

Case Study Two: Politics in Zambia

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Overview

Zambia as a Case Study illustrates many themes showing how the politics of development interacts with developmental issues concerning the economy and society. Zambia, independent since 1964 when Britain relinquished power in Northern Rhodesia, is one of the world's least developed countries, situated at the confluence of central and southern Africa. Since 1991 the country has undergone political and economic change as a consequence of abandoning the one-party state of the Second Republic and introducing reforms to liberalize the economy. The results so far have been disappointing to many Zambians and independent observers. National elections held in December 2001 offered an opportunity for a more competitive party system to become established and for new political leadership to tackle the country's many problems. The persistence of some notable continuities with the past, however, testifies to the various constraints that a country like Zambia faces.

The Case Study comprises four sections:

Section 1: Democracy and development - Based on Chapters 10, 12 and 13

Section 2: Executive-legislative relations - Based on Chapters 10 and 12

Section 3: Party politics in Zambia - Based on Chapters 5, 8, and 12 and also web Case Study one

Section 4: Zambia and the world - Based on Chapters 2, 3, and 11

Questions

Web links

References

Key dates in Zambia's recent history

1964 Independence

1972 (December) President Kaunda declares Zambia a one-party state (Second Republic)

1990 (December) President Kaunda signs constitutional amendment permitting return to political pluralism (Third Republic)

1991 (February) First national convention of Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) adopts Frederick Chiluba as its presidential candidate

1991 (October) Chiluba and the MMD defeat Kaunda and the United National Independence Party (UNIP) by very large margins in presidential and parliamentary elections

1996 Constitutional changes effectively prevent Kaunda from contesting the presidency

1996 (November) Chiluba and MMD again sweep the board in elections that UNIP declined to contest.

2001 (June) Chiluba renounces intentions of running for a third term as president and seeking constitutional change to permit this.

2001 (December) Levy Mwanawasa narrowly wins the presidency for MMD but MMD loses majority in the parliament

2004 Mwanawasa (July) says it is unlikely that a new constitution will come into being until after the general elections in 2006.

2006 (September) Elections return Mwanawasa to the presidency, and a new party, the Patriotic Front, becomes the leading opposition party in the legislature. The conduct of the elections is generally regarded as an improvement on the previous elections.

Section 1

Democracy and development

From reading Chapters 4, 8, 10, 11, and 12 you should now be familiar with some fundamental issues in democratization and in economic and social development as well. You are advised to consult Chapters 4, 8, 10, 11, and 12 if you have not already done so, for their contents are not repeated here.

Introduction

Democracy and democratization have implications for social and economic development. Socio-economic development has implications for democracy and democratization. Zambia in the 1990s in particular illustrates the relationships among social, economic and political variables, including the limitations of economic liberalization as a force for development, the impact of political reform on development, and more generally the socio-economic constraints on democratization;

Zambia achieved independence from Britain, in 1964, through a largely non-violent struggle. Since then there have been three Republics, each with its own distinctive profile. The First Republic (1964-72) was characterised by political pluralism combined with the political dominance of President Kenneth Kaunda and his party, the United National Independence Party (UNIP). This was a period of social and economic progress and considerable optimism. Kaunda's decision, finally, that a *de jure* one-party state would be in the country's best interests was not uncommon in Africa around that time. In the Second Republic (1973-1990), then, power was centralised and became increasingly concentrated in President Kaunda's hands, with the state assuming ownership of much of the modern sector of the economy. Elections were held regularly, but Kaunda's hold on the presidency was not seriously challenged. However, although politically stable, Zambia from the mid-1970s began to experience difficulties financing its development; foreign borrowings increased. By the late 1980s popular dissatisfaction with living standards were increasingly hard to ignore. Opposition to the government was voiced by the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), led by Frederick Chiluba.

In 1990 Kaunda finally conceded the restoration of political pluralism, and general elections were called for October 1991. In 1991 the Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD), with Chiluba as its presidential candidate, capitalised on widespread dissatisfaction with the government by emerging as the single most credible alternative contender for office. This greatly improved the chances of a smooth political succession. In October 1991 the MMD won a sweeping victory in the parliamentary and presidential elections, which were conducted peacefully. Kaunda conceded defeat graciously. A new dawn for Zambia seemed possible. The MMD's manifesto promised economic liberalization, social progress and greater political freedom. Foreign governments in the West warmly applauded Zambia, wanting to see its example as a bell-weather for Africa as a whole.

Since then Zambia has not fulfilled the high - possibly very unrealistic hopes - of 1991. The majority of Zambians are poorer, notable indicators of human development such as longevity have declined (to around 37 years now, from a high of 54 in the mid-1980s), and HIV/AIDS has emerged as a major problem, with around a quarter of the population directly at risk (Baylies 2002: 351). Data for basic indicators can be found in Table 1 on the web site. Despite large-scale privatization the economy shows no signs of a stable pattern of significant growth. And the political record of the first two MMD administrations (1991-1996; 1996-2001) shows evidence of the 'hollowing out' of democracy as well as some democratic progress. The political system remains closer to a form of electoral democracy than liberal democracy, although this is a matter of judgment and some observers claim there has been improvement since President Mwanawasa took office following the December 2001 elections. A detailed study of civic education in democratic citizenship in Zambia conducted in 1996 found the effects were modest, and partly contradictory, and were ill-suited to inducing mass political participation (Bratton and Alderfer 1999). The country's socio-economic performance and political developments during the 1990s have been documented separately elsewhere (for example Burnell 2001a; Burnell 2001c; Gould 2002; Szeftel 2002); in what follows, it is the interdependence between the two that are the focus.

Economic liberalization's contribution

The conventional wisdom is that economic liberalization can support democratization, indirectly by improving the general socio-economic conditions and directly by deconcentrating power away from the state: a free market is a guarantor of political freedom.

Zambia even before 1991 was beginning to move in the direction of economic liberalization; the new MMD government simply accelerated the process. Yet there are no signs yet of when the majority of Zambians might expect to see significant benefits. The 1990s saw increases in the numbers of people in absolute poverty, in depth of poverty and in inequality. There has been no serious priority given to poverty-reduction – the government had placed its hopes in a 'trickle down' from growth (Saasa with Carlsson 2002). What explains the failure of economic policy?

One theory is that the reforms have not been sufficiently comprehensive or systematic in design and execution. International donors have both praised the early reforming spirit of the MMD government and identified many subsequent shortcomings – political mishandling and bureaucratic delays in the implementation. The persistent culture of neo-patrimonialism and clientelistic politics carries a heavy burden of responsibility. The political commitment to reform has seemed strongest where members of the administration stood most to gain; it appeared to waver, or distortions crept in, where their interests were at stake. The uneven approach to liberalizing maize markets has been a prime example (Pletcher 2000). Procrastination over the privatization of Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM) in particular proved very costly to the country.

A different observation is that the kind of liberalizing measures typically associated with structural economic adjustment and which Zambia embraced in the 1990s may offer at best only a partial solution to the economic problems of a country like Zambia. Zambia shows that the supply side of the economy cannot and will not respond to such measures as price liberalization until adequate market structures are put in place and non-price barriers have been removed. It takes time, money and know-how to create the institutional and physical environments that are essential to a vibrant market economy. Zambia has experienced difficulty in devising the right institutional solutions in crucial areas like banking. There has been a succession of commercial bank failures. A general shortage of

entrepreneurial, organizational and managerial expertise and not merely of foreign exchange and finance capital hampers countries like Zambia, which suggests that greater technical and financial assistance from the international community could prove valuable. However international factors outside the country's control also partly explain Zambia's continuing difficulties (see section 4 below).

The impact of political reform on development

Democratization, good government and respect for human rights are supposed to be good for development. Hence much was expected of Zambia's return to political pluralism in 1991, especially as the incoming government professed strong commitment to make government more accountable and to reduce state intervention.

In reality the political changes have fallen short of expectations, failing to alter underlying patterns of power and influence, and this could help explain the disappointing economic performance too. During the course of the 1990s the shortcomings of political rights and civil liberties in Zambia under MMD rule become increasingly apparent; by the second half of the decade Human Rights Watch Africa and Amnesty International were making very critical comments. Freedom House downgraded Zambia from free to partly free (amending the scores for political rights and civil liberties from 2 and 3 in 1991/92 to 5 and 4). The 1996 elections in particular aroused concern (see section 3 below). The government used the public media in highly partisan ways and showed intolerance of criticism from the private press, in addition to resorting to harassment of civil society organizations as well as of opposition politicians (see Burnell 2001c; Gould 2002). Donor pressure led to a number of formal institutional changes that ostensibly promoted liberal democracy but their impact was limited. The newly established Human Rights Commission and the Anti-corruption Commission are examples (Burnell 2003). The informal institutions of Zambia's political past seemed to prevail, limiting the extent to which the executive could be held accountable.

Box 2.1: Political continuity withstands marketization

contrary to the assumptions in pluralist theory, the Zambian case suggests that the political practices associated with one-party rule, such as centralization of power in the Presidential office, and extensive use of state patronage for political gain, may prevail within the formal structures of democracy and a market economy.

Rakner 2001: 540

The consequences included repeated public expenditure allocations that had not been authorised by parliament; a culture of financial indiscipline continued to exist throughout almost the entire public sector (Burnell 2001d). The way ruling politicians reserved for themselves some of the more profitable opportunities arising from privatization sent an unfortunate signal to potential investors from outside. Yet so strong is the memory of the economic failings of the Second Republic – or so influential are the major donors – that no opposition politicians sought to take political advantage by urging substantial movement back to the more economically protectionist and state interventionist policies of the past.

Box 2.2: Economic interest group influence on public policy

in order for economic interest associations to be able to influence policies as envisioned in the pluralist notion of ‘winners and losers’, the political arena must provide channels in which interests can be aggregated into the competitive political process. So far no links have been formed between economic interests and the political party system.

Rakner 2001: 539

The outlook for democratization

If we can be sure that democracy has certain social requisites then Zambia looks to be less well endowed now than at almost any previous time since independence. Increased poverty among female-headed households in rural areas and the growing number of orphaned children in the urban areas are particularly noteworthy. A small group of Zambians have become very visibly rich – especially from commerce, trade and financial manipulations - but there is no broad middle class. Inequality has increased. The working-class has shrunk; organised labour lost political influence after finding that the MMD which it helped create then pursued policies that increased unemployment. In these

circumstances attaining political office offers a relatively attractive gateway to personal wealth. Winning - or not losing - elections acquires added importance, which provides further temptation to engage in electoral irregularities. Survey evidence shows that Zambians distrust their politicians and are cynical about the reasons why they go into politics: this serves neither democracy nor development. Revelations about irregularities in the 2001 elections published by the independent media seem to confirm the suspicions are well-grounded.

Box 2.3: Organised labour after 1991

The split within the trade union congress crippled the political influence of the labour movement as the unions fought an internal battle over the influence of Zambia's workers. The financial situation of the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions was also severely affected as the five break-away unions were among the largest. Losing one third of its membership, 40 per cent of its income, and split on the issue of economic liberalization and the rule of the governing party, ZCTU was not in a position to challenge the government's economic policies, nor could it constitute a threat in terms of rallying behind an opposition party.

Rakner 2001: 534

At the same time opposition political parties, not having access to public funds, find it difficult to maintain party organization and to finance election campaigns, which is all the more noteworthy in a culture where the distribution of largesse is a traditional feature of attempts to mobilize political support. Most opposition parties in the 1990s were small or ephemeral; this changed in the distinctive circumstances of the 2001 elections, but the likelihood that Zambia is now witnessing the institutionalization of a more competitive party system has to be doubted (Rakner and Svåsand 2004). Even then it seemed that leaders hoped to be able to reimburse the debts accumulated when bidding for power by exploiting the fruits of office. Thus for some electoral defeat came as a double blow. Civil society too is constrained by limited finance, and becomes heavily dependent on foreign donors. The MMD has questioned the legitimacy of foreign-funded civic associations; and civic bodies avoid very close relations with political parties for fear of jeopardising their foreign funding. Even President Mwanawasa has roundly criticised civic actors including the Law Association of Zambia and churchmen for their refusal to be co-opted into his

preferred arrangements for reforming the country's constitution – one that would rely on his government's ability to control the process of parliamentary approval. Meanwhile popular political participation is discouraged by the government's seeming inability to raise living standards. A high turnout of nearly 70 per cent of registered voters in the 2001 elections looks impressive, but many Zambians did not bother (or were unable) to register as voters, and the register represented only 55 per cent of the legally eligible electorate. Zambia seems to be an example of the vicious circle that traps poor countries in low levels of socio-economic progress and failure to sustain and deepen democratic political reform.

Box 2.4: A vicious circle of poverty and stunted democracy?

One interpretation of the findings of this study (of Zambia) is that those who wish to promote the establishment of democratic habits and norms must confront the barriers posed by poverty, and should design programmes and institutions accordingly. Much is riding on the success of democracy in very poor countries. Democracy is certainly a desirable end in itself. More importantly, it is also seen as a means to alleviate poverty itself, particularly by generating a more pro-development state that is checked by greater accountability and endowed with greater legitimacy. However, if poor economic conditions discourage or inhibit mass participation in the political process, these countries will have a difficult time realising either democracy or its associated benefits.

Simon 2002: 40

Of course better governance does not come cheap either. Provisioning the judiciary, the Office of Auditor General, Human Rights Commission, Anti-corruption Commission, Drug Enforcement Commission, the Electoral Commission, Commissioner for Investigations (Zambia's version of an ombudsman) and the Zambia Revenue Authority requires significant money and people of the right calibre and integrity. In a country where educational standards are deteriorating and bright, well-educated Zambians often seek their fortunes abroad, continuing economic stagnation challenges the institutional capacity of good government.

Finally, democracy is premised on a degree of national self-determination. The externalisation of power and responsibility that comes with heavy indebtedness to the

international donors and economic dependency as severe as Zambia's continue to be problematic for democratization (see section 4).

In sum, Zambia cannot provide evidence for the proposition that economic and social development propelled by free market economics helps promote democratization. Nevertheless, the failure to experience rapid or sustained development has not yet proved fatal to democracy. Weak development and an imperfect form of democracy have managed to coexist, with the limitations of each one making a contribution to the shortcomings of the other. Rather than a virtuous interaction of democratization and development that provides mutual support, Zambia's experience has been much more ambiguous, with political and economic forces exercising some malign as well as benign influences on one another.

Section 2

Executive-legislative relations

From reading Chapters 10 and 12 of *Politics in the Developing World* you should now be familiar with some fundamental issues in state-building and democratization including the question of how power is distributed between different branches of the state and implications for governance. You are advised to consult Chapters 10 and 12 if you have not already done so, for its contents are not repeated here.

Introduction

The Constitution of the Republic of Zambia has been amended several times. The constitution agreed with Britain stated quite explicitly the first president shall be Kenneth Kaunda. Later, in December 1972 Zambia was proclaimed a presidential one-party state, which brought an end to political pluralism. In December 1990, constitutional amendment reinstated political pluralism. Yet further attempts to change the constitution were made in 1996 and 2001. Following the 2001 election President Mwanawasa established a Constitution Review Commission to deliberate the subject once again.

After the 1991 election that brought the MMD to power there was an expectation the new government would address the concentration of power in the hands of the presidency. However, although for some time the cabinet became a central actor in government, there was no great decentralisation of power to other organs of state. Not until December 1993 was a new constitutional review committee formed. Those changes that were then passed in to law seemed to chime most closely with Chiluba's and the MMD's objective of retaining power. For example changes to eligibility to stand for the presidency disqualified both Kenneth Kaunda, leader of the United National Independence Party (UNIP), the main opposition party at the time, and UNIP's deputy leader as well. Another change that allowed presidents to be elected on a mere plurality of votes became significant in the 2001 elections, when Mwanawasa - Chiluba's personally chosen successor – was able to retain the presidency of Zambia for the MMD on that basis.

Box 2.5 : Elections and legitimacy

As the Foundation for Democratic Process (a civic association) would later remark, 'the use of a transient legislative majority to push through the hotly contested provisions was not the best way of conferring legitimacy on the constitution'. By the same token, the contested Constitution seriously undermined the legitimacy of subsequent elections.

Gould 2002: 308

In 2001 the constitution once again became something of a 'political football', as a campaign got under way to remove the two-term limit on presidential candidates, which would have allowed Chiluba to stand for a third term of office (see Burnell 2002b). As in 1995, the process by which the constitution should be changed was as controversial as the substance of the proposed changes. In 1996 the government ignored the constitutional commission's recommendation that there be a special assembly followed by a popular referendum, instead relying on its overwhelming majority in Parliament to push through its desired amendments. In 2001, however, Chiluba brought the controversy temporarily to a close, by publicly renouncing 'third term' ambitions. That was in no small measure due to the concerted opposition of prominent civil society organizations (the so-called 'Oasis forum'), acting in concert with some opposition politicians. But the procedural as well as substantive issues of constitutional reform have resurfaced since 2001; and President Mwanawasa's declared views give no confidence that he will support a diminution of presidential powers. He has rejected the near unanimous view of civil society that a special constituent assembly should be empowered to decide on the findings of a constitutional review commission. Also in March 2003 he rejected the declared will of Parliament (shared by the Vice-President) that there should be state funding of political parties.

The presidency and the parliament

Shugart and Carey (1992) identify a number of president-parliamentary and premier-presidential regimes. Zambia's institutional arrangements are a hybrid; also, they illustrate that the way formal roles and responsibilities are interpreted in practice can be as important as the constitutional document.

Box 2.6 Classifying regime types

The process of classifying regime types is a very messy one; there are 'no standard and universally accepted definitions of regime types and there is no general and unambiguous categorisation of states as example of particular regime types'.

Elgie 1998: 223

Zambia's hybrid regime combines the office of president enjoying its own electoral mandate and extensive powers with an elected legislature from whose ranks all government ministers, including cabinet ministers and the Vice-President, must be drawn. Parliament comprises the National Assembly and the President. The President decides when parliament shall be called and may at any time attend and address the National Assembly. The President has power to nominate up to eight additional MPs over and above the 150 elected members, and has sole power to appoint and dismiss ministers. The legislative power is exercised by Bills passed by the Assembly and assented to by the President, but bills that make financial demands have to be recommended by the president. Parliament spends nearly all its time reacting the government's legislative proposals and trying to exercise oversight and scrutiny of the executive's performance. Following reforms in the 1990s it now enjoys powers to confirm a number of appointments made by the president such as senior members of the judiciary, Attorney-General, Secretary to the Cabinet, and Auditor-General.

In Zambia's Second Republic what little power Parliament had previously exerted then gravitated to UNIP's national executive committee and President Kaunda specifically. In fact the lineage of concentrated executive power can be said to go back to colonial times. And as a leading 'front line state' in opposing apartheid in South Africa, perceptions of external insecurity were almost bound to increase the predominance of the executive anyway. This situation was magnified in 1965 by the unilateral declaration of independence by the white regime in Rhodesia (now independent Zimbabwe). Zambia in the 1990s shows that long established patterns in the distribution of power 'at the top' can prove very difficult to reverse, even when the international climate changes and becomes more enthusiastic about promoting such values as democratic accountability and decentralisation – values that many Zambians appear to endorse. This in spite of the fact

that by the 1990s Zambia had experienced a successful campaign of nation-building, and external military threats to the country's security were now remote, notwithstanding the civil war in neighbouring Angola. So, what explains the continuities?

Continuity in executive-legislative relations

The constitutional structures inherited by the Chiluba government predisposed it to a certain style of governing. But relationships within the ruling party and between Chiluba and his senior colleagues, as well as the MMD's political dominance among the parties, also played a considerable part.

The MMD's overwhelming control of Parliament after 1991, reflecting a clear mandate from the voters delivered through a first-past-the-post electoral system that magnifies representation of the winners, left UNIP in no position to press the government to curtail the powers of the executive and make it more accountable. In any case UNIP was too closely identified with the former one-party state. So relations within the MMD and cabinet were more critical to determining the new government's commitment to reform. But the MMD was a coalition of some unlikely bedfellows - ranging from organised labour (Chiluba's own background) to businessmen (who provided the party with money), left-leaning intellectuals, churchmen and others. The upper echelons consisted of former senior figures from UNIP. At the outset Chiluba's ability to hold the party together and his chances of surviving at the helm were both doubted.

The president's response was typical of leaders in this situation. Power accumulated in the hands of an inner circle of colleagues who Chiluba felt he could trust most, and some of whom seemed not to be enthusiastic about further political liberalization and democratization. Other agendas connected with staying in power commanded attention, especially as the harsh social effects of economic liberalization led people to begin to question the government's longer term chances of survival. So, the suggestion that real transition to a genuinely liberal democratic ethos must await the arrival of a new political generation untainted by past involvement in a more authoritarian regime (Barkan 2000) gains some plausibility from the Zambian case.

Box 2.7: Political generations and democratic reform

Given the argument in this article that a successful conclusion to protracted transitions in Africa in large part depends on a change in the composition and attitudes of political elites, then it is unrealistic to expect that this process will be sufficiently advanced after only one or two elections. Indeed, it is only after the second round of founding elections that we begin to see the emergence of this new generation, much less its dominance. Only then is the hard bargaining that results in a new constitutional order that solidifies democracy likely to occur on the continent

Barkan 2000: 241-2

Of the institutional reforms that were initiated during the first two MMD administrations the restructuring of the parliamentary committees system for exercising oversight of the government's activities, policy administration especially, warrant some attention. The remodelled system has not yet had time to display its full potential. But a major weakness remains the absence of effective means by which to enforce accountability on ministers and, ultimately, the president, once MPs have identified serious failings and proposed corrective or remedial steps. Among the failings regularly identified by the committees are: policy confusion and absence of clarity in policy; political interference in policy implementation, which has the effect of both distorting the policies and undermining performance; failure to consult stakeholders; inertia and failure to implement decisions (see Burnell 2002a: 298-300). The committees argue that political factors and not just shortage of finance accounts for the government's failure to address the weaknesses and their origins in government.

The Public Accounts Committee is particularly significant. It follows up on the reports on public spending made by the Office of Auditor General. In recent years, bolstered by foreign donor financial and technical support the Auditor General has produced a succession of damning reports. They reveal widespread financial indiscipline including evidence of what might be considered corruption, which Szeftel (2000) reckons has increased among the upper echelons of public service in the Third Republic. The Anti-Corruption Commission is responsible for investigating allegations of corruption but failed to make much headway during the 1990s. President Mwanawasa offered a 'new deal'

when he took office, with a declared commitment to bring to justice state officials who had misused public funds. By 2004 former President Chiluba was awaiting trial.

Box 2.8: Corruption in Zambia's Third Republic

Privatization and deregulation opened up possibilities for using political office to acquire state assets and make personal fortunes. This is not unique to Zambia or Africa... Given continuing economic hardship in the country, and the austerity programme linked to structural adjustment, the pickings from state office are often inadequate. But public office has, in a few instances, become a means of protecting individuals engaged in dubious or criminal activities.

Szeftel 2002:218, 219

The overall pattern of financial indiscipline should be understood within a context where Parliament's consideration of the government's annual budget is little more than an 'academic' exercise. The finance ministry has routinely failed to disburse all the monies to ministries, departments and other government bodies (including the Auditor General's office) vouched by parliament, on the grounds of financial exigency. But it has also presided over substantial unauthorized overspending on budget heads determined by political and other priorities decided within the executive (see Burnell 2001d). Parliament is called on later to retrospectively 'rubber stamp' these supplementary and excess appropriations, when they come to light. Even after the government began to increase from a very low base the proportion of spending devoted to social spending, in the annual budget statements from 1998 onwards, health and education have continued to lose out in the actual resource allocations.

Box 2.9: Parliament's reputation

It is clear that our current parliament is totally useless in the governance of this country. It is just an extension of State House and a very expensive one for that matter. But for all the laws they enact, real power does not lie with them, it is outside parliament.

Fred M'membe, Managing Director, The Post (Lusaka) 6 May 1996

Can institutional reform deliver?

Zambia's MPs have agreed an ambitious raft of proposals to improve the legislature's ability to contribute to the law-making process by initiating bills and more effective monitoring and scrutiny. But progress towards implementing any of these proposals and making them work effectively will depend on resources (such as for the provision of constituency offices for MPs) and, above all, on political commitment from the executive. In the meantime politicians now find themselves distracted by more immediate concerns, such as the prosecutions for corruption. President Mwanawasa's political manoeuvrings to regain MMD control of the legislature by offering positions in the government to MPs from opposition parties have also blunted the prospects for effective reform.

In any case, tinkering with the parliamentary committee system and similar steps are unlikely to make a significant difference in the absence of more fundamental and wide-ranging changes (see Burnell 2003). Four suggestions are, first: giving parliament greater powers to enforce ministerial accountability, so that the answerability of ministers to parliament is backed up by a real threat of sanctions in the event of non-compliance with legitimate and well-founded demands by the legislature. This could mean giving parliament the right to censure ministers individually or collectively, such as by passing a motion of no confidence, possibly with the consequence that the president is required to dismiss anyone who does not secure the confidence of the house.

Second, a permanent transformation of the political party system that ends the political dominance of the governing party would give opposition MPs a stronger incentive to behave as conscientious watchdogs. Otherwise, notwithstanding an enhancement of parliament's powers vis-à-vis the executive the government would still be able to take the legislature for granted (on the parties see section 3 below).

Here a third factor comes into play, namely the political culture especially among the political elite. Why do people enter politics and what do they conceive to be their duties and responsibilities? In Zambia party leaders often seem to lack genuinely principled political convictions and their party loyalties seem to be superficial, something that can discredit politicians in the eyes of the public. Bratton (1999: 559) in an attitude survey conducted in 1993 found 73 per cent of respondents agreed with the statement 'most government officials and politicians are mainly concerned with enriching themselves'. So,

even if parliament had more power and the party system is more balanced than it was in the 1990s, the collective interest of politicians in using power to serve personal ends might still produce perverse results. Economic mismanagement by the government and a failure to address the concerns of marginal and underrepresented groups - typically the chronic or ultra-poor - could well persist, so long as traditional informal patterns of behaviour among the political elite remained the same.

Finally, there is an argument that a more effective role for parliament in making government accountable could actually serve the interests of the government. By enhancing its legitimacy and requiring it to be a more effective instrument of the public good a government could hope to enjoy greater popularity and see its chances of re-election increased. That, after all, is a core assumption of democracy. But making the political executive more accountable to parliament and the people will not necessarily improve performance if the capacity of the bureaucratic executive remains weak and highly constrained by shortages of finance and skills. Thus even where extra pressure on the political executive translates into greater bureaucratic accountability, other improvements in administration and greater financial resources might still be essential for there are to be a significantly improved contribution to the democracy's performance legitimacy.

At this point the role of the international financial institutions becomes important, and not only as providers of financial and technical support to 'capacity-building' in government. The fact that inside Zambia executive predominance has continued unabated underscores the limits of what can be expected from outside intervention. At the same time it also helps explain why such predominance persists. Just as for ministers it can be more important to attend to their relations with the president than to their personal standing in parliament, so for the executive branch managing the government's relations with the Bretton Woods institutions must often take precedence over addressing the people's needs expressed in Parliament. Indeed, Zambia could be considered an example of what Mkandawire (1999) called a 'choiceless democracy'. Institutions do indeed matter, and for developing countries like Zambia some of the most significant institutions are not home-grown ones that are amenable to drastic change through the agency of domestic political struggle (see section 4 below).

Section 3

Party politics in Zambia

From reading Chapter 12 of *Politics in the Developing World* you should now be familiar with the basic meaning of democratization. Chapters 5 and 8 will have introduced you to the significance of ethnopolitics and civil society respectively. From Web Case Study One you will be familiar with issues and themes in the building of parties and party systems in developing countries, especially in new democracies. You are advised to consult Chapters 5, 8 and 12, and Case Study One if you have not already done so, as their contents are not repeated here.

Introduction

Zambia has an uninterrupted history of party politics going back to well before independence in 1964. From 1964 to 1971 (First Republic) Kaunda's United National Independence Party (UNIP) formed the government but was in electoral competition with the Zambia African National Congress, which drew most of its support from the south and west of the country. A *de jure* one-party state was then declared (Second Republic). The reason Kaunda gave for this was to prevent ethnic divisions becoming increasingly politicized and fuelling open conflict that could turn to violence, so frustrating his post-colonial project to build 'one Zambia, one nation'. Kaunda's critics, however, claim he was more concerned about the possibility that UNIP might be about to lose its dominant position.

In 1990 popular pressure for a return to political pluralism brought the reinstatement of multipartyism and the emergence of a new party, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), which has furnished the government ever since. The MMD under Chiluba won easily again in the 1996 elections, which were contested by several parties although UNIP boycotted the election. In the 2001 elections the MMD's presidential candidate, Levy Mwanawasa, narrowly won the presidency with less than 30 per cent of votes cast, which represented less than 20 per cent of registered voters. The MMD failed to secure an overall majority of seats in the parliament, with the main opposition party, the United Party for National Development (UPND), gaining 49 seats to MMD's 69 out of the total of 150

elected MPs (see Burnell 2002b). By-elections since then have helped the MMD regain supremacy in the legislature.

The party system

For much of Zambia's history one party has been dominant, first UNIP, then MMD. There is some merit in saying that the party system is best characterised in terms of what Sartori called a predominant party system (Sartori 1976, and see Burnell 2001b). That means a system where opposition to the ruling party is permitted and the ruling party cannot be certain that it would retain power under the conditions of an entirely 'free and fair' election. For most of the 1990s there were around thirty registered parties. From time to time defections from the MMD's ranks in parliament including a number of senior ministers, parliamentary by-election defeats, and talk of mergers or coalitions among varying combinations of opposition parties made the MMD's dominance look insecure. The MMD's fear of losing office helps explain why obstacles were placed in the way of a 'level playing field' in the run up to the 2001 election and during the actual campaign (Burnell 2001b).

In the end, the erosion of the MMD's dominance and the achievement of parliamentary representation by several different parties in the 2001 election owed a lot to the MMD's poor performance in office. But there is no guarantee that even if the government's performance fails to improve, Zambia will not sooner or later revert to the familiar pattern of a predominant party system with a dominant party. This is because the benefits available to the party in power can and always have been used to strengthen its position. In this respect Zambia is a classic case of neo-patrimonialism in politics. And the highly presidential nature of the polity with its characteristic feature of 'winner-takes-all' together with the first-past-the-post electoral system continue to mean that the political opposition is more likely to be fragmented than it is to offer a strong cohesive alternative to the party in power (Rakner and Svåsand 2004). Thus the party system seems likely to remain underinstitutionalized, an obstacle to democratic consolidation.

Box 2.10 Zambia's party system and democratic consolidation

There is no reason to assume that Zambia 'needs' a particular kind of party system in the sense of a specific number of parties or of specific ideological orientation, save that of upholding the democracy and preventing territorial dissolution. But for democracy to be consolidated the electorate must be able to evaluate party performance over time. This requires enduring parties and politicians who act as party representatives, rather than switching unexpectedly from the role of opposition member to ally of the government'.

Source: Rakner and Svåsand 2004: 64

Differentiation of the parties

In the struggle for independence and the years following 1964 UNIP had a clear sense of purpose based on the commitment to win freedom and build a united independent Zambia. Kaunda's own philosophical beliefs woven into a doctrine he called humanism contributed a broadly African socialist orientation, positioned somewhere between capitalism and Marxism-Leninism. Combined with the desire to wrest economic power from foreign hands 'humanism' led to a heavily statist approach to managing the economy. However it was never very popular. The MMD offered a distinct alternative, namely acceptance of neo-liberal economic thinking, and a greater willingness to co-operate with the Bretton Woods institutions to implement policy measures closely identified the 'Washington consensus'. The voters were presented with a real choice in 1991.

Subsequently, a focus on personalities, especially increasingly acrimonious rivalry between Chiluba and Kaunda dominated much of the political 'debate'. The great majority of smaller parties have been little more than vehicles for their party 'president' to gain some limelight. Few parties have been predisposed towards internal party democracy, and even the more notable ones have failed to offer much variety in their ideology or coherent programmes substantially different from the MMD's stated policies. Party cleavages in Zambia have never been based on anything resembling conventional western class lines, and neither do they neatly coincide with a division into urban and rural populations. Moreover party links with civil society organizations have been weak, although for some time Chiluba cultivated good relations with certain of the Christian

churches. But the very poor in Zambia have been consistently under-represented in all of the parties; it has been left to the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, from civil society, to speak out on their behalf. So, what most clearly differentiates the parties in the Third Republic can be summarised as the MMD's exceptional access to patronage; the MMD's responsibility for the government's failure improve development in the 1990s; and ethnic and regional divisions.

Regional and ethnic identities still do matter in as much as politicians actively seek to build their political base first in their home province and among the ethnically defined communities to which they as individuals belong. At the same time some seize opportunities to make 'character assassinations' on their opponents for being 'tribalist'. But contrary to experience in some African countries party politics in Zambia has proven adequate to the task of accommodating plural ethnic groups without degenerating into widespread inter-communal violence. In fact Scarritt (2004) argues convincingly that multiethnic parties based on shifting ethnopolitical coalitions have predominated throughout the period since independence, and the very few ethnic parties that have emerged from time to time have been small, enjoyed very limited electoral success and proven to be short lived. The fact that there are no less a than 73 ethnic groups and over 70 different language varieties contained within 15 to 20 distinct language groups (of which there are four main ones) is probably one contributory factor to this. And Molteno's (1974) argument that 'tribalism' understood as revolving around some kind of primordial identity does not offer an accurate depiction of society let alone an explanation of political behaviour in Zambia has stood the test of time well. In fact the considerable extent to which Zambia's ethnic landscape today is the historical product of processes of administrative categorization, political mobilization, and socialization has been carefully revealed in a fascinating article by Posner (2003).

Box 2.11 The colonial origins of ethnic cleavages

The contours of Zambia's contemporary linguistic landscape – the number of groups, their relative sizes, and their distribution around the country – have their roots in specific policies and actions taken by the Northern Rhodesia colonial government and its missionary and mining company partners.

Posner 2003: 142.

The electoral process

Elklit (1999: 40) identified twelve steps of the electoral process encompassing steps before, on and after polling day. In Zambia in 2001 there were claims of irregularities or cause for concern surrounding most of them (see Burnell 2002b).

Box 2.12: Twelve steps of the electoral process - areas of concern

1. Establishment of the legal framework
2. Establishment of adequate organizational management structures
3. Demarcation of constituencies and polling districts
4. Voter education and voter information.
5. Voter registration.
6. Nomination and registration of parties and candidates.
7. Regulation of the electoral campaign
8. Polling.
9. Counting and tabulating the vote.
10. Resolving electoral disputes.
11. Election result implementation.
12. Post-election handling of the election material.

Elklit 1999: 40

In consequence three losing presidential candidates in 2001 made a legal petition contesting Mwanawasa's victory; and in some of the parliamentary contests the result was disqualified after judicial process. However, the election also illustrates the difficulties involved in determining how 'free and fair' or exactly how unfree and how unfair an election really is, in these circumstances. Many political and administrative decisions and non-decisions (these are where an issue is deliberately ignored or suppressed, so as to achieve a mobilisation of bias) by President Chiluba, the government, the formally independent Election Commission, and the different parties and their campaigners all affected the result. And it is difficult to gauge whether and how far the effects bore out any of the premeditated intentions. (see Burnell 2002b). Even so, Zambian observers from among the civil society organizations and observers from the international community most notably from the European Union Election Observation Mission and the US's Carter

Center levelled serious charges against the conduct of the election on the day. Before polling day, the Electoral Commission, hampered by the government's slow release of monies and EU financial support, could have done more to ensure a higher rate of voter registration. A survey of Zambia conducted by Bratton (1999: 570) in 1993 revealed voter registration to be 'the single most important determinant not only of citizen's voting behaviour but also of overall participation, outweighing any other institutional, cultural, or social consideration'. But mistakes by the opposition, their refusal to unite behind a single candidate being the most obvious, also help account for the failure to dislodge the MMD from the presidency. By conserving their limited funds for the election campaign they allowed the MMD and its allies in the public service to mobilise a disproportionate number of its own supporters onto the electoral register.

Nevertheless, even though the legitimacy of the government returned by the 2001 elections has been questioned, as it was in 1996, Zambia has consistently shown that it is capable of conducting elections peacefully. What is more the contestants either accept the people's verdict or, if they contest the declared result, do so through due legal process. This is a plus for democracy and rule of law. But until the next general elections are held we will not be in a position to know if the voters' confidence in the electoral process has survived the failure to remove MMD from power in 2001.

Section 4

Zambia and the world

From reading Chapters 2 and 3 you should now be familiar with some basic issues in the international relations and international political economy of developing countries. Chapter 11 will have introduced you to problems of violent domestic conflict and state failure and state collapse. You are advised to consult Chapters 2, 3 and 11 if you have not already done so, for their contents are not repeated here.

Zambia in the region

As a landlocked country Zambia has borders with eight other countries: Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC, formerly Zaire). In Zambia's Northern Province there is Lake Tanganyika, which has shores with Burundi. Zambia's various peoples share close ethnic ties with many of their neighbours. Kenneth Kaunda's family hailed from Malawi and speculative claims in the Zambian press place Frederick Chiluba's background in Zaire. As a large country with heavy seasonal rains and an underdeveloped infrastructure, internal transport and communications can be poor, especially around the more outlying rural areas. This, together with extended rail connections to the sea at Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania and via Zimbabwe to South African ports, make Zambia vulnerable to instability in its neighbours.

Zambia's borders with so many countries almost dictates a policy of non-aggression towards neighbours, but at no time since independence has the country known stability all around. Indeed, Zambia is virtually unique in having remained stable, without experiencing civil war or other substantial political violence, in a conflict-prone region where at least one state – former Zaire –virtually collapsed. Civil war in Mozambique after independence only came to an end in 1990. Angola has had to wait another decade before seeing internal peace, by which time Zaire/The Democratic Republic of the Congo had descended into chaos (see Chapter 19b).

An interesting question is how Zambia has managed to remain politically stable, especially given the poor record of development from the 1980s on. An answer can be provided at

three levels: the relative absence of factors inside the country that typically give rise to conflict elsewhere; second, a capacity for conflict management and prevention; third, some combination of the aforementioned has insulated Zambia from contagion by conflict outside its borders.

First, the kind of forces that have given rise to violent conflict and undermined states elsewhere in Africa have been more subdued in Zambia. The multiplicity of ethnic groups has already been mentioned and, along with considerable inter-marriage and cross-cutting religious and other affiliations it means Zambia escapes high polarisation. Also, up until the mid-1970s Zambia enjoyed considerable development, and for some time afterwards the government's readiness to borrow heavily to fund spending avoided violent struggle over scarce resources. Here, the neo-patrimonial and clientelistic approach can be said to have helped social integration and nation-building. And it is not a tautology to say Zambia's rulers have displayed a fairly impressive record of conflict prevention and resolution. Kaunda gave priority to building 'one Zambia one nation'. He was helped by the fact that prior to independence there was a unifying force in the rejection of the Central African Federation - Britain's ill-fated solution to the governance of Southern Rhodesia (today's Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (today's Malawi). There was no secessionist movement within the country, jealous of the valuable natural resources located within its territory.

Second, in the Second Republic the use of UNIP's legal monopoly on power to prevent rival politicians from seeking to mobilise support on potentially divisive ethnic or regional lines was a stabilising force at a time when the country began to experience difficulty in maintaining development. Authoritarian rule was sustainable for a while, but by the time mounting discontent could have turned to significant violence Kaunda acceded to the demands for political reform – a return to pluralism - which at the time seemed to offer Zambians the possibility of a solution to their discontents.

Finally, the above factors have helped insulate Zambia from its 'bad neighbourhood', even though the country has played host to well over 200,000 refugees from different neighbouring countries, principally Angola. During the cold war Kaunda maintained good connections with the West, refusing to align Zambia with the socialist bloc and warning against Soviet political interference in the region. Later, his successor President Chiluba,

while determined to prevent political disturbances in Namibia's Caprivi Strip spilling over into Zambia's Western Province, also devoted considerable energies to bringing peace in the DR Congo. And the MMD government's formal commitment to economic liberalization also led it to pursue efforts to build on the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern African States (signed in Lusaka by eight states, in 1981). In 1993 agreement was reached to upgrade the organization to a Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), of which 20 states are now members. In 2003 a decision was taken to establish a regional customs union within COMESA by December 2004. That said, Zambia's importance in the region was bound to decline once cold war superpower rivalry ceased and the end of apartheid and onset of black majority rule restored South Africa to respectability in the international community. South Africa has now become one of Zambia's most prominent investment and trading partners but it also provides major competition to Zambia as a location for international capital and as the manufacturing hub for the entire region.

Zambia and international capitalism

Mineral resources, primarily copper, were what attracted British and other foreign adventurers to Northern Rhodesia. More white immigrants came in to settle the best land, producing grain and meat to feed the growing townships along the copperbelt. The indigenous people lost access to large tracts. Many left their villages and sought paid employment to meet the new financial burdens the authorities placed on them, which is precisely what the mining industry required. Few resources were allocated to educating the black population and the indigenous workers were denied significant opportunities to become entrepreneurs. The opportunities for small-scale domestic traders were often captured by Asians.

Copper's value increased dramatically during the Second World War, and although it dropped soon afterwards the industry flourished and remained the mainstay of the country's growing economy up until the mid-1970s. Then the internationally traded price fell sharply, and Zambia has never fully adjusted since (on the mining industry see Bates and Collier 1993: 387-90). By the late 1990s the parastatal Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM), while still the country's major foreign exchange earner no longer produced net revenue for the government.

In many ways Zambia before and after independence fulfils certain conditions spelled out by dependency thinking. The demand for, and price of, Zambia's commodities have always been determined far away. The big transnational mining companies have invested heavily in expanding competing sources of supply from countries like Chile. By the late 1990s the world copper market exhibited structural oversupply, able to reward only the most low cost producers, although the situation was reversed in 2004 partly due to rapidly increasing demand from China. Although not entirely a monocrop economy, the economic distortion of Zambia that mining encouraged has inhibited effective measures to achieve greater economic diversification. Kaunda took the industry into majority public ownership, leading eventually to ZCCM, but some commentators (Turok, 1990, for example) believe the government's national development strategy always remained heavily compromised, with severe constraints on its freedom to pursue genuinely socialist policies. In contrast other analysts identify economic mismanagement as being more responsible for the country's declining fortunes (Bratton 1994; Graham 1994). As early as 1973 Zambia sought the first of what were to be many agreements on financial support from the IMF.

Sooner or later the goose's capacity to deliver golden eggs was bound to decline; and by the time ZCCM's assets were privatised in the second half of the 1990s the government had great difficulty in realising any financial benefits, and was left holding the accumulated debt. Copper's proportional contribution to Gross Domestic Product more than halved between 1970 and 1980; Zambia's international terms of trade continued to deteriorate, and fell by over 8 per cent in 2002 alone. Once the foreign banks became increasingly reluctant to advance more credit the state was left with few means of meeting the rapidly growing population's welfare needs. It is debatable whether this outcome could have been prevented if Kaunda's rule had not encouraged a dependency culture inside the country (as for instance claimed by Chiluba on many occasions) in addition to the country's external dependency

Box 2. 13: Dependency culture in Zambia

'Kaunda's rather vague philosophy of 'humanism' dictated that the state would take care of every Zambian...the belief that the state should dictate and provide all services free of charge made people less willing to help themselves or maintain their infrastructure.

Donors, meanwhile, sanctioned such policies for decades with large flows of assistance.

Indeed, decades of party and government handouts have all but destroyed Zambia's tradition of self-help'.

Source: Graham 1994: 164

The international dependence that led to cumulative indebtedness gave increasing leverage to bilateral aid donors and the Bretton Woods institutions. In the 1980s Kaunda briefly abandoned an IMF agreement and substituted his own development plan, but this strategy proved unsustainable (Bates and Collier 1993: 406-29). By then the international community was making clear that it wanted Zambia to return to pluralist democracy. In the approach to the decisive 1991 elections the IMF stopped disbursements and the World Bank suspended negotiations on a structural adjustment loan, citing debt payment arrears and the government's reluctance to comply with requests to remove maize subsidies. The incoming MMD government inherited an external debt of around US\$7 billion – on a per capita basis one of the highest in the world. It immediately reached agreement with the Bretton Woods institutions in return for a commitment to implement key elements of the 'Washington consensus' on economic policy and institutional reform.

International involvement in Zambia's Third Republic

The effects of the economic opening and privatization that Zambia was encouraged to undertake in the 1990s decimated some of its manufacturing industries, for example in clothing, textiles and household detergents. And other factors outside Zambia's control have deterred international investors. In some measure the entire region came to be blighted by the political disturbances in Zimbabwe, although Zambia's tourist industry has been a partial beneficiary of Zimbabwe's plight. In an increasingly integrated global economy Zambia has difficulty competing with larger and more dynamic developing countries with good transport links. Zambia is one of those countries that has not yet

reaped substantial benefits from economic globalization and yet still incurs some of its costs. What have been the political implications? Has growing financial and economic dependency lessened the government's political independence and undermined its democracy in that way? There are arguments on both sides.

Evidence for saying yes includes the external influences on budgetary policy that have followed from agreements reached with the international financial institutions. For example the agreement on non-inflationary cash budgeting reached in 1993 had the effect of rendering parliament's vote of the annual appropriations meaningless. The finance ministry uses cash budgeting as a reason for denying ministries the funds they need if they are to enact expenditures authorized by parliament (Burnell 2001d: 53).

Accountability to parliament and the people is undermined. Social spending has been hit particularly hard. The setbacks to social and human development then have negative implications for Zambians' ability to develop stable democracy.

Box 2.14: Social costs of economic adjustment and political choice

any strategy to address the social costs of adjustment entails domestic political economy trade-offs. Under the UNIP, while donors financed social expenditures, the government squandered an enormous amount of public funds elsewhere. A sustainable strategy for protecting the poor must entail Zambians themselves exercising political choice among setting priorities for public expenditure'.

Graham 1994: 160

Only late in the 1990s did the World Bank acknowledge that its lending conditionalities had placed excessive emphasis on debt servicing at the expense of social needs, and since 1999 has been trying to encourage the government to adopt a more pro-poor approach. As part of the process for qualifying for debt relief under the heavily indebted poor countries initiative (HIPC) the Zambian government has engaged in developing a poverty reduction strategy. But failure to contain public spending especially on salaries and emoluments still puts obstacles in the way of persuading the international finance institutions to proceed with releasing the promised debt relief. Moreover Zambia's Parliament and parties appear to be largely sidelined in the consultations over poverty strategies, where the World Bank's approach has tended to privilege representatives of

civil society in this process. Saasa with Carlsson (2002: 65) question whether there is much government commitment to tackling poverty other than as a means to gain access to Bretton Woods finance, anyway. They say 'There is still an evident lack of a clear national vision, beyond what the donors prescribe, with respect to how poverty could be reduced'. Government and donors both are criticized for not building an institutional framework that would accommodate domestic forces lobbying for a stronger pro-poor orientation in public policy, and that would increase the capacity to implement more pro-poor policies, if monies were to be released as a result of debt relief. Instead, 'donor activities continue to operate with considerable latitude outside the unclear government framework'. (Saasa with Carlsson 2002: 133).

A further illustration of external involvement that might appear to confirm the negative political implications of dependency relates to the 2001 elections. The Chiluba government alleged foreign interference, by the European Union especially, in the form of the conditions it attached to offers of financial help to the Electoral Commission. The EU's official position was that it would respect the wishes of the Zambian people; in practice there was a widely-held belief that EU donors signalled they would not welcome attempts to change the constitution to facilitate a third term of office for President Chiluba. Later, the EU Electoral Unit strongly criticised the preparations for and conduct of the election, and this attracted condemnation by the government who accused the Unit of being politically partisan. After the election, President Mwanawasa elevated fighting corruption as a flagship policy - typically a priority for foreign donors including the Britain's Department for International Development and the Bretton Woods institutions.

However, to claim that Zambia's insertion into the international capitalist system under colonialism created a state that was unable to pursue truly socialist goals and, ultimately has secured a leadership fully in tune with the 'Washington consensus', increasingly controlled from outside, is far too simple, and not wholly correct. Many economists would argue Zambia's incorporation in the world market as a supplier of minerals played to the country's comparative international advantage at the time. Many critics hold Zambia's government responsible for consistently failing to pursue economic diversification effectively, for using copper revenues to subsidize inefficient import-substituting manufacturing activities without seeking to make them internationally competitive, and for failing to develop the country's considerable agricultural potential. They blame the

government in the Second Republic for borrowing excessively to subsidize consumption and for encouraging a dependency culture inside Zambia that stymies a productive entrepreneurial spirit now. These economic failings can be construed as the product of a political strategy by an increasingly unpopular government (Kaunda) to stay in power. Political expediency and informal neo-patrimonial politics have continued to mark the Third Republic, to the country's economic detriment. The international donors are placed in a no-win situation: either they continue to fund the public purse and risk prolonging what eventually will prove to be unsustainable, or they withdraw their support and are accused of trying to bring down the regime.

Box 2.15: Conflict of political and economic rationality

UNIP numbered among its political enemies a large portion of the commercial farmers, both expatriate and African; private businessmen; and organised labour. As a consequence, the Party was alienated from many of the most important productive forces in the economy and this feature of Zambian politics profoundly shaped, we argue, the content of economic policies... When the Party made economic policies that weakened production incentives, it therefore bore few immediate costs from doing so. The Party was therefore willing to sacrifice the interests of producers for short-run political gain.

Source: Bates and Collier 1993: 393; 398

Political patronage and economic policy

from the beginning, many African nations were caught in an institutional quagmire that led them to subordinate social and economic policy objectives to those of patronage politics. Zambia was no exception. Indeed this pattern may even have been more extreme there than in other African countries'.

Graham 1994: 151

As a political force that translated criticism of UNIP's economic mismanagement into practical action the MMD's mobilization of overwhelming support from Zambians in the 1991 elections was an essentially Zambian affair. That the political sea-change came from within the country, with the momentum being driven by support from civil society below, is incontrovertible, although how far the mood for change was driven by economic dissatisfaction and how much by political grievance is harder to gauge.

Box 2. 16: The domestic origins of political change in Zambia

The literature on the political economy of economic reform reflects the perspectives of states and donors. A top-down framework is warranted because African societies contain few organized interests that initiate, support, or understand a call for economic liberalization. Not so with political reform. Recent political openings have been prompted by mass political protest. The challenge in accounting for political reform outcomes, therefore, is to develop a perspective that allows for the inclusion of bottom-up influences from within civil society.

Bratton 1994: 122-23

Subsequently, the international community began to voice increasing criticism over governance and human rights issues in Zambia. But these criticisms were endorsed by the MMD's political opponents and Zambian civil society (Afronet for instance) actually lobbied the World Bank to push these concerns more vigorously in its negotiations with the government. Thus although it can be said the donors used their financial clout to interfere in Zambia's domestic political affairs they have also been criticised for not pressing the government hard enough in respect of political governance issues. The government has proved resistant to external pressure, anyway. Many donors felt betrayed by the Chiluba administration. Zambia certainly does not present a showcase for the achievements of international democracy promotion. President Mwanawasa was Chiluba's choice of successor, not the donors' nominee. The profile he has given to tackling corruption is a donor priority but it was also a politically shrewd decision. It neutralized Chiluba's ability to continue to exert influence from the sidelines, inside or outside the MMD, and disarmed some opposition politicians too. It has been welcomed in the country at large.

In conclusion

Zambia's continuing financial and economic difficulties mean that although dependent on imports for many things it is becoming more marginal to the global economy.

Comparatively speaking the majority of the population, who now live in absolute poverty, are less closely integrated into the structures of international capital than perhaps any previous generation. They are at the very margins of subsistence. The world-wide interest

shown in Zambia in the early 1990s as an African pioneer of economic and political reform is now past. Its appeal later in the 1990s as an oasis of political stability in the region is also now less compelling, as the worst of the violence in Angola and DR Congo now appears to be over. The greater concern could be not that Zambia is a client state but that it could become more like an orphan, possessed of too little of economic, political or other strategic value to warrant much international interest and support. Zambia today provides good material for researching the once very familiar debate that used to occupy different kinds of Marxists when writing about the developing world: between those who lament international capitalism's exploitation of poor countries and those who retort the real problem is that some such countries are not being exploited enough.

In total the external impact goes a considerable way towards explaining Zambia's current economic and political situation. For instance the colonial legacy of economic distortion and the concentration of executive power are still very much present. The severe indebtedness induced by past lending and vulnerability to global market fluctuations affecting basic commodities weigh heavily still. A number of modest improvements in the formal institutions of Zambia's democracy that the MMD government introduced in the 1990s can be ascribed in part to international pressure. But none of this can offer a complete account or full explanation of the most prominent events. For some other African countries have had different economic and political trajectories even though sharing with Zambia some basic similarities in terms of their situation in the world. These range from the sustained economic progress of Botswana's stable democracy to Zimbabwe's consistent record of rejecting international pressure (both the former Rhodesia's UDI and now under President Mugabe) and recent political decay. Domestic factors internal to Zambia are an essential part of the explanation for distinctive features like the continuing absence of substantial political violence and the return to political pluralism in 1991 ahead of almost any other reforming black African state. Analysts can never know the counterfactual: Zambia now might look very different if the 1991 elections had led on to a more balanced party system, or if in 1996 there was a real possibility of alternation in office. The 2001 elections might yet prove to have been a turning point. What Zambia does show above all is that the process of democratization can be uneven and sometimes very slow.

Questions

1. What kind of democracy is Zambia today?
2. What are the main political influences on Zambia's chances of enjoying improved economic, social, and human development and what might lead these influences to move in a favourable direction?
3. How interdependent are the condition of civil society, the nature of the party system, and the concentration of power in the presidency in a country like Zambia?
4. How far does the colonial legacy and Zambia's historical role as an exporter of mineral wealth explain the character of its politics from independence to the present day?
5. How has Zambia managed to remain politically stable in an unstable region and how long can it last?
6. In what main respects is Zambia a typical developing country and in what main respects is it untypical?

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Web links

www.zamnet.zm

Enables you to keep abreast of current developments in politics, society and economy in Zambia

www.zambia.co.zm

Styled 'The National Homepage of Zambia' includes Professor Kees van Donge's critical essay on the EU Election Mission (2001) report and a link to the site of the United Party for National Development, currently the largest opposition party.

www.sadcpf.org

The site of the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum, launched in 1996 to bring together the parliaments of the twelve member states including Zambia to give support to democracy in the region.

cartercenter.org

The Carter Center, a nonprofit non-governmental organization founded in 1982 by former US President Jimmy Carter, sent observation missions to Zambia's elections in 1991 and 2001. The site has Interim and Final Statements on the 2001 election.