party leader has (again) threatened to set up a secessionist "Republic of Central and Northern Mozambique" (*allAfrica* 2015b). After a brief interval following the elections, the violent confrontation and mutual accusations resumed in 2015 (*Africa Research Bulletin* 2016).

The Diminishing Weight of Western Leverage

During the transition in the early 1990s the principal objectives of economic policy were taken to be self-evident, and the strategies commended by the major donors for achieving these goals were not challenged. Under the new unipolar world order the IMF and other western donors provided budgetary and balance-of-payments support to facilitate the economic transition, on the condition that agreed reforms were duly implemented (Plank 1993: 415–416). While economic growth in Mozambique has been robust after the political transition, the overall poverty rate (54% in 2003) has stagnated or even slightly deteriorated. The level of inequality has increased substantially, and there is still imbalance between the richer south of the country and the centre and north (Virtanen 2015: 93–94). The transition to market economy has not been challenged by either the ruling party or the opposition, although it is now evident that it has not produced the expected reduction in poverty. However, independent social protests over deteriorating living conditions erupted in 2008 and 2010 in Maputo and other cities. In some places the protests escalated to full-scale riots, which demanded several casualties. Interestingly, neither the opposition parties nor the CSOs had any role in mediating the conflict (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012: 25). But as a closer analysis indicates, this should not be interpreted as meaning that the poor have turned against democratic reforms: while they may be critical towards the current political regime, they tend to support democratic values even more strongly than their rich compatriots (Virtanen 2015: 96–100; cf. Sumich 2012).

The leverage built by western donors during the transition created a relationship of mutual, although asymmetrical, dependence. The government faced a relatively united front of donors, led by the World Bank, who increasingly made their aid conditional on compliance with their policy prescriptions. Failing other sources of revenue in the first decade after the transition, the government had to accept the economic policies and political reforms favoured by the donors (Plank 1993: 417). As the international donors still provided around one half of the national budget in 2010 (albeit with a falling trend), they also held *de facto* veto power. For example, some donors withheld their aid for Mozambique in early 2010 due to alleged irregularities in the 2009 electoral process (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012: 7–8). With

the increasing state revenue due to the recent expansion of extractive industries in Mozambique the situation is, however, changing rapidly as new economic partners from the south are displacing the traditional western partners. Over a ten-year period (2003–2013), the share of the EU in the foreign trade of Mozambique fell by one half to 18 per cent while the role of the USA remained marginal. On the other hand South Africa, China and India are now among the key players (EC 2015), and although the volume of Brazil's trade with Mozambique is still relatively low, it has lately become the main source of foreign direct investment. The weakening of the economic linkage has also reduced the weight of the pro-democratic leverage previously held by the western donors, as the new southern partners emphatically refrain from setting political conditions (Nogueira and Virtanen 2015).

Conclusion

Similar to most democratic transitions in sub-Saharan Africa, in Mozambique external factors were important in the initial phases of the process. During the first decade of independence Mozambique had very few economic or cultural links with the West – aside from the tenuous link with Portugal and some aid-based links to Nordic countries. However, the rapidly expanding aid relationship in the pre-transition period strengthened the linkage, which was effectively turned into pro-democracy leverage that lasted for more than a decade – although the level of democracy expected by many donors was rather minimal and the support limited to technical improvements in state administration. Over the last decade the leverage has, however, weakened along with the extractive industries-based growth in Mozambique and the rapidly expanding economic ties with southern partners, who use their growing leverage for other purposes than advancing domestic democracy in Mozambique.

External factors have had less impact on the consolidation of democracy after the initial transition. According to the theorists of the "third wave" transition, the relative balance of power between the authoritarian incumbents and the opposition during the initial stage of transition was conducive to pacted transition and subsequent democratisation. However, Levitsky and Way (2010: 23) argue strongly that the durability of the regime mainly depends on the cohesion of the ruling party, while the strength of the opposition is a less salient

factor. In Mozambique the transition included both a formal pact (the GPA) and relatively equal support for Frelimo and Renamo in the founding elections, but instead of democratic consolidation, the country has been moving toward *de facto* single party rule.

In this article "pact" and "pacting" are understood broadly to mean the agreement to negotiate and make agreements. As such it differs from the formal-rational system of majoritarian representative democracy, and may actually be closer to African political traditions based on consensual decisions (cf. Mazula 1995). It may also have been indispensable for saving the transition process in Mozambique from the path of Angola and eventual collapse, as argued by Carrie Manning (2002). However, establishing formal democratic institutions and procedures is not enough if these are not implemented in an equitable way. The same institutions and rules can also be used to "legitimise authoritarian regimes, create new regime types and prompt new political crises and human rights abuses" (Crawford and Lynch 2012: 8; cf. Adebanwi and Obadare 2012). A pact does not automatically create enduring "rules of the game" (most pacts leading to national independence did not), and may actually lead to a situation in which the opposition feels cheated and therefore forced to use threat and elite pacting (in the sense of recurring negotiations between selected political leaders) to thwart the ruling party's abuse of the established, supposedly democratic political institutions. This would seem to be the way Renamo perceives the political situation in Mozambique; but would it follow the rules of the game fairly if it were to win a majority in parliament? In this regard, the experience of other post-communist transitions is not encouraging, as the change of one authoritarian regime has often merely produced another authoritarian regime (Levitsky and Way 2010; McFaul 2002). And as noted above, opaque elite pacts done over the heads of citizens do not strengthen democracy, even if they may improve political stability and please international investors.

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