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DEVELOPING MULTI-PARTY POLITICS:
STABILITY AND CHANGE IN GHANA
AND MOZAMBIQUE

Giovanni M. Carbone
Development Research Centre, LSE/
Università degli Studi di Milano

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Developing Multi-Party Politics:
Stability and Change in Ghana and Mozambique
Giovanni M. Carbone
Development Research Centre, LSE/
Dipartimento di Studi Sociali e Politici, Università degli Studi di Milano

In April 2002, at a packed venue at the Trade Fair Centre of Accra, a close contest was held to elect the new chairman of the National Democratic Congress (NDC). Taking place after Jerry Rawlings left office and the party was defeated at the 2000 elections, the 5th NDC general meeting was labelled a "make or break party Congress".[1] At the end of a heated 29-hour non-stop conference, the tight race for the party chairmanship enthroned Dr Obed Asamoah, who ran on a post-Rawlings political platform: with 334 preferences, he was just two votes ahead of the candidate sponsored by the former president. Was it truly the case that, as a Ghanaian daily newspaper anticipated, Asamoah's success "brought home a few truths to the ex-President – that the NDC as a party is bigger than him (Rawlings)"?[2]

Around that same time, Mozambique's main opposition party – the *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (Renamo) – demonstrated its "legendary disorganisation".[3] Following the controversial expulsion, in late 2000, of the increasingly influential chief of the parliamentary *bancada* (feared by party leader Afonso Dhlakama as a potential challenger), the marginalisation of prominent Renamo figures developed into a pattern in mid-2002. A well-known MP was controversially suspended and another one resigned from the parliamentary group. The secretary general of the party was dismissed only months after he took office, as were the head of the party's National Council and eventually, on grounds of 'unpatriotic' and 'undemocratic' behaviour, the whole Political Commission. Dhlakama himself took over as interim secretary general, combining the latter position with that of party leader and thus further concentrating power and control over the party in his hands.

In the typically highly-personalised politics of African countries such as Ghana and Mozambique, the 'make or break' NDC Congress and the chaos and personalistic rule inside Renamo turn the spotlight on the issue of political party institutionalisation – that is, the development of party organisations and party systems that transcend individual politicians – which has long been identified as a critical aspect of sound democratisation processes. Through the notion of party system institutionalisation, this article examines the historical roots, the social bases, the organisational development and the electoral performances of political parties to understand how democratic practices have evolved, since their formal introduction in the early 1990s, in a country where a single party regime was in place for twenty years (Mozambique) and in one with a long tradition of military involvement in politics (Ghana). It concludes that, in both countries, political parties have been instrumental to the emergence and stabilisation of pluralist politics, and that Ghana's party system – which is relatively better and more evenly institutionalised than Mozambique's – also compares

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[1] *Daily Graphic* (Accra), 24 April 2002, p.7.
[2] *Daily Dispatch* (Accra), 26 April 2002, p.1.
[3] Michel Cahen, '"Dhlakama é maningue nice!" An atypical former guerrilla in the Mozambican electoral campaign', *Transformation*, 35 (1998), p 30.

positively to African party systems at large and represents an asset in the fragile process of consolidating the country's democratic advances.

Political parties in emerging democracies

While it is important to be cautious about the authenticity and the depth of political changes brought about by the formal introduction of multipartism in African countries during the 1990s, a number of these countries reached the significant objective of holding a first, then a second, and at times even a third round of elections. Were these elections part of broader processes of deepening and consolidation of newly-introduced democratic politics?

To some extent, the fact that a country where competitive politics was recently adopted also holds a second election – i.e. democracy formally remains on track – can be taken as a first if superficial indicator of possible consolidation. The patterns followed by countries such as Senegal or Botswana demonstrate that "the longer democracies survive, the likelier is eventual consolidation. Over time, surviving democratic institutions will gain organizational strength and political constituencies".[5]

Yet, more demanding notions of consolidation point towards the long-term achievement of a consensus on democratic politics as 'the only game in town' – a consensus empirically manifest in behaviours, attitudes and respect for constitutional procedures.[6] Democratic participation and competition are progressively internalised, routinised and thus institutionalised, to the point where no significant political actor or group aims at gaining power in ways other than through free and fair elections. Deconsolidation tends to occur where non-constitutional and illegal practices, political violence and human rights abuses become evident.[7]

Political institutionalisation (or "the process through which organisations and procedures acquire value and stability")[8] is key to democratic consolidation. As the theoretical literature points out, it is not only formal government organisations and rules such as constitutions, legislatures or judicial systems that need to be institutionalised, but also the political parties and party systems through which electoral participation and competition are channelled.[9] The traditional weakness and dis-functionality of most African political parties, inevitably raises questions about the capacity of the political organisations operating in the new competitive regimes to contribute to the latter's success.

The condition for political parties to actually help the establishment of democratic politics is their development as durable, socially-rooted, country-wide effective and legitimate

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[4] Alex Thomson, *An introduction to African politics*, London: Routledge, 2000, pp.222 & 247.

[5] Michael Bratton & Nicolas Van de Walle, *Democratic experiments in Africa. Regime transitions in comparative perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p.236.

[6] Juan J. Linz & Alfred Stepan, *Problems in democratic transition and consolidation: southern Europe, South America, and post-communist Europe*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

[7] Larry Diamond, *Developing democracy: toward consolidation*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999, p.74.

[8] Samuel Huntington, *Political order in changing societies*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1968, p.12.

[9] For example, Scott Mainwaring, 'Party systems in the third wave', *Journal of Democracy*, 9(3), 1998, pp.67-81; Richard Sandbrook, 'Transitions without consolidation: democratisation in six African cases', *Third World Quarterly*, 17:1 (1996), p.76; John M. Carey, 'Institutional design and party systems', in Larry Diamond, Marc Plattner *et al.* (eds), *Consolidating the third wave democracies. Themes and perspectives*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997, pp.69 & 84.

organisations. Thus, a well-functioning democratic polity requires the institutionalisation of the party system. In his studies of Latin American democratisation processes, Mainwaring defines an <u>institutionalised</u> party system as one where "there is stability in who the main parties are and in how they behave. Change, while not completely precluded, is limited".[10] Therefore, party system institutionalisation depends on four elements, namely: '<u>stability in interparty competition</u>, the existence of parties that have somewhat <u>stable roots in society</u>, acceptance of parties and elections as the <u>legitimate</u> institutions that determine who governs, and <u>party organisations</u> with reasonably stable rules and structures".[11] Of course, extreme levels of institutionalisation may produce negative effects, notably a paralysis of political competition and a lack of accountability or political change. Yet, comparative evidence supports the idea that an institutionalised party system is an important factor for democratic consolidation, as it tends to promote political legitimacy, electoral and horizontal accountability, and effective governance.[12] An institutionalised party system reduces the space for populist appeals and candidates, keeps the personalisation of political power under check, helps restrain neo-patrimonial practices and potentially limits the marginalisation of parliament. The latter phenomena, by contrast, normally thrive in <u>inchoate party systems</u>, the empirical opposite of institutionalised party systems. Here, electoral volatility and uncertainty, in conjunction with the weak social linkages and the poor authority and organisation of political parties – at times the result of outright 'anti-politics' or the appeal of 'anti-parties'[13] – are often the terrain for the persistence of low-quality and non-consolidating democracies and for the development or retention of semi-authoritarian delegative practices.

Comparative analyses of the features displayed by the party systems that have emerged in Africa since the early 1990s have recently made their appearance.[14] Such studies normally share a general starting point (the theoretical recognition of the role parties can play in consolidating new democracies) and broadly pessimistic conclusions (the structural limits met by African parties, their generally low level of institutionalisation, and their ambiguous contribution to democratic development).

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[10] Mainwaring (1998), p.68.

[11] Scott Mainwaring & Timothy Scully, 'Introduction. Party systems in Latin America' and 'Conclusion. Party and democracy in Latin America, Different patterns, common challenges', in Scott Mainwaring and Timothy Scully (eds) *Building democratic institutions: party systems in Latin America*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995, p.1, emphasis added. For a reflection on the notions of party and party system institutionalisation, including the possible tensions between the two, see Vicky Randall & Lars Svåsand, 'Party institutionalization in new democracies', *Party Politics*, 8:1 (2002a), pp.5-29.

[12] See, for instance, Leonardo Morlino, 'Consolidation and party government in Southern Europe', *International Political Science Review*, 16:2 (1995), pp.145-168, on Southern European democracies (Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece); Atul Kohli, 'Centralisation and powerlessness: India's democracy in comparative perspective', in Joel Migdal, Atul Kohli, *et al.* (eds), *State Power and Social Forces*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp.89-107, on the Indian experience; Dietrich Rueschemeyer *et al.*, *Capitalist development and democracy*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992, p.168, and Mainwaring & Scully (1995) on Latin American cases. For a differing view, based on study of Eastern European post-communist states, see Gábor Tóka, 'Poltical parties in East Central Europe', in Larry Diamond, Marc Plattner, Yun-han Chu and Hung-Mao Tien (eds), *Consolidating the Third Wave democracies. Themes and perspectives*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1997, pp.93-134.

[13] Cf. Francisco Gutierrez Sanín, 'Los tiempos de las involuciones democráticas', *Crisis States Programme Working Paper* No.25, London: Development Research Centre, London School of Economics, 2003.

[14] This paragraph largely refers to Van de Walle's review of the key features of Africa's party systems ('Presidentialism and clientelism in Africa's emerging party systems', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41:2 (2003), pp.297-321). But see also Carrie Manning, 'Assessing African party systems after the Third wave', Paper presented at the University of North Texas Conference on Parties and Elections in New Democracies, 2002; Vicky Randall & Lars Svåsand, 'Political parties and democratic consolidation in Africa', *Democratization*, 9:3 (2002b), pp.30-52; and the slightly more hopeful Michelle Kuenzi & Gina Lambright, 'Party system institutionalisation in 30 African countries', *Party Politics*, 7:4 (2001), pp.437-468.

The unbalanced nature of most new party systems is a first problematic aspect that has been highlighted. Rather than alternation in power by different parties, African reformed polities typically display long-lasting dominance by the same party (more often than not, one that won founding elections and quickly developed privileged links with state organisations, which helped it secure subsequent elections).[15] The large majorities that such parties pile up, election after election, can hardly be challenged by the many small, weak and volatile parties that surround the ruling group. Opposition parties are usually disorganised and fragmented, and, with no or little access to state assets, they lack the necessary resources to develop their organisational structures and the capacity to mount effective campaigns. Thirdly, in most cases, African political parties appear to be a combination of personalistic factionalism and ethnic or religious solidarities. They normally lack significant socio-economic, ideological or programmatic foundations as well as links with genuinely pluralist organised interests; rather, African parties commonly emerge as clientelistic arrangements based on personal and communal loyalties.

Because of the above and other pitfalls, African parties "have themselves sometimes been identified as 'obstacles' and 'problems' for the process [of democratic consolidation]".[16] To what extent do the Mozambican and Ghanaian cases provide evidence that corroborate these largely valid continent-wide generalisations? In other words, what is the recent, current and potential contribution of the party systems of these two countries to their democratic development? To answer these questions, after a brief reconstruction of the two transition processes, the remainder of the article dissects the Mozambican and the Ghanaian party systems along the four dimensions of institutionalisation specified above, namely social and historical rootedness, party organisation, electoral stability and party legitimacy.

Ghana's three steps forward

Post-1992 political developments in Ghana show how "even a flawed transition can set the stage for democratic progress".[17] In spite of its troublesome beginnings, the country's gradual but continual steps towards the adoption of democratic practices is today hailed as one of the most promising cases of political reform on the continent.

In the late 1980s, pressures for political reforms began to emerge in a country that had been ruled by a 'revolutionary' Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) since Jerry Rawlings's military coup of 1981. In the post-Cold War international environment, donors were increasingly concerned with promoting pluralist openings in non-democratic regimes. At the regional level, a critical process of political liberalisation was at its outset in countries such as Benin, Namibia or South Africa. Internally, a government-appointed National Commission for Democracy conducted a consultative exercise that exposed the Ghanaians' desire to move back (or, rather, forward?) to multiparty politics.

Capitalising on the country's relative economic success and on his formidable popular support – notably among the rural poor – Jerry Rawlings was well positioned not only to

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[15] A specific analysis of these ruling parties would require a closer look at the subtle (and empirically-blurred) analytical distinction between hegemonic and dominant party systems, where the first indicates a non-competitive regime, while the second points at least competitive one (cf. Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and party systems. A Framework for analysis*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

[16] Randall & Svåsand (2002b), p.47.

[17] Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi, 'Ghana: the challenges of consolidating democracy', in Richard Joseph, *State, conflict and democracy in Africa*, London: Lynne Rienner, 1999, p.424.

control political openings, but to win the country's first election in 1992. The main opposition – the newly-formed New Patriotic Party (NPP) – was rooted in the relatively better-off Ashanti region and linked to the liberal and entrepreneurial elites that suffered the most under the PNDC. The much-awaited elections, however, were half a failure. When Rawlings was declared the winner, the NPP cried foul and, on grounds of rigging, decided not to take part in the subsequent parliamentary contest.

It took four more years for the country to produce an election, in 1996, which all contestants acknowledged to be 'free' if not truly 'fair' and thus to put the process of political reform back on track.[18] When Rawlings agreed to abide by the constitutional limit of two mandates and to step down in 2000, the NPP and his presidential candidate, John Kufuor, were eventually able to seize the opportunity and win office. The NDC – and the outgoing executive, intimately linked to military circles – significantly acknowledged their electoral defeat, a rare occurrence on the African continent.

Political parties have been prominent in Ghana's reform process. The formation of the NDC was instrumental to the civilianisation of the PNDC ruling group and to the latter's adaptation to competitive politics. The NPP gave voice and organisation to the staunchest anti-Rawlings opposition, whose unceasing activity led it to take power at the beginning of the new century. The 2000 alternation in power, in turn, prompted a further stage of party development by creating incentives for the NDC to deal with a post-Rawlings scenario.

Democracy for peace in Mozambique

The 1992 General Peace Agreement, signed in Rome by president Joaquim Chissano and guerrilla leader Afonso Dhlakama, marked the beginning of a 'pacted' and fundamentally successful process of democratic change in Mozambique. The country's first pluralist elections, held in 1994, established a formally competitive system, which opened the political arena to the guerrillas of the *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (Renamo). Democratic reform was instrumental to the pacification of the country and, with peace and stability restored all over the territory, came dividends in the form of resumed economic activities and impressive rates of growth. Nevertheless, Mozambique remains among the poorest countries in the world. Its achievements over the last decade are emphasised by the striking contrast with the failed political transition of its twin country, Angola. The political trajectories of these former Portuguese colonies – where Marxist-Leninist regimes were introduced at independence in 1975, prompting former Southern Rhodesia and apartheid South Africa to sponsor civil conflicts – began to diverge in the early 1990s. While Mozambicans swiftly moved towards peace and pluralist politics, Angola's negotiated settlement failed when guerrilla leader Jonas Savimbi withdrew from the electoral process in 1992. As his *Unión Nacional para la Independencia Total de Angola* (UNITA) rebels resumed fighting, the country was plunged into ten years of renewed devastation before a second opportunity for peace emerged in early 2002, following Savimbi's death in combat. The failure of political reforms prevented pacification in Angola and, alongside thousands of lives, another decade was lost with no signs of development.

The 1994 and 1999 elections in Mozambique confirmed the *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (Frelimo) as the country's ruling party. Joaquim Chissano, the un-elected president since 1986, was twice endorsed by the electorate with an absolute majority. In each of the two parliamentary elections, Frelimo obtained a plurality of the vote, which was turned

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[18] Richard Jeffries, 'The Ghanaian elections of 1996: towards the consolidation of democracy?', *African affairs*, 97:387 (1998), p.199.

into a majority in the House. But a key outcome of the first election, later born out by the 1999 results, was Renamo's impressive performance. In spite of an appalling record of violence inflicted upon Mozambicans, the guerrillas-turned-into-party immediately positioned themselves as an unchallenged and challenging second force under the new constitutional framework.

The historical and sociological roots of parties

Studies on the origins of political parties in Western democracies have often focussed on the presence of socio-political cleavages generated by key historical ruptures.[19] In this view, processes such as the formation and secularisation of modern states or the industrialisation of economic activities were crucial factors that contributed to the creation of deep societal divides and to the consequent emergence of political parties of various types (representing national minorities, religious interests, agricultural concerns, and so on). This approach emphasises the durable consequences of historical ruptures and socio-political cleavages over party systems: once a certain form of political antagonism emerges, it is likely to crystallize and shape competition for power for a long time;[20] that is, it is likely to become institutionalised.

The above approach was elaborated with reference to Western European countries and its propositions cannot be directly extended to other geographical and cultural areas. Yet, a 'soft' application of this reading can be adopted to look at political parties in Ghana and Mozambique as the outcome and expression of key historical developments. The dualism between Frelimo and Renamo is a legacy and a manifestation of a profound historical conflict in Mozambican society. The rivalry of the civil war outlasted the end of the conflict, and the population has thus remained divided between the same two socio-political camps under electoral politics. In Ghana, the antagonism between the NPP and the NDC is formally more recent: the two parties were only set up at the beginning of the country's democratic transition, in the early 1990s. Yet, the NPP is directly linked to one of the country's historical 'political traditions', drawing back to the formative years of pre-independence politics, whereas the NDC is a direct successor to the PNDC ruling group and, more specifically, to Jerry Rawlings's 'revolution' of the early 1980s.

While an interpretation that emphasises the historical and sociological origins of parties in the two countries is of critical importance, it needs to be interrogated in terms of the extent to which it can explain change. It must also be flexible enough to pay due attention to the centrality of specific individuals in launching, supporting and contributing to the electoral success of two of the four parties under examination, namely Rawlings for the NDC and Dhaklama for Renamo.

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[19] The classic study can be found in Stein Rokkan, *State Formation, Nation-Building and Mass Politics in Europe: The Theory of Stein Rokkan*, edited by Peter Flora, Stein Kuhnle, and Derek Urwin, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999.

[20] Seymour Martin Lipset & Stein Rokkan (eds), *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-national Perspectives*, New York: Free Press, 1967.

Party political traditions in Ghana

Much like the rest of Africa, Ghana did not experience party politics until the eve of independence.[21] The years just prior to the end of British rule were a crucial moment in the formation of political alignments. The anti-colonial drive required illuminating leadership, and this was the time when emerging political figures provided competing visions about the country's future development. Expectations ran high. A large part of the population was suddenly mobilised for electoral purposes and put in touch with modern politics. Party organisation was necessary to contest elections, and electoral competition contributed to the development of party organisations.

It was after World War II that Joseph B. Danquah and other educated Ghanaians took the lead in setting up a United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) and demanding representative self-government. Yet, the new party, which was controlled by the educated elite of the coastal strip in Cape Coast, Sekondi and Accra, only had a limited territorial presence in the countryside, with some presence in the Ashanti region, but none in the northern parts of the colony.

Anti-colonial radicalism, however, could not be contained within the UGCC. The latter's secretary general, Kwame Nkrumah, broke away with a large following to form his own political party, in 1949, and push for 'self-government now'. The Convention People's Party – the 'verandah boys' party (a nickname for a group of young politicians in the party) - concentrated its efforts on reaching out to workers, farmers, market women and the youth, and emerged in the pre-independence election campaigns of the early 1950s as a far better organised party than its contenders.

The dominant dynamics on the African continent, however, was the progressive replacement of the formally-democratic arrangements inherited by the departing colonial powers with authoritarian regimes, and Ghana was no exception. After an Avoidance of Discrimination Act was passed in 1957, prohibiting region-, ethnic or religion-based parties, opposition forces had come together in a United Party (UP). But, by 1964, Nkrumah had entrenched his power through the constitutionalisation of a one-party regime.

A brief spell of military rule under the National Liberation Council followed a 1966 military coup. When electoral politics was reintroduced, in 1969, the moderate Progressive Party (PP) of the Ashanti-based establishment, led by Kofi Busia and explicitly linked back to the UP and the UGCC, defeated the Nkrumahists' National Alliance of Liberals (NAL). The PP swept the Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo regions, but it also won seats among the Ewe of southern Volta and fought for all constituencies in the north. Soon, however, a new military coup interrupted the country's multiparty experiment. General Ignatius Acheampong's regime, installed in 1972, held power for most of the 1970s.

A fresh attempt at introducing pluralist political arrangements took place in 1979. Once again, the country's political discourse depicted the contest as one between the heirs of two historically opposed parties – the socialist-oriented Nkrumahists and the followers of the more liberal-oriented Danquah-Busia experiences. This time around, the political pendulum swung back to the Nkrumahist side. A People's National Party (PNP) took advantage of the divisions among the factionalised 'liberal' camp – where a Popular Front Party (PFP) split

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[21] See David E. Apter, 'Ghana', in James S. Coleman and Carl G. Rosberg (eds), *Political parties and national integration in Tropical Africa*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966, p.261.

away from the United National Convention (UNC) – and secured the presidency of the short-lived Third Republic.

Historically, therefore, there were two main 'political traditions' Ghanaians used to refer to when talking politics: the Nkrumahist and the Danquah-Busia. Born during the immediate pre-independence period, these political alignments were first given shape by the CPP and the UGCC respectively, and intermittently re-emerged with the formation of the NAL and the PNP on the one side, and of the PP, PFP and UNC on the other (see Table 1).

	1950s-1960s	1969	1979	1992	1996	2000
Danquah-Busia tradition	*UGCC and UP*	**PP**	*PFP and UNC*	*NPP*	*NPP*	**NPP**
Nkrumahist tradition	**CPP**	*NAL (and JP)*	**PNP**	*PNC, PHP, NIP and NCP*	*PNC and PCP*	*PNC, CPP, NRF*
Rawlings tradition	-	-	-	**NDC**	**NDC**	*NDC*

Table 1. *Political parties and political traditions at election times in Ghana, 1950s-2000s.*
Note: For every period, election-winning parties are marked in bold.

In terms of principles and policy-orientations, this division has often been interpreted as a centre-left *versus* a centre-right rivalry, although the 'ideological' cleavage always combined with ethno-regional antagonisms. The professional and business elite of the country, largely hailing from the Ashanti region, constitutes the nucleus and the focal point of political moderates, whose liberal language is littered with references to multiparty democracy, individual rights and liberties, respect for the rule of law, private business-based economic competition, and so forth. A more state-centred approach, by contrast, characterises the legacy of the CPP, with the Nkrumahists' political rhetoric abounding with allusions to socialist ideals and broad public intervention in the economy, equality-oriented development, pan-africanist and anti-imperialist positions.

During periods when parties were not allowed (i.e. 1966-69, 1972-79, 1981-92), informal socio-political networks kept alive each of the two main political traditions, which thus developed like underground watercourses that spring up as the occasion arises. Thus, in the early 1990s, as the country moved towards political reform, these underground opposition networks once again resurfaced.

But what do Ghanaians mean by 'political traditions'? The most careful theoretical analysis on the subject is offered by Jonah, according to whom:

> the party political tradition is a body of symbols, myths, ideas, ideals, ideologies, philosophies and concrete political achievements associated with a national political hero and a political party in the history of the country. ... [it] is characterised by personification, indivisibility, indissolubility and invariable leadership ... [and implies] <u>the institutionalisation of the party political culture</u>.[22]

Reference to a past political party and leadership, as Jonah explains, "serves two principal purposes. It is a source of legitimation for political parties and party leadership and the basis of socialisation and recruitment".[23] The legitimacy such a legacy confers is both normative (that is, a reference to a set of ideas and principles that are meant to guide the party) and empirical (i.e. a reference to the past achievements of the political 'ancestors' of a given political party). Each time competitive politics were re-introduced in Ghana, this kind of legitimacy played a crucial role in attempts at establishing or re-launching a successful political party: "parties not attached to any distinct political tradition were ultimately doomed to political extinction or disintegration".[24] Reference to well-known traditions enables parties to freeze an established pattern of conflict and competition – i.e. to freeze the Nkrumahist-*versus*-Danquah/Busia cleavage structure as the 'language of politics' – and thus to constrain voters' choices, delegitimise potential outsiders and increase their chances of survival as successful organisations.[25]

Historical analysis is key to understanding the meaning of current political party developments. But the notion that current political competition is entirely embedded in long-term historical memories and continuities, with the NDC trying to establish itself as a third force, is incorrect.[26] In suggesting this, for example, Nugent overstates the importance of political traditions, or at least underestimates the processes by which old traditions become eclipsed and new ones invented. In spite of the relative influence they may have retained on the public discourse, the Nkrumahists barely proved to have an electoral constituency in the 1992, 1996 and 2000 elections. It is them – and not the NDC – who are trying and failing to become the third force in the new NDC-NPP party system. As Nugent himself acknowledges, "the CPP era is a distant, or more commonly non-existent, memory for the greater part of what is now a very youthful electorate".[27]

Thus, Ghana seems to be both an example of the resilience of political traditions and of their propensity for eclipse and replacement. From 1979, Rawlings became a new reference point for the militant youth that had formed the bulk of the support for Nkrumahism. He offered a new opportunity for radical politics and thus stole the ground from under the feet of the

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[22] Kwesi Jonah, 'Political parties and the transition to multi-party politics in Ghana', in Ninsin, Kwame A. (ed.), *Ghana. Transition to democracy*, Accra: Freedom Publications, 1998, pp.75-76, emphasis added.

[23] Jonah (1998), p.76.

[24] Jonah (1998), p.84.

[25] See Peter Mair, *Party system change: approaches and interpretations*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997, pp.6, 9ff., 45ff. & 87. This view, known as the 'freezing hypothesis', was first elaborated to explain the stability of Western European party systems by Lipset and Rokkan, according to whom "the party systems of the 1960s reflect, with few but significant exceptions, the cleavage structures of the 1920s... The party alternatives, and in remarkably many cases the party organisations, are older than the majorities of the national electorates" (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967, p.50).

[26] Paul Nugent, 'Living in the past: urban, rural and ethnic themes in the 1992 and 1996 elections in Ghana', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 37:2 (1999), pp.287-319.

[27] Nugent (1999), p.316.

Nkrumahists, largely occupying their political space. But Rawlings to some extent managed to merge existing traditions and to capture people from among the Danquah-Busia networks. Thus, Rawlings' legacy appears to locate itself in-between pre-existing traditions, combining egalitarian and social justice ideals (articulated in terms of grassroots or participatory democracy), a neo-liberal economic practice, and populist or moralist anti-corruption and anti-profiteering undertones.

Since the notion of 'political tradition' implies something that lasts beyond the life of a founding leader, only time will tell if it is appropriate to refer to a Rawlings 'tradition' (indeed, many Ghanaians, for the time being, prefer to talk of a Rawlings 'factor'). Yet, Rawlings's vigorous impact and political legacy on current party alignments are very much evident.

The socio-political bases of Frelimo and Renamo

Democratic political competition in Mozambique is heavily shaped by past patterns of conflict. Both main political parties emerged out of armed experiences. Frelimo was forged by the anti-colonial war fought against the Portuguese between 1964 and 1974. The northernmost province of Cabo Delgado naturally became the main area for the recruitment of anti-colonial fighters and remains a stronghold of the party. Yet, because Frelimo's top leadership has invariably come from the south, southern dominance inevitably came to be resented, even before the new regime was established.

Three years after taking power, in 1977, Frelimo adopted important measures by transforming the liberation movement into a Marxist-Leninist party. The Leninist notion of a single vanguard party, with restricted membership and party primacy over the state, implied a decision to do away with political opposition, leading to the latter's repression. Centrally-planned and collectivist socio-economic and agricultural policies also had key political consequences. The privilege accorded to the urban and industrial sectors and the combination of neglect and forced 'modernisation' for rural communities heavily contributed to widespread social disillusionment. Measures such as the forced resettlements envisaged by collective villagisation programmes or the ideological attacks on traditional institutions deepened a sense of distance between Frelimo and those sections of the population that were identified as obstacles to development. Thus, a conflict sparked by the Southern Rhodesia and the apartheid regime of South Africa met less than fierce resistance among local populations and gradually acquired some domestic support. In large areas of central Mozambique, Renamo's guerrillas were able to operate most successfully and to establish links with local communities. They alternated raids and devastation on some parts of the country with relatively stable control over other areas, and progressively built upon existing opposition to the dominant political economy. The largely coercive recruitment of Renamo members has tended to hide a degree of tacit support that the movement enjoyed, if not for its vicious actions, at least for its effective opposition to the ruling group in Maputo. As a result of Frelimo's rural policies, by the early-1980s:

> the people became divided in search of an identity on which to build their own survival. Traditionalism, a strong reference in the recent memory of the community, flourished anew as the natural refuge... In this vacuum Renamo

>appeared as an armed opposition ... to some extent interpreting this movement of a popular psychological and cultural retreat to values and models of the past.[28]

Dhlakama's movement became an outspoken defender of traditional rules and leadership, of religious beliefs and of (especially non-southern) rural communities – in other words, a protector of all those who had been penalised or marginalized under Frelimo's rule. Thus, while it has long been acknowledged that the insurgency was initiated by Southern Rhodesia's Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO), Renamo rapidly turned into a "Mozambican phenomenon".[29]

The dynamics of the civil war combined with the regime's attempts at transforming society and promoted the formation of two rival socio-political coalitions that were ripe for expression when a pluralist election was called. Contrary to what happened in other African political transitions (such as those of Ghana, Zambia and Mali, for example, where prominent parties formally emerged during the reform process),[30] Mozambique's major political parties were formed prior to the country's political opening.

By 1992-94, however, when Frelimo and Renamo decided to abandon their weapons and to embark on a new game based on electoral competition, their starting conditions were immensely different. Having governed for twenty years, Frelimo's leadership and cadres were tested and experienced in national government, policy- and law-making, administration of state structures, political organisation and mobilisation, and diplomatic relations. Renamo's guerrillas, by contrast, were only hurriedly re-organised from a clandestine military movement into a national political party in the run up to the election. Historically, the ranks of the rebels had mostly expanded through the coercive recruitment of young guerrillas in rural areas. The new party now faced the peculiar challenge of "strengthen[ing] its political and administrative side, largely by recruiting in the cities".[31] Thus, when multiparty politics was introduced in Mozambique, the political structures of the former rebels were still fragile, the internal procedures of the new party hardly effective, its presence on the ground was rather unorganised, its policies were in all evidence poorly articulated, and its personnel was totally inexperienced in modern politics and administration.

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[28] José Luis Cabaço, 'The long march of Mozambican democracy', in Mazula, Brazão (ed.), *Mozambique: elections, democracy and development*, Maputo, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, 1996, p.89. See also Glenda Morgan, 'Violence in Mozambique: towards an understanding of Renamo', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 28:4 (1990), pp.603-619; Jessica Schafer, 'Guerrillas and violence in the war in Mozambique: de-socialization or re-socialization?', *African Affairs*, 100 (2001), pp.215-237; and João Pereira, *The politics of survival: peasants, chiefs and Renamo in Maringue district, Mozambique, 1982-992*, Masters Dissertation, Johannesburg, Faculty of Arts, University of Witwatersrand, 1999. In spite of important differences, traditional authorities played a similar role as a refuge against political oppression in the KwaZulu Natal region of pre-apartheid South Africa (Beall et al., 'Traditions, inventions and transitions: framing institutional change in metropolitan governance in eThekwini (Greater Durban)', Paper presented at the Annual Workshop of the Crisis States Programme (Development Research Centre, London School of Economics), University of Witwatersrand, Johannesbourg, 14-18 July 2003 2003, p.9).

[29] Alex Vines, *Renamo: from terrorism to democracy in Mozambique?*, London & Bloomington: Center for Southern Africa Studies, James Currey & Indiana University Press, 1996 [1991], p.1.

[30] See Sandbrook (1996), p.75.

[31] Carrie Manning, 'Constructing opposition in Mozambique: Renamo as a political party', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24:1 (1998), p.188.

The swift emergence of two-party electoral contests

Each time Ghanaians and Mozambicans approached an election, during the 1990s, they knew that the main choice facing them was one between NDC and NPP or between Frelimo and Renamo, respectively. In other words, in both countries electoral contests immediately gave prominence to two organised political actors and produced a dualistic competition, with any remaining parties having to run for electoral leftovers.

While the information provided by two elections is undoubtedly limited, the relative stability displayed by party competition is apparent: a clear, if only emerging, pattern of two-party competition that seems likely to be confirmed by further elections.

Pedersen's index of electoral volatility allows us to quantify the stability of inter-party competition in the two countries under investigation and to compare it with other experiences. The index measures the net percentage of votes that, from one election to the next, shift from one party to another party. In other words, the lower the volatility, the more stable is the number of votes that parties receive over time and, as a consequence, the more stable the structure of the party system as a whole.

In the case of Ghana, the boycott of the 1992 parliamentary election on the part of the NPP inflates some of the data on electoral volatility (see Table 2). The percentage of votes that 'moved' from one party to another between the 1992 and the 1996 parliamentary elections, for example, was quite high – over 44% – since the second largest party in terms of support (the NPP) simply did not take part in the first contest (in 1992) but competed for votes in the second (in 1996). The same data for the 1996 and 2000 elections – both elections contested by NDC and NPP – show a much lower degree of fluctuation (17.3 %), well below the African average of 28.4 %. Similarly, because of the boycott, parliamentary-presidential volatility was much higher for 1992 (38.8%) than for 1996 (4.3%) or 2000 (14.1%). The 11.2% volatility for presidential elections (i.e. elections that were not affected by boycotts) is much lower than the 29.6% average for thirty African countries and reflects an electoral game that has been *de facto* shaped, over the three electoral rounds of 1992, 1996, 2000, by a stable NDC-*versus*-NPP dualism.

When multiparty reforms where adopted in Mozambique, in spite of the considerable social discontent generated by many of Frelimo's policies, prior to the election one could legitimately doubt Renamo's capacity to gain support in a country where it waged a brutal civil war for fifteen years. On the eve of the 1994 election, it was not uncommon for analysts to point out that "Renamo's prospects are ... bleak given its infamous reputation for brutality during the civil war".[32] Yet, the former rebels surprised most observers by winning an average 36% of the vote in the presidential and parliamentary elections, and by further improving their showing five years later.

According to Pedersen's index, legislative volatility in Mozambique, between 1994 and 1999, was a relatively modest 8.9%, less than one third of an African average as high as 28.4%. Over the same period, electoral volatility in the country's presidential contests – at 14% – was higher than its legislative volatility, but it still measured less than half the African average (29.6%). The preponderance and the stability of Frelimo-Renamo competition in Mozambique is also evident across types of elections, i.e. when measuring the discrepancy

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[32] Mark Simpson, 'The foreign and domestic factors in the transformation of Frelimo', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 31:2 (1993), pp.336.

between the votes obtained by a party in a given parliamentary election and those that the same party obtains in a corresponding presidential election. Parliamentary-presidential volatility in Mozambique measured 14.3% in 1994 and 12.7% in 1999, averaging 13.5% as against an African mean of 24.9%. These figures imply that turning an erratic game of bullets into a seemingly regularised count of ballots did not change who the main contestants for power are: political rule in Mozambique is still the result of a Frelimo-*versus*-Renamo confrontation.

	Ghana (%)	Mozambique (%)	African average (%)
Parliamentary volatility	30.7 (17.3*)	8.9	28.4
Presidential volatility	11.2	14	29.6
Parliamentary-presidential volatility	18.9 (9.2*)	13.5	24.9

Table 2. Legislative, presidential and parliamentary-presidential electoral volatility in Ghana and Mozambique (my own calculations) and in thirty African countries (Kuenzi & Lambright, 2001, pp.449 & 452).[33]
*Figures based on 1996 and 2000 data only, showing that the NPP's boycott of the 1992 parliamentary election in Ghana inflates presidential-parliamentary and, especially, parliamentary volatility.

The observation of regional patterns of voting across elections provides further evidence that popular support for major political parties is not ephemeral.

In Ghana, the NPP and the NDC have thus far relied on banking votes from the electoral loyalties of two crucial regions – i.e. Ashanti and Volta, respectively (See Table 3).[35] Here it seems to hold true that "Ghanaians talk ideology, but they then vote ethnicity".[36] In other words, because no voter would admit that they vote on the basis of ethnicity, they tend to rationalise their political behaviour in terms of ideology. The way the two parties are ethno-regionally rooted, however, is significantly different. Rawlings is a half-Ewe, and he has thus traditionally counted on a strong personal following in the Volta region. This personal consensus, in turn, translated into that region's support for the pro-Rawlings NDC. The NPP, by contrast, was formed by a network of people who were mostly of Ashanti origin and who referred back to a robust regionally-rooted party tradition. In a sense, the NPP's support in Ashanti precedes the party's very creation.

[33] Since my calculations for electoral volatility are all based on votes, the comparison with Kuenzi and Lambright's data – based on seats or on a combination of seats and votes - can only provide an impressionistic account.
[34] Simpson (1993), p.336.
[35] Ashanti and Volta, which are today the breeding ground of opposite political parties used to be the hotbeds of opposition forces during Nkrumah's regime, in the 1950s and 1960s.
[36] Kwesi Jonah, personal discussion.

It must also be kept in mind that ethnic voting often leaves room for important differentiation, [37] and that, in spite of the close links that Volta and Ashanti have with the main parties, the country retains a number of areas where actual electoral competition does take place. The Greater Accra, Central, Eastern and, especially, Brong-Ahafo regions saw significant vote fluctuations between 1996 and 2000.

Regions	NDC		NPP	
	1996	*2000*	*1996*	*2000*
Western	**11**	**10**	7	8
Central	**14**	**9**	3	8
Greater Accra	**15**	6	7	**16**
Volta	**19**	**17**	-	-
Eastern	**14**	8	12	**18**
Ashanti	5	2	**28**	**31**
Brong Ahafo	**19**	7	2	**14**
Northern	**20**	**18**	3	3
Upper East	**12**	**8**	-	2
Upper West	**8**	**7**	-	-
Total	137	92	62	100

Table 3. Number of parliamentary seats won by NDC, NPP and other parties by region, 1992, 1996 and 2000 elections.
Figures in bold indicate which party won the majority of seats in a given region.

The regional polarisation of Mozambican society – itself a legacy of the anti-colonial struggle and of the subsequent civil war – is exposed by the results of the first two multiparty elections. Table 4 shows the number of seats obtained by the two main parties in each electoral constituency (i.e. the country's ten provinces, plus Maputo city) for both the 1994 and the 1999 election.. With the exception of Niassa, the sole province where majority support shifted from one party to the other, election results confirmed the strong and stable regional roots of both Frelimo and Renamo. In most provinces, the dominance of one of the two main parties is so overwhelming that the environment is one of political homogeneity, with a huge majority of the people living in the same area (i.e. a province or, even more, a district) voting in the same way in favour of one party or the other.

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[37] Nugent (1999), pp.307-308.

Electoral constituencies		Frelimo		Renamo (-UE)	
		1994	*1999*	*1994*	*1999*
South	*Maputo City*	**17**	**14**	1	2
	Maputo Province	**12**	**12**	1	1
	Gaza	**15**	**16**	0	0
	Inhambane	**13**	**13**	3	4
Centre	*Sofala*	3	4	**18**	**17**
	Manica	4	5	**9**	**10**
	Tete	5	8	**9**	**10**
	Zambezia	18	15	**29**	**34**
North	*Nampula*	20	24	**32**	**26**
	Cabo Delgado	**15**	**16**	6	6
	Niassa	**7**	6	4	**7**
Total		129	133	112	117

Table 4. Number of parliamentary seats won by Frelimo, Renamo and União Democratica by electoral constituency, 1994 and 1999 elections.[38]
(Figures in bold italic indicate which party won the majority of seats in a given constituency)

Modes of (and limits to) political organisation

Party organisations in Ghana

The electoral effectiveness of the NDC, "the single most coherent political force" in early-1990s Ghana,[39] was not only the result of Rawlings's own charisma but also of "the political infrastructure that had been laid in the 1980s".[40] The activities of para-party organisations such as the 31st December Women's Movement (31 DWM), the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDRs) and the Mobisquads of the National Mobilization Programme proved crucial,[41] notably for political mobilisation in rural areas. The Council of Indigenous Business Associations and the Ghana Private Road Transport Union acted as further channels for clientelistic distributions.[42] When the NDC left office and moved into opposition, it began to lack the resources and necessary funding to sustain ancillary organisations and interest groups. A decline in the activity of party offices was also manifest at the lower levels, despite effigies still covering a great part of the country.

The defeat at the 2000 election also affected the highest levels of the party hierarchy. The leadership of the NDC had remained essentially unchallenged for a decade. Rawlings only got indirectly involved in the activities of the party, but *de facto* retained full control. While party congresses were held every two years, between 1992 and 2002 top positions were

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[38] In 1994, a third force, União Democratica, obtained 9 seats. In 1999, Renamo allied with the 10-party União Eleitoral coalition.

[39] Paul Nugent, *Big Men, Small Boys andPpolitics in Ghana: Power, Ideology and the Burden of History, 1982-1994*, London & New York: Pinter, 1995, p.247.

[40] Nugent (1995), p.215.

[41] Gyimah-Boadi (1999), p.418. See also Jeffries (1998), p.200 and Alhaji Huudu Yahaya, Secretary General of the NDC (interview, Accra, 12 April 2002).

[42] Richard Sandbrook & Jay Oelbaum, 'Reforming the political kingdom: governance and development in Ghana's Fourth Republic', *Critical Perspectives* No.2, Accra: Center for Democratic Development, 1999, p.21.

basically confirmed without any real contests taking place, no internal competition took place for presidential nominations, and the party executive retained a decisive role in the parliamentary candidates' nomination process. For these reasons, the party was repeatedly criticised for its lack of internal democracy and a few party members broke away and set up a National Reform Party (NRP)[43].

The electoral defeat ushered in a new phase which culminated in the 2002 party congress. Party officials openly recognised that the disaffection among the members and the electorate had partly to do with the way party affairs had been conducted, notably with regard to the central imposition of parliamentary candidates to local constituencies. The congress marked an important effort to institutionalise the organisation of the party. A new chairman, who made clear that Rawlings's "charisma … is no substitute for organisation",[44] was elected for the first time through a genuinely competitive ballot, and a number of 'democratic' changes to the party statutes were adopted, including a return to the use of primaries for parliamentary nominations. The ongoing power struggle to renew the party and have it transcend the role of Jerry Rawlings, however, is far from linear. While the presidential nomination for 2004 was, for the first time, the result of an open contest, the aspirant backed by Rawlings won a landslide – signalling the success of a 'continuity' line – against a 'reformist' candidature.

The launch of the New Patriotic Party relied heavily on pre-existing political networks that referred back to the Danquah-Busia tradition. The continuity of such networks was manifest at the elite level – the first chairman of the NPP, for example, had been the secretary general of the Progress Party between the late 1960s and early 1970s – and was reflected in the resilience of grassroots-level affiliations, with household political identities normally outlasting the succession of the country's regimes. The rapidity shown by the party in organising for the 1992 presidential election, where it gained 30% of the vote, is partly explained by this underground presence. But a lot of new activity occurred between elections before the party achieved its success in the 2000 campaign. In fact, the NPP:

> was able to transform itself as a party perceived as one for educated middle class and urban dwellers to one which appealed to rural dwellers. The NPP worked around the clock by, for example, having an early congress to elect its presidential candidate, training polling agents to monitor the elections, coming out with a manifesto and bringing catchy adverts on both radio and television.[45]

The historical links that parties in the Danquah-Busia tradition have with the Ghanaian professional and business communities were a crucial resource. The Ghana Bar Association, the Association of Ghana Industries, the Ghana Employers Association and the Ghana National Chamber of Commerce, for example, are all to different degrees somehow connected to the NPP, stretching from party personnel sitting in these organisations to more informal personal contacts.

Contrary to the National Democratic Congress, the leadership of the NPP was never

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[43] While the NRP did not win any seats at the 2000 election, it split the vote for the NDC with non-negligible effects: in the absence of NRP, the NDC would have won 97 seats and the NPP only 95 (Magnus Öhman, 'Determining the contestants. Candidate selection in Ghana's 2000 elections', *Critical Perspectives* No.8, Accra: Center for Democratic Development, 2002, p.35).

[44] *Daily Dispatch*, 24 April 2002, pp.1, 5 & 8.

[45] Joseph R. A. Ayee, 'The 2000 general elections and presidential run-off in Ghana: an overview', in Ayee, Joseph R.A. (ed.), *Deepening democracy in Ghana. Politics of the 2000 elections*, Vol.1., Freedom Publications: Accra, 2001, p.52. See also Nugent (1995), p.223.

personified in a single individual but consisted of different prominent members and displayed a regular alternation in party offices. By 1998, for example, the top-level positions of presidential candidate, party chairman, secretary general and treasurer were not covered by any of the people who occupied them in 1992. Indeed, throughout the 1990s, major national party posts have usually been allocated through fairly contested internal elections[46].

Similarly, decentralised parliamentary nomination processes have been the mark of NPP's inner functioning since the party was set up. Of course, there are important efforts on the part of the party hierarchy and of the parliamentary leadership to influence the (re-)selection of candidates by local branches. Yet, the procedure leaves ample room for locally-grounded choices.

Party organisations in Mozambique

In spite of a gradual erosion of the popular support it enjoyed at the time Mozambique gained independence, Frelimo remains the country's dominant organisation under the new political dispensation: one of a number of African parties that managed not only to survive the transition from one-partism to pluralist competition, but also to remain in power.

The party maintains an effective organisation that was built over two decades of monopolistic rule and that is now proving its efficacy in a multiparty context. In fact, Frelimo's organisational set up has remained largely unchanged, both at national and local levels. The uninterrupted control of the state apparatus mitigated the changes that the party underwent. A formal separation of state and party structures was introduced in 1990-1991, and this has reduced the direct relevance of party branches and the power and privileges of local party leaders.[47] But the majority of state personnel still belong to Frelimo and thus, while state and party structures are now parallel rather than overlapping, the separation is largely an artificial one.

While internal party arrangements have by and large remained the same, they now have to accommodate a hugely increased party membership. Between 1977 and 1989, Frelimo replicated the Marx-Leninist model of a vanguard party, according to which it was only people of proven militancy and loyalty who could be formal members of the party. But when constitutional reform began to be discussed in the country, Frelimo started to target groups that had been previously considered as 'enemies' – such as traditional leaders and religious communities, and even business people – and began to portray itself as an open and "vast front congregating Mozambicans of <u>all social classes and strata</u>".[48] Membership increased, reaching the impressive figure of 1 million 400 thousand in 2002, up from around 100,000 in the early 1980s and 250,000 in 1991.[49]

While the local *célula* is supposed to be the basic unit of the party, inner processes have always worked in a top-down fashion. Party congresses, which so often marked turning points in the history of the party, are only held more or less every five years. But the authority of former combatants of the anti-colonial struggle in the fifteen-member *Commissão Politica* and in the much larger *Comité Central* has remained essentially unchallenged, in spite of the emergence of the new technocrats in government and of an influential parliamentary wing.

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[46] See *Daily Graphic*, 28 August 1995 (p.3) and 31 August 1998 (p.1).
[47] See Carrie Manning, *Democratic transition in Mozambique, 1992-1995: beginning at the end?*, PhD Thesis, University of California at Berkeley, 1997, pp.93-94 & 96.
[48] *Estatutos do Partido* (1997), art. 2.2, emphasis added.
[49] Manuel Tomé, Secretary General of Frelimo 1995-2002 (interview, Maputo, 2 July 2002).

'Freedom fighters' are seen as guarantors of the superior ethics of the national leadership in the face of the new and allegedly more corruptible politicians brought to the fore by multiparty politics. The way Frelimo's new secretary general and prospective candidate for the 2004 presidential election was selected, in mid-2002, testifies to the strengths and limitations of the party's organisation. On the one hand, it was not Chissano alone who appointed his successor, proving that any given individual in the party, as powerful as he may be, has to take into account the latter's institutionalised procedures. At the same time, however, the selection process was fundamentally oligarchic: a nomination was produced by the *Commissão*, it was then formally endorsed by the *Comité Central* and later approved by Congress. The party leadership hardly had any trouble in seeing its choice approved, showing that it was in full control of the party hierarchy and that the legacy of Marxist-Leninist 'democratic centralism' still exerts its powerful influence.[50]

Born as a military organisation, Renamo succeeded in gaining legitimacy among broad sections of the population, in mounting a serious electoral challenge to the ruling party, and in maintaining their role as the principal opposition over almost a decade of multiparty politics. As it is currently working, however, the main opposition party manifests major weaknesses in its lack of a well-functioning organisation and, in part as a consequence, in its difficulties in operating within the new democratic institutions. Even under pluralist politics, party leader Dhlakama retained his unchallenged and personalist control over the party by systematically undermining the development of an effective and democratic party organisation.

Establishing local party structures and keeping them alive with only a weak stream of funding coming in is an almost impossible task, and a chronic problem for African parties that are out of power. In areas where Renamo has many MPs, the latter have helped to keep party activities going, in others – notably in the south – the party's presence has remained much more erratic. Renamo's branches on the ground are often little more than a flag on a member's house. Nevertheless, the party has long benefited from networks of support and, in particular, from the sympathetic role of the many traditional leaders who have adhered to it.[51] This has allowed the party to expand its support by keeping in touch with the population at a time when, in spite of its better functioning organisation and physical structures, Frelimo appears to many as losing touch with the people.

In spite of the major efforts embarked upon by the leadership to open the newly created party to qualified personnel – people who could staff its own cadre positions and represent Renamo within state institutions – the functioning of the organisation has remained almost totally in the hands of its president and closed to either external or internal scrutiny. Dhlakama himself embodies the core of the party, the unifying centre of a network of different groups who hardly communicate to each other.

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[50] See Michel Cahen, 'État et pouvoir populaire dans le Mozambique indépendent', *Politique Africaine*, 19 (1985), p.41.

[51] See Graham Harrison, 'Mozambique between two elections: a political economy of transition', *Democratization*, 6:4 (1999), p.171. During the war, an alliance between traditional chiefs and Renamo developed in central Mozambique, largely as a result of Frelimo's marginalisation of customary authorities and of the forced re-settlements of villagisation policies: "the implicit contract between Renamo and chiefs, who invited Renamo to set up bases on their land, was that Renamo would block government interference with their way of life and enable them to remain on their land. In return, the chiefs would serve as administrators for Renamo, taking the Renamo title of '*mambos*' and mobilising the population to provide food and collaborators to serve as police '*majubas*'" (Pereira, 1999, p.8, cf. p.61). Customary authorities taking sides under electoral politics have also been a prominent feature of the politics of KwaZulu Natal, the South African province where, notably during the 1990s, they linked to the Inkatha Party as a pro-tradition partisan force (Beall et al., 2003).

Internal rules have little relevance to the working of the party. While party congresses should be organised every two years, for example, none were held between 1994 (when a small general meeting took place in Maringue) and 2001. In October 2001, a Congress re-elected Dhlakama as party president against two hopeless contestants who were meant to show a façade of internal democracy. A new statute was also approved, but the re-structuring of the party was again marred by confusion and over-concentration of power. The authority of the party president only seemed to be countered by an alternative source of internal power when a Renamo parliamentary wing was formed, following the 1994 election of the first multiparty parliament. In the absence of the party leader, Raul Domingos, the head of the *bancada*, emerged as an influential and visible figure between 1994 and 2000. The (limited) autonomy of the party's legislative wing, however, was undermined when, on the basis of some dubious accusations, Dhlakama decided to expel him from the party in late 2000. It is widely believed that Domingos was perceived by Dhlakama as a threat in view of the party Congress and of an internal election for the party leadership. Less than two years on, the marginalisation of prominent figures developed into a pattern, reaching a point where total confusion seemed to dominate party affairs in mid-2002: a most patent manifestation of the weakness of the party's internal arrangements and of the persistence of its 'legendary disorganisation'.[52]

Political parties and legitimacy

Recent surveys seem to show that political parties enjoy a degree of popular legitimacy among Ghanaians. While only 34.3% of citizens claim formal membership to a political party, two-thirds of the population (66.6%) say they 'feel close' to a party,[53] compared to the significantly lower 47% average amongst ten African countries.[54] Asked if they have confidence in political parties, again Ghanaian citizens respond positively, with trust in parties running quite high at 63.7%.[55]

The scarce presence of independent MPs – testifying to the centrality and legitimacy of political parties as vehicles of political representation in Ghana – is a feature shared with many other African countries, but one that contrasts with the situation in other new multiparty regimes, such as those of several Eastern European and Asian countries, where no-party candidates are much more frequent and the number of independent MPs can reach over 40%.[56]

The mutual relations between the two main parties, however, have been seriously strained as a result of the deep antagonism and resentment that divided the former authoritarian rulers from those who paid the price of 'revolutionary' military rule. Under the PNDC regime, a significant part of the established business elite was targeted by Rawlings's campaigns against 'profiteering' and wealth, initiatives that were allegedly carried out on behalf of common Ghanaians. The economic and political persecution of big business, largely originating from Ashanti, naturally led many influential business people to the opposition side.

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[52] Cahen (1998), p.30. See *BBC World Service* (31 July 2002) and *AIM* (28 July and 22 August 2002) for the string of dismissals and reshuffles that marked Renamo's chaotic internal life in mid-2002.

[53] Centre for Democratic Development (CDD), 'Popular attitudes to democracy and market reforms in Ghana', *Research Paper* No. 2, Accra: Centre for Democratic Development, 1999, p.20.

[54] Öhman (2002), p.4.

[55] CDD (1999), p.20.

[56] Öhman (2002), pp.2-3.

From the mid- 1990s, a bumpy inter-party dialogue helped to legitimise the rules and develop a minimum of trust between party players. After the controversial 1992 election, the NPP's acceptance of the 1996 verdict and, four years later, the NDC's recognition of its defeat facilitated a degree of reciprocal party legitimisation.[57]

While the relationship between the two main parties remains characterised by distrust at regional and grassroots level, the House turned into something of a special context, as daily activities helped parliamentarians develop personal relations. Even party leaders got to know each other and get along, to the point where "outside parliament, the parties accuse us – the MPs of the two camps – of being too close to each other".[58]

In the case of Mozambique, the very end of the civil war – that is, the acceptance of the new political set up on the part of the former rebels – can be taken as an indication of the relative legitimacy of the new party system, which is broadly acknowledged as the main channel for political participation and the main ground were politics is to be played out. Renamo leaders have occasionally organised vehement protests or threatened a 'return to the bush' as a response to alleged malpractices on the part of the ruling group. Yet Renamo have never been close to actually re-starting the war and, in fact, it has contributed to keeping all sections of society within the new pluralist framework, thus avoiding violent challenges to the latter. In spite of its vicious past, the main opposition party enjoys a broader legitimacy among ordinary Mozambicans than was expected during the war.

According to regional surveys carried out in Maputo, Sofala and Nampula provinces, almost half of those interviewed (47%) declared they have no confidence whatsoever in political parties, as against less than one in five (18.7%) saying that they trust them.[59] These findings are, however, problematic. A different survey, for example, found that as many as 44.9% of Mozambicans express some measure of trust towards political parties, while only 20.3% state that, in varying degrees, they do not.[60]

While the party system as the locus of pluralist representation enjoys some consensus, the mutual legitimacy of the two main contenders seems to be weaker. Frelimo is attacked by Renamo for its monopolisation of political power, for its centralising and undemocratic attitudes, and for the alleged manipulation of election results. The leadership group of the governing party, on the other hand, has long claimed a sort of 'natural right' to rule Mozambique, systematically questioning Renamo's fitness to govern the country. In contrast to the Ghanaian case, the socialisation functions of parliament are very limited. Political conflict is so deep-seated that few contacts take place in an assembly where cross-party networks seem to be entirely absent. Especially within Renamo, there is a sustained perception that people should not talk to members of the majority – as they are 'Frelimo people' – and those who do so tend to be looked at suspiciously by their colleagues.

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[57] Sandbrook & Oelbaum (1999), p.31.

[58] Cecilia Amoah, MP for the NPP (interview, Accra, 11 April 2002).

[59] Ética Moçambique, *Estudo sobre corrupção, Moçambique 2001*, Maputo: Ética Moçambique/Afrisurvey, 2001, pp.71-72 & 86.

[60] Centro de Estudos de População, *Inquérito nacional de opinião pública 2001*, Maputo: Centro de Estudos de População at Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 2002, p.13.

Conclusions

There is no question that the structural limits to the development of political parties in African multiparty polities – limits that begin with the scarcity of human, infrastructural and, especially, material resources – remain a massive obstacle on the way towards the consolidation of democratic politics in Ghana and Mozambique. But, as the above analysis shows, there are signs, notably in Ghana, that some of the drawbacks normally associated with Africa's party systems may be contained if not entirely avoided.

"Both in the first period of multiparty politics in Africa immediately after independence and in the 'second independence' in the 1990s", it has been pointed out, "parties grew not out of socio-economic cleavages or struggles over the nature of state authority, but out of elites' urgent need for electoral vehicles … Social bases for parties have by and large been created in response to the needs of elites who required an electoral vehicle in relatively short order".[61] Yet a reading of Ghanaian and Mozambican parties as mere instruments of political elites is way too simplistic. The social identities, issues and demands that the countries' major parties articulate (as poorly as they do it) are both relevant and far from volatile or entirely induced. Think, for instance, of the way Renamo has given voice to the grievances of traditional communities and authorities, or of the NDC-NPP rivalry with regard to the defence of established big businesses. More generally, the four main parties of the countries under investigation were not simply vehicles set up 'in relatively short order', but organisations drawing their origins from acute and longstanding socio-political conflicts.

The latter conflicts also contribute to explaining why the legitimacy of political parties is still questioned. From the outset of political transitions in the two countries, a deep distrust has characterised mutual party relations: a lack of trust largely explained by the fact that the current party systems reflect an antagonism between pre-transition non-democratic rulers and their opponents. There are, however, important distinctions to be made. The issue of reciprocal legitimacy among major parties appears to be more problematic in Mozambique – largely due to the country's legacy of violent conflicts – than in Ghana, where popular trust in parties appears to be more clear-cut and parliamentary politics has recently promoted a degree of interparty socialisation. Alternation in power between the NPP and the NDC demonstrated that a gradual process of mutual recognition is taking place.

As socially rooted as the four parties are, however, they draw a significant part of their support from limited regions or ethnic areas. Renamo and central Mozambique, Frelimo and the southern and uppermost areas of the country, the NDC and the Volta region, the NPP in Ashanti: each of these political parties is easily associated to one or more regions that it dominates and depends upon. These kinds of links are no novelty to analysts of African politics, and they may become so close and rigid to the point of stifling effective electoral competition and turning into the ground for ethno-regionally-based exclusion. This does not bode well for the development of pluralistic politics, which, ideally, thrive in more flexible and competitive environments. The geographic concentration of a party's support, however, seems to be more regionally-entrenched in Mozambique than it is in Ghana, where regions and voters shifting their support from one party to the other made alternation in power a reality.

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[61] Manning (2002), p.9.

Vast asymmetries also mark the patterns followed by the four parties under investigation in terms of their degree of institutionalisation (i.e. the extent to which a party organisation, its rules and inner mechanisms are placed above specific individuals) and of 'openness' (i.e. the presence of decentralised and participatory practices as opposed to centralised and unaccountable decision-making) (see Figure 1).
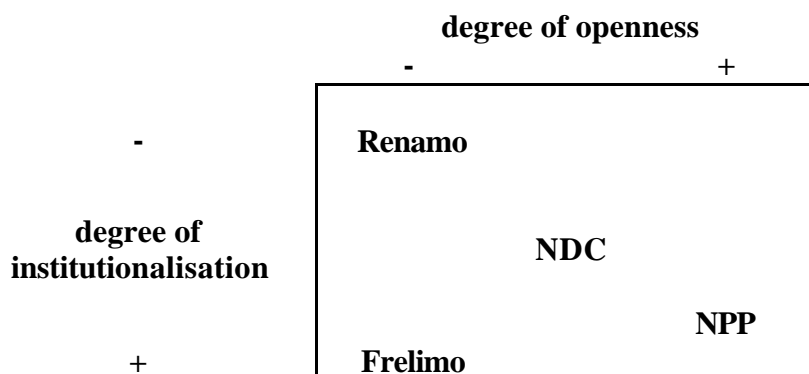

degree of openness

Figure 1. Degree of institutionalisation and openness of individual parties in Ghana and Mozambique.

With Dhlakama fostering disorganisation to retain full discretionary authority, Renamo stands out as the least democratic, least formalised and regularised organisation among those studied. The heavy centralisation and personalisation of internal power means that, from an organisational point of view, the former rebel group bears close resemblance to the stereotype of the African party as a personal faction. At the opposite extreme, the NPP is a party that has never been controlled by any single individual and repeatedly went through formalised procedures for the definition of internal power-holders and for the selection of candidates representing the party at national elections. Somewhere in-between Renamo and the NPP lies the NDC: the party regularly held national congresses and recently went through an open attempt at curbing the massive influence of Rawlings' charisma, yet the degree to which its actual functioning has been institutionalised and shaped by democratic principles is very limited. Finally, Frelimo is the older and most strongly institutionalised organisation, but one that is highly centralised and oligarchic, leaving little room for democratic decision-making.[62] Thus, not only Ghanaian party organisations appear to be, on the whole, more 'open' than Renamo and Frelimo are, but the Mozambican party system remains evidently more 'unevenly' institutionalised than Ghana's.[63]

Under the constitutional frameworks recently adopted, parties have been central to political life both in Accra and in Maputo. As pointed out in this paper, major parties heavily structured electoral competition by establishing a practice of two-party contests, while would-be third political forces and independent candidates were left little or no room for manoeuvre. Several other African countries – including Mauritius, a relatively long-standing multiparty system, or Benin, Madagascar and Mali, which completed their transitions in the 1990s –

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[62] As the empty corner of Figure 1 shows, the combination of a relatively democratic functioning with a low level of institutionalisation is conceptually possible but empirically rare, as it implies un-regularised, informal or contingent forms of internal democratic participation.

[63] See Randall & Svåsand (2002a), pp.6ff..

have party systems that do not feature degrees of electoral stability comparable to those of Ghana or Mozambique. Benin is a classic example: the largest party in the 1991 election only won twelve seats, but four years later only three of the eleven parties that were represented in the previous legislature re-gained seats, while fourteen new parties obtained representation.[64]

Even in the case of Mozambique, one should not forget the role Frelimo and Renamo played in making the new democratic dispensation work – the former by deciding to open the door to multiparty politics, and the latter by choosing to walk in and stay in the game. Yet, adding to the enormous difference in the degree of institutionalisation of the two main organisations, the Mozambican party system follows the continent-wide familiar pattern of a deep-rooted dominance and uninterrupted hold on power by the largest party. While the presence of a paramount party organisations may carry with it 'mixed blessings', such as an increased stability and legitimacy for the political system,[65] a subtle line separates these potentially beneficial effects from the prevalence of oppressive and regressive political practices. In this sense, Ghana's more balanced two-party system – with closer electoral contests and a recent instance of actual alternation in office – strengthens the country's chances of deepening its fragile democracy, in spite of a tradition of heavy involvement of the military in politics that, for the foreseeable future, will hang over Ghanaians like Damocles's sword.

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[64] Van de Walle (2003), p.300. The prevalence of volatile parties can be found in countries of other world regions where multiparty politics was recently introduced (or re-introduced), such as the Philippines, Thailand, Brazil or Peru (James Putzel, 'Thinking about civil society and political parties: challenges for development assistance', Paper presented at a seminar of the Crisis States Programme, Development Research Centre, London School of Economics, October 2002, p.6; Mainwaring & Scully, 1995).

[65] See Hermann Giliomee & Charles Simkins, *The awkward embrace. One-party domination and democracy*, Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999, p.xv.

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Asia Development Research Institute (Patna, Bihar)
NEIDS, North-East Hill University (Shillong)

In South Africa:
Wits Institute of Social & Economic Research (WISER)
Sociology of Work Workshop (SWOP)
Department of Sociology
(University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg)

In Colombia:
IEPRI, Universidad Nacional de Colombia
Universidad de los Andes
Universidad del Rosario

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Director: Dr James Putzel
Administrator: Wendy Foulds
Editorial Assistant: Jonathan Curry-Machado

Development Research Centre,
Development Studies Institute (DESTIN),
LSE, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE
Tel: +44 (0)20 7849 4631   Fax: +44 (0)20 7955 6844
e-mail: csp@lse.ac.uk

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