

**Parties of Pressure: Opposition parties in the dominant-party  
systems of Botswana and South Africa**

**by**

**Anna Christina Parkin**

***Dissertation presented for the degree of  
Doctor in Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences  
at Stellenbosch University***



The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation (NRF) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the NRF.

**Supervisor: Prof. Nicola de Jager**

**April 2022**

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April 2022

## ABSTRACT

Democracy requires the participation of political parties to afford voters choice in terms of their representatives and to provide effective opposition. Opposition parties play an important role in keeping the ruling incumbents accountable, providing legitimacy to the system, encouraging political participation, and offering an alternative to the electorate. However, in many African multi-party democracies, opposition parties have been weak and, in some instances, weakened. In Southern Africa, the emergence of dominant-party systems has posed unique challenges to democratic competition and consolidation. It was therefore important to understand the functions opposition parties fulfil, the conditions they operate in, and the challenges they face in the dominant-party system context. Two Southern African case studies – Botswana and South Africa – were selected to investigate this.

The study thus focused on how opposition parties *remain relevant* and the challenges they face in dominant-party systems. The concept of ‘remaining relevant’ was linked to democracy-supporting functions which included legitimising, electoral participation, and accountability functions. The study was a comparative case study and used key-informant interviews as well as a desktop literature review to conduct the research. The key-informant interviews were with prominent members of opposition parties. The interviews’ data were analysed using computer-assisted data analysis software (Atlas.ti) and thematic content analysis was used to identify themes in the data.

The main findings were linked to the identified democracy-supporting functions and the challenges opposition parties experience in relation to these functions. In terms of legitimising functions, opposition parties attempt to educate people about democracy and provide an alternative to the ruling party. A challenge in relation to this was the delegitimisation of and the lack of trust in opposition parties. In relation to electoral participation functions, opposition parties were intent on providing viable alternatives to the electorate and the most important strategy that was identified was the mobilisation of the electorate. A challenge in the Botswanan case was the first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system which has favoured the ruling party. In the South African case, the electoral system was not identified as a challenge, but poor voter turnout and apathy were the key identified issues. Accountability functions were identified as central to opposition parties’ role in dominant-party systems. They also collaborate with one another and other civil society organisations to keep the ruling party accountable. A big challenge in Botswana is

the discrepancies in resources between the ruling and opposition parties. In South Africa, negative perceptions about opposition parties were a big challenge.

The study is significant because it sheds light on how opposition parties remain relevant in dominant-party systems. Opposition parties in the two cases are intent on providing viable alternatives and seek to win more power. For now, they operate as parties of pressure and are focused on a) contributing to the legitimacy of the democratic system; b) mobilizing the electorate and encouraging conventional participation; and c) holding the ruling party and government accountable. Thus, while constrained by the unlikely alternation in power, characteristic of dominant-party systems, these opposition parties still fulfil important democracy-supporting functions.

## OPSOMMING

Demokrasie vereis die deelname van politieke partye om kiesers die keuse te gee rondom hulle verteenwoordigers en om effektiewe opposisie te bied. Opposisie partye speel 'n belangrike rol om regerende bekleërs aanspreeklik te hou, regmatigheid aan die stelsel te verskaf, politieke deelname aan te moedig, en 'n alternatief aan die kiesers te bied. Tog, in baie multi-party demokrasieë in Afrika, is opposisie partye swak, en in sommige gevalle, verswak. In Suider-Afrika, het die opkoms van dominant-party sisteme unieke uitdagings vir demokratiese kompetisie en konsolidasie veroorsaak. Dit is dus belangrik om die funksies wat opposisie partye vervul, die kondisies waarin hulle funksioneer, en die uitdagings wat hulle ervaar in dominant-party stelsels te ondersoek. Twee Suider-Afrikaanse gevallestudies – Botswana en Suid-Afrika – is gebruik om dit te ondersoek.

Die studie fokus op hoe opposisie partye *relevant bly* en die uitdagings wat hulle in dominant-party sisteme het. Die konsep 'relevant bly' is gekoppel aan demokrasie-steunende funksies wat regmatigheid, verkiesingsdeelname funksies, en verantwoordbaarheidsfunksies insluit. Die studie was 'n vergelykende gevallestudie en het sleutel-informante onderhoude asook 'n werkskerm literatuuroorsig gebruik om die navorsing te doen. Die sleutel-informante onderhoude was met prominente lede van opposisie partye. Die onderhoude se data is geanaliseer met die hulp van rekenaar-ondersteunde data analise sagteware (Atlas.ti) en tematiese inhoudsanalise is gebruik om tema's in die data te identifiseer.

Die belangrikste bevindinge is gekoppel aan die verskillende demokrasie-steunende funksies en uitdagings wat opposisie partye ervaar. In terme van regmatigheidsfunksies het opposisie partye gepoog om mense op te voed rondom demokrasie en om 'n alternatief te bied tot die regerende party. 'n Uitdaging in terme van hierdie was die delegitimisering van en die gebrek aan vertroue in opposisie partye. In terme van verkiesingsdeelname funksies was opposisie partye gefokus om realistiese alternatiewe aan die kiesers te bied en die belangrikste strategie wat geïdentifiseer is, is die mobilisering van die kiesers. In Botswana was die 'first-past-the-post' (FPTP) kiesstelsel wat die regerende party bevoordeel, 'n uitdaging. In die Suid-Afrikaanse geval, is die kiesstelsel nie geïdentifiseer as 'n uitdaging nie, maar swak verkiesingsopkoms en apatie is geïdentifiseer as sleutelkwessies. Verantwoordbaarheidsfunksies is geïdentifiseer as sentraal tot opposisie partye se rol in dominant - party stelsels. Hulle werk ook met mekaar en burgerlike

samewingsorganisasies om die regerende party verantwoordbaar te hou. 'n Groot uitdaging in Botswana is die ongelykhede in hulpbronne tussen die regerende en opposisie partye. In Suid-Afrika, is negatiewe persepsies rondom opposisie partye 'n groot uitdaging.

Die studie is belangrik omdat dit insig bied oor hoe opposisie partye poog om relevant te bly in dominant-party stelsels. Opposisie partye in die twee gevalle is gefokus om realistiese alternatiewe te bied en om meer mag te wen. Vir nou funksioneer hulle as partye van druk en fokus om a) by te dra tot die regmatigheid van die demokratiese stelsel; b) meer deelname aan te moedig; en c) om die regerende party en regering verantwoordbaar te hou. Dus, terwyl hulle beperk word deur die onwaarskynlike verandering in mag, 'n eienskap van dominant-party stelsels, vervul hierdie opposisie partye steeds belangrike demokrasie-steunende funksies.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Nicola de Jager. Your unwavering support, constant encouragement, and invaluable advice have been central to fulfilling this goal. I am so grateful to have been on this journey with you. Thank you.

To the Transformation Research Unit – in particular Prof. Ursula van Beek – I am deeply grateful for the financial assistance I received. With the help of the TRU, I was able to obtain a scholarship and also funding to conduct research in Botswana.

Prof. Edwin Hees, thank you for your input and editing of this dissertation. It has been of significant value and has helped to elevate the dissertation.

To the Post Graduate office and Research Division, thank you for important training sessions and support received throughout this process. Without that, the successful completion of this research would not have been possible.

To my family, in particular my parents and in-laws, a big thank you for all of your prayers and support. To my extended family, friends, and colleagues, thank you for your interest, support, and prayers. I am truly blessed.

I am forever grateful for the love and support of my husband, Quintin, and our two young sons, Liam and Christopher, during the last few years. When I embarked on this journey in 2016, we were also starting a family and settling into our lives. Through the tough times, long hours, and self-doubt, you have been my rock and steady ground. I love you.

Lastly, to my Heavenly Father, all the honour and glory be to You. Nothing would exist without You at the centre of it. “The Lord God is my Strength, my personal bravery, *and* my invincible army; He makes my feet like hinds’ feet and will make me to walk [not to stand still in terror, but to walk] *and* make [spiritual] progress upon my high places [of trouble, suffering, or responsibility]!” (Habakkuk 3:19).

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**ABBREVIATIONS**

ACDP	African Christian Democratic Party
AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
ANCYL	African National Congress Youth League
ANN7	African News Network
BAM	Botswana Alliance Movement
BCP	Botswana Congress Party
BDP	Botswana Democratic Party
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
BIP	Bechuanaland Independence Party
BLP	Botswana Labour Party
BMD	Botswana Movement for Democracy
BNF	Botswana National Front
BOFEPUSUS	Botswana Federation of Public Sector Unions
BPP	Botswana People's Party
BTV	Botswana Television
BWP	Botswana Workers' Party
CAQDAS	Computer-assisted qualitative data-analysis software
COPE	Congress of the People
DA	Democratic Alliance
DESC	Departmental Ethics Screening Committee
DP	Democratic Party
EISA	Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
FPTP	First-past-the-post
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual
MP	Member of Parliament
NA	National Assembly
NCOP	National Council of Provinces
NDF	National Democratic Front

NDR	National Democratic Revolution
NP	National Party
NNP	New National Party
PAC	Pan African Congress
PR	Proportional representation
PSP	Permanent Secretary to the President
PUSO	United Socialist Party
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SDP	Social Democratic Party
TCA	Thematic content analysis
UDC	Umbrella for Democratic Change
USA	United States of America

## ***Chapter 1: Introduction & Research Plan***

### **1.1 Introduction & Rationale**

Democracy can only be legitimate when the electorate can choose (and change) those who govern them. Lipset (1959: 71) defines democracy in the following terms:

...a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for the changing of the governing officials. It is a social mechanism for the resolution of the problem of societal decision-making among conflicting interest groups which permits the largest possible part of the population to influence these decisions through their ability to choose among alternative contenders for political office.

This definition emphasises how important multiple parties are when competing for government power. Furthermore, another condition that is needed in a democracy is the existence of effective opposition parties; without that, government officials will not be held accountable and the public's influence on policy making will diminish (Lipset, 1959: 71). Thus, opposition parties are seen as proverbial guardians of democracy that hold the ruling party to account for their actions (Solomon, 2011: 1). They also contribute to the legitimacy of a democracy by participating in the legislative process. Their most influential role, it seems, is not only to encourage political participation, but also to provide an alternative to the incumbent ruling party (Kiiza, 2005). In his seminal work, *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies* (1966), Robert Dahl made the following statement about the existence of opposition in democracies:

The system of managing the major political conflicts of a society by allowing one or more opposition parties to compete with the governing parties for votes in elections and in parliament is, then, not only modern; surely it is also one of the greatest and most unexpected social discoveries that man ever stumbled upon (pg. xv – xvi).

In an African context, however, opposition parties are largely impotent organisations. Since the third wave of democracy, sub-Saharan Africa has experienced a multitude of multi-party elections from the beginning of the 1990s (Karume, 2004: 3). However, despite the advent



of multi-party elections, many of these systems are now deemed undemocratic. One potential reason for this state of affairs is that opposition parties are constrained and weakened. Yet, opposition parties are crucial to the democratic process because their strength and the strategies that they use are associated with the dynamics of democratisation in Africa.

This research project focused on two African cases: Botswana and South Africa. According to Freedom House (Freedom in the World: Botswana, 2020; Freedom in the World: South Africa, 2020), both are considered to be functioning democracies. Yet despite that, opposition parties in these countries are either constrained, weak and/or weakened. This inability of the opposition to win elections nationally can be linked to the dominance of the ruling parties which have been in power for a long time. In Botswana, the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) has been in power since the country gained formal independence in 1966. The dominance of the BDP is illustrated in the last two election results. In 2009, the BDP gained 79% of the seats with 53% of the vote (De Jager & Meintjes, 2013: 237). The main opposition party, the Botswana National Front (BNF), won only 11% of the seats and 22% of the vote (De Jager & Meintjes, 2013: 238). In the 2014 elections, the BDP won 37 out of the 57 constituencies which translates into 65% of the seats, but with only 46% of the vote. In 2019, the BDP won 52.65% of the vote (see figure 4.1 in Chapter 4). The Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) - an alliance between different opposition parties – became the main opposition party with 30% of the vote and 30% of the seats (17 out of 57 constituencies) (EISA, 2014). The UDC alliance was formed between the Botswana National Front (BNF), Botswana Alliance Movement (BAM) and Botswana People's Party (BPP) in 2012 (A brief history of UDC, 2016).

The case in South Africa is similar to Botswana. The African National Congress (ANC) has dominated South Africa's politics since coming to power in 1994. It has won every national election since 1994 by more than 50%. The ANC uses its liberation struggle history to maintain the support of the majority of the electorate (De Jager, 2013: 156). Opposition parties, as in the previous instances in Botswana, have struggled to put the ANC under any real electoral pressure. For example, support for the Democratic Alliance (DA) – the official opposition – has grown significantly since 1994, but despite that, the party has not won more than 25% of the national vote. This is also illustrated by the most recent election results in 2019. The DA won 84 seats out of the allotted 400; this translates into 20.77% of the vote (Electoral Commission of South Africa, 2019). The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) have

emerged as another challenger – albeit very different from the DA – to the ANC’s dominance. In its maiden national elections in 2014, the party gained 25 parliamentary seats and 8% of the vote. In 2019, the EFF’s share of the vote increased to 10.80% and 44 seats.

Even though opposition parties in these case studies are unlikely to dislodge the ruling party through the ballot box in the near future, they are still important to the democratic process. As mentioned above, opposition parties hold governments accountable; they provide legitimacy to the democratic system; and they offer the electorate an alternative (Lipset, 1959; Kiiza, 2005; Solomon, 2011). Therefore, the focus turns to how these parties *remain* relevant in a system where the political landscape is dominated by the ruling party. Due to the increase in dominant-party systems in Africa – replacing one-party systems – it has become important to look at the conditions that opposition parties operate in, the challenges they face, and the strategies they use to remain relevant in these systems. A dominant-party system can be defined as one where “one party dominates over a prolonged period in an ostensibly democratic system with regular elections and multiple parties participating in elections” (De Jager & Du Toit, 2012: 3). A second aim is to determine whether the strategies they use are similar. This would provide greater insight into Southern African politics and the nature of opposition party politics in these countries. Furthermore, it would also provide greater insight into the nature of democratic politics in dominant-party systems. The originality of the research lies in a comparative analysis of the case studies in order to build a theory around the strategies that opposition parties use to remain relevant and the challenges they face in these dominant-party systems.

### 1.1.1 Literature Review

Since the third wave of democratisation, there has been a multitude of studies on political parties in the developing world. Many of these works focus on the health and continued survival of democracy; central to this investigation is the existence of strong opposition parties. However, in Africa there is a tendency for political systems to be dominated by a single party and for opposition parties to be constrained/limited. Existing studies on opposition parties in dominant-party systems show the following trends:

a) Most of the studies tend largely to pay attention to the dominant ruling party and to the nature of that party’s dominance (Pempel, 1990; Good, 1997; Bogaards, 2004; Karume, 2004; Huo, 2005; Greene, 2008; De Jager & Du Toit, 2013);

b) When the focus is on opposition parties, they are viewed through the lens of the ruling party's dominance (Manning, 2005; Mozaffar & Scarrit, 2005; Scheiner, 2006; Solomon, 2011);

c) In many studies, the focus is on the weaknesses of opposition parties in Africa and the reasons why they remain uncompetitive (Karume, 2004; Kiiza, 2005; Manning, 2005; Rakner & Van de Walle, 2009; Teshome, 2009; Solomon, 2011).

One of the central assumptions of this study is that dominant-party systems are not conducive to democratic health in the long run. A competitive political system – specifically a competitive electoral system – is an essential part of a healthy democracy. For a system to be competitive, there must be viable alternatives to the incumbent party. This section discusses the existing literature around dominant-party systems and their impact on democracy before moving on to consider how opposition parties can remain relevant in these systems.

#### *Dominant-party systems and democratic health*

A dominant-party system develops where one party dominates a multi-party political landscape (elections and government) for an extended period of time (Bogaards, 2004: 173; De Jager & Du Toit, 2013: 3). Pempel (1990: 3 – 4) identified four dimensions that need to be in place for a party to be dominant. Firstly, the party must be dominant in numbers; it must dominate the electorate. This dominance is specifically related to the number of seats/votes won in general elections (Huo, 2005: 746). Secondly, it must have a dominant bargaining position, which means it can negotiate successfully with other parties (Pempel, 1990: 3). Thirdly, it must be dominant chronologically; in other words, it must have been the governing party for an extended period of time. Lastly, a party must dominate governmentally whereby it implements a series of interrelated policies over a number of years. However, it has to be mentioned here that Pempel focused on single party dominance in industrialised societies. The experience of single party dominance is different in a developing world context. Furthermore, according to Arian and Barnes (1974: 593), the dominant-party system:

...has often been associated with developing countries, where low levels of mobilization have sometimes combined with independence movements to give

rise to parties that seem to dominate their polities completely without doing away with democratic procedures and symbols.

De Jager and Du Toit (2013: 7 – 10) compiled criteria that could be applied to developing countries. The first criterion is the political system, which is a multi-party democracy that is characterised by holding regular elections. The second criterion is the threshold of dominance, which means that the ruling party wins general elections with a majority and that it has the ability to dominate the policy-making process. The next criterion is the nature of the dominance, which refers to the symbolic attachment that the electorate feels for the dominant party. Another criterion that is discussed is the inclusion of opposition features whereby opposition parties compete in elections, but it would be improbable for them to beat the dominant ruling party. The last criterion is the time span of the ruling party's dominance, which translates into the dominant party winning four or more consecutive national elections. Since the third wave of democracy in the 1990s, there has been a tendency in Africa for dominant-party systems to develop (Bogaards, 2004: 173; Karume, 2004: 1; Manning, 2005: 708). These dominant ruling parties enjoy large legislative majorities and they have become rooted in power (Manning, 2005: 709). Giliomee and Simkins (1999b: 12) agree that dominant parties that were former liberation/revolutionary movements “tend first to become identified with and then synonymous with the regime they established.” Furthermore, the dominant parties have more close relationships with most of the social groups than any of the opposition parties (Doorenspleet, 2003: 182). This is relevant when focusing on the two case studies (Karume, 2004: 7 – 8).

It is important to note, however, that De Jager and Du Toit (2012: 13) distinguish between hegemonic/dominant party authoritarian regimes and dominant/dominant party democratic regimes. In hegemonic regimes, ruling parties use their power in an authoritarian manner and are characterized by Freedom House as ‘not free’ or ‘partly free’. In contrast, dominant party democratic regimes are recognized as democratic regimes and are characterized by Freedom House as ‘free’. An important concept that can be linked to this, is that of competitive authoritarian regimes. Levitsky and Way (2010: 3) argue that after the collapse of communism and the fall of many authoritarian regimes, transitions have not always led to democracy. Instead, in many cases, new regimes have emerged that have combined various forms of authoritarianism and electoral competition. A competitive authoritarian regime can be described as one where formal democratic institutions and processes are

viewed as the gateway to political power (Levitsky & Way, 2002: 52). However, incumbents regularly abuse these institutions and processes so that the regime fails to meet the minimum requirements of a democracy. In addition, competitive authoritarian regimes are characterized by unfair elections, an uneven playing field, and human rights violations (Bardall, 2016: 21). Some could argue that Botswana and South Africa can be categorized as competitive authoritarian regimes. However, De Jager and Du Toit's distinction between hegemonic and dominant party democratic regimes clearly places Botswana and South Africa in the latter category, especially given the Freedom House ratings discussed earlier. The two cases can thus be described as unconsolidated, dominant party *democratic* regimes.

However, dominant-party systems present challenges to democratic rule and democratic consolidation. Giliomee and Simkins (1999a: xvii) state in the book *The Awkward Embrace: One-Party Domination and Democracy*, which focuses on dominant parties in the semi-industrialised world:

Domination has not led to continuous mass repression or the aggrandisement of power by an unaccountable elite, but there is a greater unwillingness to disperse power, a readier inclination to delegitimise opponents, and a more widespread abuse of state patronage than in systems where there is a periodic changeover of government.

It is for these reasons and others that this study moves from the assumption that such a party system can hinder democratic consolidation. An important factor when discussing dominant-party systems in the context of this study is the effect that they have on the performance of opposition parties. There are a variety of factors that limit opposition parties' competitiveness in a dominant-party system. There is a perception that in developing countries – and especially in Africa – voters generally would remain loyal to the ruling party (Giliomee & Simkins, 1999b: 339). Why is this the case? It comes back to the instrumental understanding of democracy in developing nations. Giliomee and Simkins (1999c: 339 – 340) sum this up in the following way: “Even if a dominant party supporter is displeased with what government has done, he still asks: ‘Who else but government is in a position to do things for him?’” Scheiner (2006: 13), in examining opposition failure in Japan's dominant-party system, asks how there can be a lack of political competition in a democratic system that shows unhappiness with the ruling regime. He identifies clientelism as being at the

centre of the problem: "...clientelist systems create direct and personal bonds, usually through material side payments" (Scheiner, 2006: 14). Greene (2007: 5 – 6), when writing about the experiences of dominant party rule in Mexico, identifies further challenges that opposition parties face: "they end up creating niche parties that make specialized appeals to minority electoral constituencies." This makes the probability of opposition parties gaining government control all the more unlikely.

There are also a variety of external factors that also limit opposition parties' competitiveness. Weissenbach and Korte (2010: 137) state the following: "In comparison to ruling parties, oppositional parties find themselves exposed to a highly unequal competitive environment when facing forthcoming elections." For instance, the ruling party has an advantage in terms of public and private funding, especially during elections (Doorenspleet, 2003: 182). Thus, in dominant-party systems the playing field is 'uneven'. This means that there is a great disparity between the resources (e.g. state institutions, finances, media) available to the ruling party and those available to opposition parties (Doorenspleet, 2003; Karume, 2004; Greene, 2007; Rakner & Van de Walle, 2009; Levitsky & Way, 2010; De Jager & Meintjes, 2013). Levitsky and Way (2010: 58) state that a playing field is uneven when: a) state institutions are abused for partisan ends; b) the ruling party is constantly favoured above opposition parties; and c) the opposition's ability to compete during elections is severely impeded. This situation is very unhealthy for democratic competition.

Despite the above, there are those who contend that dominant-party systems can be positive in terms of the development of a stable democratic system (Arian & Barnes, 1974; O'Brien, 1999; Karume, 2004; Spiess, 2015). O'Brien (1999: 335 - 336) states:

The partial democracy of the single-party dominant situation allows for a range of hopes, a range of possible futures: decisively better than political despair and the solution of despair, state collapse. Beyond that, the single-party culture allows for all kinds of a long learning experience.

Clemens Spiess (2015: 6) argues that single-party dominance in Africa can reconcile the needs for government stability and societal inclusion; this view is also echoed by Arian and Barnes (1974: 593). Even though Karume (2004: 6) recognises some of the negative aspects of dominant-party systems, he states that they have been important for nation

building and reconciliation in many societies in Southern Africa. These arguments could certainly be put forward when looking at the two case studies (Botswana and South Africa). However, given the unequal distribution of resources between the ruling party and opposition parties, the weak institutionalisation of political parties, and the lack of political competition in Africa, this situation does not bode well for the continued health of democracy in these cases. Due to the nature of dominant-party systems in Africa, the lack of resources and weakened state of the opposition, the focus shifts to *what* opposition parties can do to remain relevant and gain support in these systems. This will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

### *Opposition parties in dominant-party systems*

Democracy is not possible without multiple political parties which fulfil various functions and compete for office (Norris, 2004: 3). These functions include mobilizing citizens; aggregating and articulating interests; formulating public policy; recruiting political leaders; forming parliament and organizing government. The conventional view of the role of political parties, however, focuses on their quest to win political power. This is based on the linkage function that political parties fulfil between the government and political parties (Lawson, 2010: xii). Competitive parties are focused on this role by winning elections and governing. This conventional view of the key function of political parties, however, does not take into consideration the importance of opposition parties in a dominant-party system, where they are unlikely to win political office (at least for a while). These parties operate in very different circumstances. This may create the perception that these parties are not successfully fulfilling the above-mentioned functions and are not achieving the main goal of a political party, namely contending for and winning political power. This is also linked to the view that parties in new democracies in the developing world are weak and poorly institutionalized. Hague and Harrop (2004: 200) state the following: "Parties remain fundamental to the politics and governance of consolidated democracies but their significance is somewhat reduced in the newer post-communist and post-military democracies. In most new democracies, parties lack cohesion, a mass membership and even an ideology." When looking at the existing literature on opposition parties in dominant-party systems, this is also the perception. They are considered to be inherently weak, poorly organized, and unable to compete with the dominant party. But maybe their value is in being democracy-supporting institutions. In the short term they may not win office, but perhaps they keep open the democratic space, and in the long-term, this may mean there is a competitive democratic system with the possibility of winning political office. As stated in the previous section, a

dominant-party system is one where the ruling party has been in power for an extended period of time and is unlikely to be removed through an election. If that is the case, the following questions arise:

- How do opposition parties remain relevant?
- What strategies do they use?
- What are the functions that they have to fulfil?
- What challenges do they face?

Some argue that opposition parties in dominant-party systems in Africa are weak and weakened and are unlikely to win elections (Karume, 2004: 4; De Jager & Du Toit, 2013: 10). In fact, they contribute to the entrenchment of dominant-party systems (Karume, 2004: 15). This view is echoed by Mozaffar and Scarritt (2005: 404), who state that “the lack of electoral and legislative competition generally translates into dominant-party systems.” This section focuses on a few studies that could provide insight into opposition party behaviour and what they potentially do within the confines of dominant-party rule. This also provides the study with a theoretical framework that could be used for analytical purposes.

Rajni Kothari makes a crucial distinction in *The Congress ‘System’ in India* (1964) between the ruling party (party of consensus) and parties/organisations (parties of pressure<sup>2</sup>) that oppose them. He states the following about the latter:

These groups outside the margin do not constitute alternatives to the ruling party. Their role is to constantly pressurize, criticize, censure and influence it by influencing opinion and interests inside the margin and, above all, exert a latent threat that if the ruling group strays away too far from the balance of effective public opinion, and if the factional system within it is not mobilized to restore the balance, it will be displaced from power by the opposition groups (Kothari, 1964: 1162).

The concept of parties of pressure provides a lens through which the behaviour of opposition parties in dominant-party systems can be analysed and explained. If their main objective is not only to win elections and replace the incumbent ruling party, their behaviour, motives, and strategies become more interesting to study.



Greene (2002: 759) focuses on how opposition parties in Mexico overcame dominant party rule by identifying three strategies that opposition parties used. Firstly, opposition parties focused on recruitment of activists who were important for promoting opposition parties' programmes to voters. Secondly, they offered the electorate viable policy options. Given the tendency of voters to remain loyal to an incumbent party due to the benefits they might receive from policies, this is an important strategy that opposition parties can use. Lastly, opposition parties also utilised two-dimensional competition/coalitions which increased the chances of strategic voting by the electorate and enhanced the chance that the power of the ruling party could be cut. These strategies could be linked to the electoral and legitimising functions performed by political parties. Greene's study in this case is relevant because it deals with opposition parties in the developing world, dominant party-system that eventually ousted the incumbent party.

In another study that focuses on opposition party behaviour, the author attempts to examine the strategies that opposition parties in Russia use to function in a dominant-party system (White, 2011: 655). It has to be noted here that Russia, unlike the two case studies (Botswana and South Africa) that will be examined, is not considered to be a functioning democracy, according to Freedom House (Freedom in the World: Russia, 2020). However, the experiences of Russian opposition parties *vis-à-vis* the ruling party, United Russia, can enhance our understanding of opposition politics in dominated systems. White (2011: 662 – 663) uses the strategies that Greene identified in his 2002 study and refers to them as activist recruitment, ideological positioning and coalition building. He also emphasises the importance of *opportunity*; in other words, opposition parties must seize the right opportunities at the right time to curb or even break the ruling party's dominance.

A study that focuses on opposition party behaviour in an African context, is Weghorst and Lindberg's (2011) work titled *Effective Opposition Strategies: Collective Goods or Clientelism?* In this study, they attempt to explore the main strategies opposition parties in Ghana used to gain support in the 2008 elections. There is one central question to the study: what factors led voters to support opposition parties? Even though Ghana does not fall into the dominant party-system category, the actions of opposition parties in the elections provide insight into what the opposition could do to win support. Firstly, they focus on whether private goods (clientelism) or collective goods were more effective for opposition parties to gain electoral support (Weghorst & Lindberg, 2011: 1193). The findings indicate

that the opposition parties' commitment to deliver collective goods (for example: community development and representation) was more important to voters than gaining private goods (for example: material goods) (Weghorst & Lindberg, 2011: 1207). Secondly, they also pay attention to the groups of voters that opposition parties targeted. Opposition parties focused on the undecided/'swing' voters who were still weighing their options (Weghorst & Lindberg, 2011: 1199). Again, in terms of the discussion here, the emphasis is on the electoral functions that parties fulfil.

De Jager and Meintjes' (2013) look at opposition parties in two of the case studies of this study, Botswana and South Africa. The focus here is on how opposition parties remain relevant in a dominant party-system where the playing field is 'uneven'. They suggest in Botswana's case that the opposition parties should cooperate during elections by forming alliances (De Jager & Meintjes, 2013: 243). Alliances during elections could prove significant since the ruling BDP has received just over 50% of the national vote in the last two general elections (De Jager & Meintjes, 2013: 241). This could indicate that opposition parties in Botswana may opt to move away from ideologically extreme positions that appeal to a particular constituency in favour of more centrist positions in order to gain more support. In South Africa, the situation is different and therefore, the strategies that opposition parties adopt are also different to that of Botswana's opposition. Some smaller opposition parties which focus on representing the interests of a certain section of society, attempt to influence decision-making (De Jager & Meintjes, 2013: 248). These parties follow strategies like being co-opted into government or make use of smaller parliamentary committees in order to influence decision-making (De Jager & Meintjes, 2013: 249). However, they do not challenge the ruling party's power in a significant way. This corresponds with Greene's (2007: 35) conception of a niche party. A niche party refers to one that draws candidates and supporters from core constituencies and make appeals specifically to these constituents. Other parties may opt to form coalitions with other parties in local elections and cooperate with civil society associations. This also corresponds with the idea of a catchall party that attempts to expand their support base beyond the initial core constituencies (Greene, 2007: 37). Greene (2007: 38) states the following about this strategy: "By definition, when opposition parties expand into catchall competitors with broader appeals, the incumbent is threatened, and the dominant party equilibrium breaks down."

There are a few studies which focus on opposition parties and examine their strengths and strategies (Greene, 2002; Lindberg, 2006; White, 2011; Lebas, 2011; Weghorst & Lindberg,

2011; De Jager & Meintjes, 2013; Cooper, 2014; Bratton & Logan, 2015). However, not all these studies deal with dominant-party systems. This leaves a gap in the body of knowledge about dominant-party systems, because there is a need for further studies on the behaviour of opposition parties in these systems. Furthermore, there is a need for a comparative study that examines opposition parties' behaviour in several case studies aids in identifying patterns and differences.

### *1.1.2 The two cases*

The two cases were selected based on two primary criteria. Firstly, they are functioning democracies in the Southern African region: Botswana received an overall score of 72 out of 100 and South Africa received a score of 79 out of 100 from Freedom House (Freedom in the World: Botswana, 2020; Freedom in the World: South Africa, 2020). Many other Southern Africa countries (Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe) do not satisfy this criterion. Furthermore, the two case studies also provide an interesting comparison as they share similarities, such as a dominant ruling party, constrained opposition, and yet functioning democratic processes. In addition, the Presidents are not elected directly by the electorate but chosen by the respective National Assemblies.

However, there are also important differences. For instance, Botswana did not experience a liberation struggle history and hence the ruling party's dominance is not built on such a legacy. In Botswana's case, the President is very powerful with comprehensive constitutional powers. In South Africa the President's powers are somewhat constrained by parliamentary checks and balances (Good, 2004: 5; 78). Other factors that will provide interesting points of comparison are the respective electoral systems and the voter turnout in each case. This will provide insight into the electoral performance of the opposition parties and the ruling party. Botswana has a first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system for both national and by-elections and this system dictates that: "...the person or persons who received the highest number of votes being placed first and those who received any lower number of votes being placed in descending order" (Constitution of Botswana, 1966). This situation has ensured that the ruling BDP remains dominant and that it has won all the general elections since 1965 comfortably (Molomo, 2005: 31). The FPTP system has contributed to the weak representation of opposition parties in the legislature (Molomo, 2005: 40). This is a crucial factor when examining the strategies that opposition parties in Botswana adopt to gain public support during elections.

South Africa uses the proportional representation/list electoral system for both national and provincial elections (Republic of South Africa, 1996: 26). The PR system allows many opposition parties (including small, niche parties) to be represented and active in parliament. National elections entail the election of the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces, which consists of two ballots – one for the National Assembly and one for the provincial legislature. This provides opposition parties with the opportunity to try and win at a provincial level. The next section will focus on the problem statement, research questions, and objectives.

## **1.2. Problem Statement & Research Questions**

### *1.2.1 Problem Statement*

The survival and growth of democracy in Africa are dependent on the presence of strong and viable opposition parties which are competitive during elections (Rakner & Van der Walle, 2009; Lindberg, 2006). However, opposition parties in dominant-party systems struggle to challenge the ruling parties and realistically compete for government power (Karume, 2004; Bogaards, 2004; Mozaffar & Scarrit, 2005; Rakner & Van der Walle, 2009; De Jager & Du Toit, 2013). This situation could prove detrimental to the survival of democracy in these dominant-party regimes. While there are studies that deal with the nature of the ruling party's dominance in these systems, insufficient attention has been paid to the role and behaviour of opposition parties in dominant-party systems. The main purpose of this research is to focus on what opposition parties do to remain relevant in a dominant-party system context and to determine if there are similarities between the opposition parties<sup>1</sup> in the two case studies. In addition, the focus will also be on the challenges they face in the dominant-party system context.

### *1.2.2 Research questions*

This research seeks to address the following main research question: How do the opposition parties in Botswana and South Africa remain relevant in dominant-party systems?

Sub-question:

- What are the challenges that opposition parties in Botswana and South Africa face?

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<sup>1</sup> In Botswana it is the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) and in South Africa it is the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP).

### 1.2.3 Research objectives

To answer the research questions, focus was placed on the following objectives:

- i. Analysing the functions opposition parties fulfil in the dominant-party systems of Botswana and South Africa, ostensibly democratic regimes;
- ii. Identifying the challenges that opposition parties face in Botswana and South Africa, in light of the importance of competition and alternatives in a democracy.

It is important to note here that the purpose of this research is to focus *how* opposition parties in these systems remain relevant and not whether they are successful or not. Thus, there is a recognition that these are functions that are needed and an attempt to fulfil these. In other words, these functions are aspirational.

### 1.3. Theoretical points of departure

The preceding parts introduced the central focus of this study (opposition parties in Southern African dominant-party systems) and the case studies that will be examined and compared. It became clear that the existing literature on dominant-party systems lacks systematic analysis of opposition parties' behaviour and their attempts to remain relevant. In this section, the focus is on engaging with some of the concepts and theoretical elements which will be important for analytical purposes. This includes conceptualising 'remaining relevant' in African dominant-party systems.

The concept 'remain relevant' in this context refers to the functions that opposition parties fulfil in support of democratic consolidation. This denotes the different functions of political parties in a democracy which include the following: aggregating and channelling interests; representation of interests; mobilisation of the public; sources of governance; maintaining government accountability (De Jager, 2010: 107 – 108). Sartori (1976: 107) focuses on the relevance of parties by looking at different 'rules' about whether parties can be counted or discounted in a democratic system. Firstly, he argues that no matter how small a party is, if they have coalition potential and the ability to influence the make-up of government then they are relevant. In other words, they have governmental relevance. There is also another variation that he identifies in relation to this: the blackmailing potential of parties. In other words, the extent to which parties can hold the system 'ransom', in particular the functioning of parliament and the passing of legislation. Secondly, parties can be deemed relevant if they can change the tactics of party competition and the direction of governing-orientated

parties (Sartori, 1976: 108). In terms of this thesis, 'remain relevant' will be based on democracy-supporting functions that political parties fulfil. These include legitimizing, electoral participation, and accountability functions. These functions are described in greater detail in Chapter 2.

Another important concept is that of dominant-party systems. A dominant-party system develops where one party dominates a multi-party political landscape (elections and government) for an extended period of time (Bogaards, 2004: 173; De Jager & Du Toit, 2013: 3). Pempel (1990) and De Jager and Du Toit (2013) identify different criteria for a system to be considered a dominant-party system. This is unpacked and discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. Furthermore, opposition parties in dominant-party systems are important to look at. Rajni Kothari's (1964) concept of 'parties of pressure' becomes important. He defines it as follows:

These groups outside the margin do not constitute alternatives to the ruling party. Their role is to constantly pressurize, criticize, censure and influence it by influencing opinion and interests inside the margin and, above all, exert a latent threat that if the ruling group strays away too far from the balance of effective public opinion, and if the factional system within it is not mobilized to restore the balance, it will be displaced from power by the opposition groups (Kothari, 1964: 1162).

This provides the study with a clear concept of opposition parties and the role they play in dominant-party systems. This will be further explored and discussed in Chapter 2. The next section is focused on describing the study's research design and methodology.

#### **1.4 Research Design & Methodology**

The study is qualitative in nature and is a comparative case study. It is comparative because it seeks to gain understanding through the comparison of political phenomena in different contexts. Cases are used because a case study is focused on an in-depth examination of a problem. This is relevant to this study because of the focus on the Botswanan and South African contexts. The two cases were selected based on shared features (dominant-party systems, democracies, Southern African context). In other words, the study was delimited to these two cases.

Key informant interviews with influential party members were used as the primary data collection tool. This was motivated on the basis of the insights that these individuals could provide. Key informants were chosen from various parties in Botswana and South Africa. In Botswana, Botswana National Front (BNF) members of the coalition – Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) – and the Botswana Congress Party (BCP)<sup>2</sup> were identified and interviewed. This took place during the course of a week in August 2017. In South Africa, members from the Democratic Alliance (DA) and a member from the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) were interviewed in 2018 and 2019 respectively. Initially, the DA and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) were identified as the key parties in South Africa. However, the EFF did not respond to requests for interviews. The decision was made to pursue the ACDP who could offer other insights because they were a small opposition party who have had representation in Parliament since 1994. In addition, secondary data was also collected in the form of a desktop literature review. This included a literature review and statistical data that were collected and tabulated (e.g. Afrobarometer).

The data analysis was focused on the data collected from the key informant interviews. Computer-assisted qualitative data-analysis software (CAQDAS) in the form of Atlas.ti was used to conduct the data analysis. The interviews were transcribed and coded, in other words breaking the data down and categorising the data. This was a combined approach between inductive and deductive methods. Inductive coding was used and was focused on the patterns that emerged during the course of the interviews. Deductive coding was used via the interview schedule and theoretical framework that underscored certain codes. The codes were divided into two groups - 'opposition party relevance' and 'opposition party challenges'. For 'opposition party relevance' there were 9 codes across three themes. For 'opposition party challenges' there were 7 codes across three themes. Thematic content analysis (TCA) was used to analyse and provide an in-depth discussion of the data. TCA is used to identify themes/patterns in the data – this was of particular significance for this study. The discussion of the themes/codes were linked back to the theoretical framework (Chapter 2) and the contextual chapters of the two cases.

There were a few limitations that needed to be overcome during the course of the study. This included the unwillingness of individuals to participate, in particular the EFF. There were also limits to conducting interviews in person due to time constraints, financial

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<sup>2</sup> This was before the BCP became a member of the UDC.

implications, and logistical factors. This was of particular relevance in the Botswanan case where I only had a five-day week to conduct interviews. In South Africa, certain party members who were approach for interviews were unavailable and I was unable to set up interviews with them. In Chapter 3 more detail is provided in relation to the research design and methodology.

## **1.5 Overview of Chapters**

### **Chapter 2 – Analytical Framework**

This chapter provides a detailed overview and analysis of the literature on political parties in a democracy and opposition parties in dominant-party systems. Attention is also paid to the nature of dominant-party systems and the constraints that opposition parties in Africa face. This chapter deals with contested concepts, the features of dominant-party systems, and the characteristics of opposition parties in these systems. Furthermore, this chapter provides the criteria that are used to compare the two case studies.

### **Chapter 3 – Research Design and Methodology**

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology that have been employed for this study. This includes a discussion on the data analysis, specifically the use of Atlas.ti to code and conduct the thematic analysis. Furthermore, the limitations of the study and ethical considerations are discussed.

### **Chapter 4 – Botswana**

This chapter focuses on Botswana through an in-depth overview of the country's institutional context. This includes a discussion on the executive, legislative, and judicial arms of government and the electoral system. The focus is specifically on the performance of opposition parties, the resources available to them, and the features of the dominant-party system since Botswana gained independence in 1966.

### **Chapter 5 – South Africa**

This chapter focuses on South Africa through an in-depth overview of the country's institutional context. This includes a discussion on the executive, legislative, and judicial arms of government and the electoral system. The focus is specifically on the performance of opposition parties, resources available to them, and the features of the dominant-party system since the country's first democratic elections in 1994.



## **Chapter 6 – Analysis and Discussion**

The penultimate chapter focuses on the analysis and discussion of the data collected during the interviews. The codes are linked to the democracy-supporting functions (as set out in Chapter 2) and the topics of *opposition relevance* and *opposition challenges*. The purpose of this chapter is to: a) identify similarities, b) differences and c) general themes in the two cases. The chapter also presents a discussion of the conditions within which the opposition parties function and the strategies/actions that opposition parties have adopted in order to remain relevant.

## **Chapter 7 – Conclusion**

The final chapter presents: a) the concluding remarks on the study; b) the main findings; c) the original contribution that the study makes to the existing body of knowledge; and d) possibilities for further research in this area.

## **Chapter 2: Analytical Framework**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The existence of political parties and the subsequent political competition that comes with that are seen to be essential elements in a democratic political system. The importance of this research lies in contemplating the health of democracy in the dominant-party systems of Southern Africa, specifically the future of democratic consolidation in the two cases of Botswana and South Africa. These dominant-party systems seem to provide unique challenges to the political competitiveness in democratic systems. The interest of this study is not how parties become dominant or how ruling parties remain dominant, but rather *how* opposition parties remain relevant in these systems and the context they operate in.

Thus, in order to create a theoretical framework that could assist in answering the main research question, this chapter focuses on certain themes: the functions of political parties in democracy; the importance of political parties in the developing world, particularly in Africa; and the impact of dominant-party systems on the health of democracy. One of the central premises of the research is that for a democracy to be healthy, there needs to be a competitive party system. Therefore, the focal point of this theoretical discussion is *how* opposition parties can remain relevant in dominant-party systems and how they could potentially expand their influence. All of this will provide the study with a theoretical framework that will be used to discuss and analyse the two case studies.

This chapter includes the discussion of various aspects related to political parties, their functions in democracy, and the dominant-party context. Firstly, the definition and classification of political parties are discussed. Secondly, the functions political parties fulfil in a democracy are focused on, in particular how these functions are linked to democratic consolidation. These include functions toward a democratic political culture (legitimising); democratic participation (electoral participation); and democratic governance (accountability). In addition, the following are discussed: political parties and democracy in the developing world and opposition parties in dominant-party systems.

## 2.2 The definition & classification of political parties

A political party is distinct from other organisations because its fundamental purpose is to win government power (Heywood, 2013: 222). Political parties have four distinct characteristics: a) the goal of exercising power by winning political office or at least influence decision-making if it is a small party; b) they are organisations with formal membership; c) they are united by common goals, ideology, and preferences; and d) they have a broad focus and attempt to address a variety of policy issues.

Various scholars have focused on classifying different political parties and the features they display (Panebianco, 1988; Gunther & Diamond, 2003; Simon, 2003; Sartori, 2005; Krouwel, 2006). This investigation will be helpful when examining opposition parties in the dominant-party systems of Southern Africa. However, a problem that must be kept in mind is that most party models have focused on Western European and American contexts (Krouwel, 2006: 249). Thus, it may be problematic to apply these models to an African context.

Political parties emerged in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Europe and were shaped by certain circumstances and social changes (Duverger, 1954; Klingemann, Hofferbert & Budge, 1994; Scarrow, 2006; Simon, 2003). The emergence of political parties can be broadly linked to the advent of democracy in Europe (Duverger, 1954: xxiii; Scarrow, 2006: 17). This led to a subsequent broadening of the suffrage and the transfer of political power to the legislature. Duverger (1954: xxx – xxxvi) argues that political parties also emerged outside of parliament from other societal groups. He identifies the following groups and associations that have contributed to the birth of political parties: trade unions; agricultural cooperatives and peasant associations; philosophical societies; churches and religious cliques; ex-servicemen associations; commercial and industrial groups. Thus, the origins of parties can be linked to societal changes that occurred, particularly in Europe.

Other scholars have also emphasised the changing social landscape and issues that emerged out of that. Klingemann *et al.* (1994: 5) state:

Historically, parties emerged out of conflicting interests – newly emerging interests versus interests threatened by forces of change. The differences among modern political parties can be traced back to the social cleavages dominant at the time of their founding. These cleavages formed a general pattern across the lands now occupied by modern democracies.

Gunther and Diamond (2003: 173) also argue that several types of parties emerged out of a particular social and technological context and argue that “this ‘founding context’ can leave a lasting imprint on the basic nature of the party’s organization for decades to come.” Thus, when investigating several types of parties, the origins of such parties become relevant and important to explore.

The classification of political parties can be a challenging task due to the sheer number that exist. Furthermore, the criteria used for classification are also not standardised. For instance, should the focus be placed on organisational, ideological, functional or behavioural features? Many party models also focus on a single feature, usually organisational or functional characteristics that may neglect other key features (Krouwel, 2003: 249; Gunther & Diamond, 2003: 169; Sartori, 2005: 6). It is therefore important to focus on typologies/models that focus on more than one feature/criterion.

### *2.2.1 Elite/cadre parties*

The first type of parties that developed was based on a small cluster of elites that were usually made up of parliamentary representatives (Duverger, 1954: 1; Gunther & Diamond, 2003: 175). Gunther and Diamond (2003: 175) and Sartori (2005: 11) argue that the early elitist parties comprised so-called ‘notables’, in other words, prominent members of the land-owning aristocracy. Furthermore, these would be representatives from the same region who were bound together to defend their local interests (Duverger, 1954: xxiv). Initially, these aristocratic representatives used their personal relationships and local prestige to attain public office. They tended to lack organisational strength.

Since then, with the advent of universal suffrage, these parties have evolved from primarily rural, traditional organisations of aristocratic notables to ones that could adapt to a changing environment (Gunther & Diamond, 2003: 176). What emerged from this was a so-called clientelistic party that focused on the provision of patronage whereby there is an exchange of favours that became the primary electoral mobilisation tool (Gunther & Diamond, 2003: 176; Krouwel, 2006: 254).

The origins of elite/cadre parties have left a lasting impact on the make-up of these organisations. Wolinetz (2002: 140) states about elite/cadre parties: “Cadre parties are loosely structured, elite-centred parties with minimal organisation outside of the legislature”. Neumann (1990: 46) argues that these are parties of individual integration marked by limited

participation. Modern elite/cadre parties are dominated by a small group of leaders at the centre, even with the presence of a large party membership. In terms of elite/cadre parties, the participation of members is limited while the core leadership plays a vital role. Given this loose organisational framework and lack of emphasis on committed membership and participation, these parties also do not emphasise ideology in their electoral programmes (Gunther & Diamond, 2003: 175). In many ways, the next type of party is the opposite of elite/cadre parties and developed as an antithesis to elite/cadre parties.

### 2.2.2 Mass parties

Mass parties were also a product of 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, as the “manifestation of the political mobilization of the working class in many European polities” (Gunther & Diamond, 2003: 178). They differed from the elite/cadre parties in the following ways: a) their origins lay *outside* of parliament; and b) there was an emphasis on membership, especially groups that had previously been excluded from political participation (Krouwel, 2006: 254).

These parties are focused on the incorporation of excluded groups into the political system and aim to redistribute economic, social and political power (Krouwel, 2006: 254). Mass parties, in contrast to elite/cadre parties, require strong commitment and participation from their members (Gunther & Diamond, 2003: 178; Krouwel, 2006: 254). This does not, however, mean that there is less control exercised by those in leadership positions. Panebianco (1988: 264) refers to the importance of the representative bureaucracy that is “used by the mass party leaders to maintain close ties with the members, with the *class gardée*.” His concept of mass bureaucratic parties stresses the importance of the party bureaucracy.

These parties – also referred to as parties of integration (Neumann, 1990: 47) – aim to infiltrate various spheres in society and form links with other societal organisations (e.g. trade unions). The result of this is the creation of a large membership, hence the term ‘mass party’ (Sartori, 2005: 15). However, according to Wolinetz (2002: 143), modern mass parties may exhibit a variation. A modern ‘mass’ party is not necessarily just characterised by a large membership base, but how *involved* those members are in the activities of the party. Thus, it is not the size of the party that matters, but the extent to which members are expected to participate. This commitment and involvement of members are linked to the ideological convictions that a mass party espouses. Thus, an important feature of mass parties that sets them apart from elite/cadre parties, is the importance of ideology. These

ideological commitments could either be to socialism, nationalism or a religion (Gunther & Diamond, 2003: 178).

The extent of these ideological or programmatic commitments also plays a key role in whether mass parties are tolerant and pluralist, or tend to seek a radical overhaul of the political system (Gunther & Diamond, 2003: 178). On the one hand, those mass parties that are tolerant and pluralistic accept the democratic system and function within its rules and institutions. In contrast, mass parties that seek to gain a hegemonic position in a society want to replace a democratic system with a more radical one that would achieve its radical objectives. Thus, in terms of these types of parties, there is an emphasis on participation from their members, strong ideological convictions, and an attempt to integrate formerly excluded groups into the political system.

### *2.2.3 Left-wing and right-wing parties*

The left-wing/right-wing divide has dominated party politics in the Western world for most of the 20th century. Left-wing and right-wing parties' positions differ on a variety of issues, most notably how the economy should be managed. Along with that there are differences between them in terms of social issues and policy goals (Cochrane, 2011: 104). According to Cochrane (2011: 107), left-wing and right-wing parties are characterised by their different ideological inclinations toward the following: free-market materialism, religion, out-group intolerance and equality. Left-wing parties are focused on change via social reforms or economic transformations (Heywood, 2013: 224). It must be noted here that the nature of left-wing/right-wing parties is very dependent on the contexts they operate in. A left-/right-wing party in Africa will be very different from one in Europe or the USA.

The divide has become more prominent in recent years, specifically in relation to issues of social justice. Left-wing parties have moved to represent minority interests such as women's rights and LGBTQIA+ interests. Right-wing parties have traditionally opposed these liberal, progressive notions. In many ways, right-wing parties are linked to neo-conservatism and neo-liberalism. Neo-conservatism is focused on the restoration of traditional values (family, religion, and the state), the reassertion of authority to ensure social stability, and the emphasis on shared values and culture (Heywood, 2013: 38). Neo-liberalism emphasises the importance of the market economy and advocates for the roll-back of the state, in other words, less state intervention in society especially in the economy.

There has been a rise in right-wing populism in Europe (Brexit) and the USA (Trump presidency). However, it could also be argued that we have seen a left-wing backlash to these events in the form of anti-Brexit sentiment as well as the Black Lives Matter movement in the USA. Huber and Schimpf (2017: 148) state that populist left-wing parties focus on the issue of class, while right-wing populist parties tend to focus on the issue of culture when defining *the people*. Left-wing populist parties tend to focus on the ills of capitalism while right-wing populists focus on the threats from 'outside'/foreign groups to the idea of *the nation*.

#### 2.2.4 Electoral parties

Electoral parties present an evolution from the previous two-party types. The origin of electoral parties lies in the waning influence of ideologically driven mass parties in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Europe (Krouwel, 2006: 256). These changes have occurred due to the changing social conditions, where class differences slowly dissipated with the growth of the middle class and the spread of education. Panebianco (1988: 264) developed the concept electoral-professional parties that emphasised the professionalisation of parties and greater efficiency during elections. The central aim of electoral parties is the attainment of as much electoral support as possible. Thus, in parties such as these, ideology and membership become less important, while "the party's gravitational center shifts from the members to the electorate" (Panebianco, 1988: 264).

Gunther and Diamond (2003: 185) argue that electoral parties are ones that do not have a strong organisational framework aimed at mobilising members; rather, their key function is conducting an election campaign. This corresponds with Sartori's (2005: 17) view that "the electoral mass party builds machines which are election-orientated". This also involves moving away from strict ideological convictions towards an attractive electoral mandate that could attract more voters. There is evidence that party programmes do matter when it comes to winning the support of the electorate (Klingemann *et al.*, 1994: 20). There is a perception that parties aim to formulate policy programmes and place focus on certain issues in order to win the largest amount of support (Klingemann *et al.*, 1994: 22).

Electoral parties use modern campaign methods (television and other forms of mass communication; social media) and rely on professionals and experts. This corresponds with Panebianco's concept of electoral-professional parties. Thus, the main aim is to make parties as attractive as possible for voters. Gunther and Diamond (2003: 185) go on to

distinguish between three types of electoral parties: the catch-all, programmatic, and personalistic party. The first two types are pluralistic/democratic, while the personalistic party may lean towards hegemonic ambitions.

The catch-all party has a superficial organisation, a vague ideology, and is focused on elections where the main goal is to increase votes, win elections and rule (Gunther & Diamond, 2003: 186). There is a broad appeal to many different voters, but a weak link to or identification with the party itself (Krouwel, 2006: 265). The policy objectives of catch-all parties tend to shift with the public mood. In contrast to this, the programmatic party promotes a particular and consistent programmatic ideal (Gunther & Diamond, 2003: 187). Furthermore, while the programmatic party also attempts to bring together different interests, it offers a more defined party platform and also tends to target a more clearly demarcated social base of support.

In contrast to both the aforementioned types, the personalistic party represents a potentially undemocratic version of electoral parties. The focus of these parties is simply to provide a vehicle for their leader to win elections and wield power. The electoral appeal is not based on the party's ideology or programmes, but rather the appeal and charisma of its leader. The next three types of parties have emerged in recent years.

### *2.2.5 Ethnic parties*

Parties that organise specifically around the issues of identity or ethnicity are organisations that continue to play a key role in African politics. Mozaffar (2006: 239) states: "Political parties rely on ethnicity for mobilizing electoral support, especially when they are organisationally and programmatically weak, as they are in many African countries." The importance of ethnicity in an African democracy is the consequence of the uncertainty of electoral competition and the legacy of colonialism, in particular the importance of traditional kinship ties. This mobilisation in an African context has become a cost-effective instrument for programmatically and organisationally weak parties. Norris and Mattes (2003: 1) also found that ethnicity is a predictor of political support in most African countries, especially ones where there are several ethno-linguistic differences. Thus, ethnicity becomes a useful tool to mobilise voters and is inherently bound up with political competition (Eifert, Miguel & Posner, 2010: 1).



Ethnic parties differ greatly from mass parties and electoral parties in that a) they lack the organisation of mass-parties; and b) they do not offer policies that could appeal to the wider society (Gunther & Diamond, 2003: 183). Purely ethnic parties aim to mobilise people from their own ethnic group to vote. The attractiveness of ethnic parties to constituents lies in the potential benefits that voters believe they can gain from such a party (Gunther & Diamond, 2003: 183; Eifert *et al*, 2010: 31). Eifert *et al*. (2010) and Mozaffar, Scarritt and Galaich (2003) found that in an African context the salience of ethnicity tends to spike during periods of political competition.

In addition to this, ethnic parties tend to draw lines between ethnic 'friends' and 'foes' and create an 'us' vs. 'them' mindset. This can become a potentially dangerous situation, especially if the "electoral logic of the ethnic party is to harden and mobilise its ethnic base with exclusive and often polarizing appeals to ethnic group opportunity and threat" (Gunther & Diamond, 2003: 184). Findings do suggest that as material wellbeing increases, the power of traditional ties decreases.

A different type of ethnic party that Gunther and Diamond (2003: 184) identify is the congress party that is a coalition of different ethnic parties. These parties differ from purely ethnic parties in that they appeal to national unity and focus on integration rather than emphasising differences. A congress party tends to have a broad social base made up of different ethnic groups. However, the attraction of these parties is like purely ethnic parties, they provide voters certain benefits and distribute patronage to supporters.

### *2.2.6 Movement/niche parties*

Movement/niche parties are different from mainstream political parties in that they do not focus on conventional issues and employ non-institutionalised tactics (Kitschelt, 2006: 280; Wagner, 2011: 847). These parties are also engaged in 'new' politics and can be described as 'new' parties with a post-materialist orientation (Wagner, 2011: 849). According to Ignazi (1996: 552), these parties allow for more grassroots participation. He goes on to state that it is not necessarily the decline of older parties' strength that brought about the emergence of these new parties, but the decline of the role of the party members (Ignazi, 1996: 554).

Movement/niche parties bridge the gap between social movements and political parties with a fluid organisational framework and an emphasis on non-mainstream issues (Gunther & Diamond, 2003: 188; Meyer & Wagner, 2013: 1247). These parties tend to move away from

economic issues, focusing on a narrow set of non-economic issues (Wagner, 2011: 847). Thus, movement/niche parties focus on the questions that mainstream parties have ignored (Meyer & Wagner, 2013: 1248). Kitschelt (2006: 280 – 281) identifies a few features of movement parties: a) lack of formal organisation and membership; b) not focused on solving large societal problems; and c) use extra-institutional tactics such as demonstrations. There are two types of movement parties that can be identified: left-libertarian and post-industrial extreme right parties.

The left-libertarian parties adopt a specific post-material attitude, and these parties also exhibit internal diversity and no single, comprehensive ideological or programmatic set of ideals. In many ways the demands that these parties make – whether it be about the environment, feminist ideals, peace and so on – have a disjointed character (Gunther & Diamond, 2003: 188 – 189; Kitschelt, 2006: 283). Furthermore, left-libertarian parties have a strong emphasis on direct participation/democracy with little or no organisational control (Gunther & Diamond, 2003: 189; Kitschelt, 2006: 281). Lastly, these parties are also not interested in gaining widespread electoral support and functioning according to electoral logic, but are interested primarily in representing their constituency.

Post-industrial extreme right parties provide completely different answers and responses to post-industrial life. These parties represent issues on the right that have not been sufficiently focused on in mainstream politics (Kitschelt, 2006: 286). Thus, their response to post-industrial society stems from a feeling of alienation and the desire for greater order, stability, tradition, security and identity (Ignazi, 1996: 558; Gunther & Diamond, 2003: 189).

Extreme right parties also adopt a xenophobic and racist position when it comes to immigration, which is a central issue in their cause (Gunther & Diamond, 2003: 189; Kitschelt, 2006: 286). Along with that, there is clear anti-state and social welfare rhetoric. In contrast to left-libertarian parties, right-wing parties tend to be dominated by a few leaders who compete for power (Kitschelt, 2006: 287). The last type of party is a category that has frequently been discussed and debated in recent years.

### *2.2.7 Cartel parties*

The cartel party is a new type and is a category that specifically looks at the relationship between parties and the state (Wolinetz, 2002: 148; Katz & Mair, 2009: 755). The cartel

party type tries to explain parties' growing dependence on the state in the form of state resources (Bolleyer, 2009: 560).

In this case, the lines between the party and state become blurred, with parties using state resources and institutions for their own purposes (Krouwel, 2006: 259; Katz & Mair, 2009: 755). In addition to that, even though cartel parties function within a competitive political system, competition between parties is weakened. Cartel parties attempt to block competition from other parties by using legal means in their favour and focus on excluding competitors from executive office (Krouwel, 2006: 259). This type of party can be interesting to examine in dominant-party systems where the dominant parties tend to display similar tendencies.

During elections cartel parties try to appeal to a large electoral audience, emphasise their efficiency, and they are loosely organised and do not stress membership (Wolinetz, 2002: 148). However, these parties are not primarily focused on winning as much electoral support as possible, but they focus on gaining as much access to the state as possible, even if it means sharing power with other parties. In many ways, the cartel party shares some features of the catch-all party but differs in important aspects. While the catch-all party attempts to reconcile intra-party conflict by vesting decision-making power in the party on the ground, cartel parties tend to vest it in the party in public office (Bolleyer, 2009: 565). Furthermore, catch-all parties tend to view politics as a chance to strive for societal improvement, while cartel parties view politics as a profession. The closer relationship between the party and the state is "central as the state provides the institutional environment and the resources by which cartel parties can retreat from society" (Krouwel, 2006: 260).

The different types of parties will provide a framework for the discussion of the opposition parties in Botswana and South Africa. The functions that political parties play are also linked to the history of political parties and the several types of parties that exist. The next section will focus on the importance of political parties, the concept of democratic consolidation, and the functions of political parties in democracies.

### **2.3 Democracy and the indispensability of political parties**

The presence of political parties is an important ingredient for a democracy to function optimally. Moreover, free and open competition between different political parties is a

necessary condition of democratic politics (Simon, 2003: 3). Lipset (1959: 71) defines democracy in the following terms:

...a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for the changing of the governing officials. It is a social mechanism for the resolution of the problem of societal decision-making among conflicting interest groups which permits the largest possible part of the population to influence these decisions through their ability to choose among alternative contenders for political office.

Political parties are the institutions that provide a democratic society with the means to form a government and provide effective opposition (Diamond, Linz & Lipset, 1995: 34). According to Bonotti (2011: 19), political parties are: "...voluntary organizations that channel citizens' demands into the public political realm in order to influence the political agenda, place candidates in elections, and often (but not always) aim to obtain control of government." The definition points to a variety of functions that political parties fulfil in a democratic context.

Political parties are also key in the process of democratic consolidation and relates to securing democracy as the 'only game in town' (Schedler, 1998: 91). This concept has been of particular importance for democracies that emerged after the breakdown of communist and one-party rule. One of the fundamental aspects of democratic consolidation is to prevent a democratic state from slipping back into authoritarianism. An important element of this is to avoid democratic erosion, which is the gradual weakening of democracy and its institutions. This is significant in the cases of Botswana and South Africa that have both endured periods where democratic values and institutions have been put under pressure, especially under the presidencies of Ian Khama (Botswana) and Jacob Zuma (South Africa) respectively. A key feature for some is that in order for a democracy to become consolidated, there must be an alternation in power (Beetham, 1994: 160; Schedler, 1998: 98). There are questions around this conceptualisation because it is possible for democratic values to become entrenched even though the incumbent party has been in power for some time. However, the alternation in power argument is interesting when considering the two cases where there have never been alterations in power and where the dominant-party systems have had negative influences on democracy. Thus, opposition parties become central if we consider an alteration in power to be an important condition of democratic consolidation.

Schedler (2001: 68) argues that there are behavioural, attitudinal, and structural foundations to democratic consolidation. Behaviourally, a democracy is consolidated when everyone respects the 'rules of the game'. If actors do not conform to the democratic rules, then there is a danger of democratic erosion. Thus, there must be an absence of antidemocratic behaviour. What does this undemocratic behaviour entail? Firstly, the promotion and use of violence; secondly, the rejection of elections; thirdly, if government officials reject the rule of law and the boundaries of their office (Schedler, 2001: 71). Attitudinally, a democracy is consolidated when there is democratic consensus, not just among the political elite, but the broader public (Schedler, 2001: 75). In other words, there is an intrinsic – *not* instrumental – support for democracy. Structurally, democratic consolidation is linked to conducive socio-economic conditions and institutional factors. Poverty and inequality pose dangers to democracy because these factors can threaten democratic stability (Schedler, 2001: 81). This is a general concern in African democracies. Institutions, such as electoral management bodies, are important for democratic consolidation because they act as constraints against antidemocratic behaviour. This is also important to focus on in the dominant-party systems of Botswana and South Africa. The following section will set out and discuss the functions of political parties and these functions are linked to democratic consolidation.

### *2.3.1 Functions of political parties in democracy*

Political parties contribute to the functioning of a democracy in several ways. However, in recent years parties have increasingly been placed under pressure as the primary link between the state and society. Various scholars have pointed to a decline in party membership and popular participation in party politics – especially in established democracies (Diamond *et al.*, 1995; Dalton, Farrell & McAllister, 2011; Ignazi, 2014; Dommett, 2016). Yet despite this, there is a consensus that political parties remain an indispensable element for the proper functioning and consolidation of a democracy (Simon, 2003; Randall & Svåsand, 2002a; Van Biezen, 2004; Bonotti, 2011). Thus, it is important to look at the distinct functions that parties fulfil and how these functions contribute to sustaining and consolidating democracy.

Randall and Svåsand (2002a) divide the different democracy-supporting functions of political parties into three categories which will be useful in this discussion. These functions will relate back to the research question about *how* opposition parties remain relevant. The first category of functions is orientated towards the electorate and includes representation

and integration. The second category is associated with parties' linkage function and includes aggregating interests and the recruitment of political leaders. The third category – which is of particular interest for this study – is linked to government and includes making government accountable and organising opposition and dissent. However, there are more functions that could be added to these categories, which include political socialisation, providing legitimacy, and political activity (Simon, 2003). The categories of functions will be adjusted for the purposes of this discussion and will be linked to attitudinal, behavioural, and structural elements of democratic consolidation and will be focused on opposition parties. These categories are summarised in table 2.1.

It must be noted here that these functions are *not* mutually exclusive. Rather, they overlap and influence one another. For example, the greater an opposition party's ability to mobilise supporters, the better their chances of holding a governing party accountable or recruiting more talented political leaders. The division of these functions into these categories makes it easier to analyse and discuss the topic at hand.

#### *2.3.1.1: Functions to maintain a democratic political culture (legitimising)*

Political parties play a role in legitimising the democratic political system by helping to shape public opinion (Simon, 2003: 22). In many ways, this function relates to democracies becoming consolidated and widely accepted by the public. For a democracy to become consolidated and widely accepted, it needs people to develop an appreciation of and support for the institutions of political society, among other things (Linz & Stepan, 1996: 17). These institutions include political parties, electoral rules, leadership, elections, legislatures and political alliances. Political parties must play a role in diffusing respect, appreciation, trust, and support for democratic politics and its institutions. Linz and Stepan (1996: 18) state: "Democratic consolidation requires political parties, one of whose primary tasks is precisely to aggregate and represent differences between democrats."

Trust in democratic institutions is crucial, especially in developing countries. According to Chu and Shen (2017: 28): "Institutional trust enables a political system to establish legitimacy, especially as it relates to democracy." Institutional or political trust is also linked to citizen satisfaction and participation. Political trust can be explained by cultural theories that argue that trust in political institutions is exogenous and embedded in the beliefs that individuals have; political trust is an extension of interpersonal trust (Mishler & Rose, 2001:

31). In contrast institutional theories state that political trust is endogenous and is linked to whether political institutions are performing satisfactorily. In addition, for democracy to become consolidated it requires the broad support of the polity. There have been various attempts to define and describe the support required.

Firstly, David Easton (1975) distinguishes between diffuse and specific support. Specific support is related to the level of satisfaction people feel toward the outputs they obtain from the political system (Easton, 1975: 437). Specific support is a) “directed towards the political authorities and authoritative institutions”; b) people are sufficiently aware that their satisfaction or dissatisfaction can be associated with those in authority (i.e. government and political elites); c) specific support is also only possible in societies where those in authority can be held accountable for their actions; d) specific support varies with the benefits that people derive – if benefits increase, support will increase and vice versa. This can be linked to the notion of instrumental support for democracy. The concept of diffuse support can be linked to that of intrinsic support. Easton (1975: 444) describes it as follows: “Outputs and beneficial performance may rise and fall while this support, in the form of a generalized attachment, continues. The obverse is equally true. Where support is negative, it represents a reserve of ill-will that may not easily be reduced by outputs or performance.” This therefore refers to the deep-seated beliefs and values that people hold about a specific regime. Diffuse support is also more enduring than specific support. In the short term, it is also not linked to the performance of the regime. In other words, there is no risk of regime failure even if many are dissatisfied with the performance of the government. This type of support is reliant on the political socialization process.

Political socialisation is closely related to people’s acceptance of democracy. Through this, people “become aware of and acquire the norms, values and rules of political behaviour” (Simon, 2003: 19). Thus, political parties – along with other institutions – play an educational role (De Jager, 2010: 107; Dalton *et al.*, 2011: 6). This is of particular importance in new democracies, where citizens must acquire new values in relation to the political system (Simon, 2003: 20). Political parties play a significant role in how the public engages and views issues. This is of particular significance in terms of issue framing (Slothuus & De Vreese, 2010: 630). If people are attached to a particular political party, they are more likely to accept the views of that party in relation to certain issues. Through the socialisation process, parties – along with other institutions – help to foster a democratic political culture.

Political culture refers to the “beliefs and values concerning politics that prevail within both the elite and the mass” (Diamond, Linz & Lipset, 1995: 19). A democratic political culture refers to values and beliefs that people have in relation to democracy. This ranges from belief in the legitimacy of democracy to tolerance of opposition to political participation (Diamond, Linz, & Lipset: 19). In addition to values and beliefs people have, political culture is crucial because it informs behaviour. In other words, if there is a broad acceptance of democratic values, institutions, and processes, the polity’s actions/behaviours will reflect these values and beliefs. This is also specifically related to their participation in the democratic system. Almond and Verba (1989: 3) argue that democracy requires a participatory political culture. In their seminal work, *The Civic Culture*, they identified three different types of political culture, namely parochial, subject, and participant culture. A parochial culture can be linked to the political cultures of tribal communities, particularly in Africa (Almond & Verba, 1989: 17). In this instance, people tend to identify with their local/tribal grouping and do not expect to participate in political matters. Subject political culture is characterized by a passive citizenry who do not engage in politics and seemingly do not have a great influence over government matters. A participant culture is one where the citizenry is actively involved in politics: “...the participant culture, is one in which the members of the society tend to be explicitly orientated to the system as a whole and to both the political and administrative structures and processes: in other words, to both the input and output aspects of the political system.” A democratic political culture is crucial for political participation and providing legitimacy to the political system. In Southern African, its history of political violence and colonial oppression have had an important impact on the prospects for democratic consolidation and democratic governance. It is therefore important to take into account people’s attitudes toward and support for democracy.

Another important function that is linked to legitimising of the democratic system is the aggregating and channelling of interests. According to Bonotti (2011: 19), political parties are the “only organizations able to enhance citizens’ demands with a semi-institutional sway, thanks to their intermediate position between state and civil society.” There is a link between the function of aggregation and representation: on the one hand, parties give voice to the demands of citizens, but due to the variety and often conflicting demands, parties are also responsible for reconciling these interests and demands (Linz & Stepan, 1996: 18; Randall & Svåsand, 2002a: 6). Political parties can bring together a variety of different interests, groups and values and convert them into policies, laws, and coalitions (Diamond *et al.*, 1995: 34; De Jager, 2010: 107). According to Dalton *et al.* (2011: 6), “parties aggregate political



interests, placing them in a comprehensive and coherent form that will guide government policy if and when they are elected into office.” Thus, political parties are also able to simplify the political debate and provide citizens with easier options when making their electoral choices (Bonotti, 2011: 21; Dalton *et al.*, 2011: 6). Diamond *et al.* (1995: 34) state: “Without effective parties that command at least somewhat stable bases of support, democracies cannot have effective governance.”

Along with the functions of political socialisation and interest aggregation, political parties also help to sustain and legitimise the political system by recruiting and training political leaders. The recruitment and training of political leaders is important for attracting effective political representatives (Randall & Svåsand, 2002a: 6). Even more important than the recruitment process, is the training of political leaders. Through this, political leaders are socialised into the values and norms of a democratic political system and enabled to form governments (Randall & Svåsand, 2002a: 6; De Jager, 2010: 107; Dalton *et al.*, 2011: 6). The next section discusses the functions to promote democratic participation in more detail.

#### *2.3.1.2 Functions to promote democratic participation (electoral participation)*

One of the key functions of political parties is to mobilise the public to participate in the democratic system. This function is usually associated with elections whereby the electorate express their political preferences by choosing among different political contenders (Manin, Przeworski & Stokes, 1999: 29; Randall & Svåsand, 2002a: 24; Dommert, 2016: 86). In short, according to Simon (2003: 24), this is about an expression of the electorate’s will and, according to Randall and Svåsand (2002a: 5), it is about ‘giving voice’ to the people. This representation of the electorate can be linked to the programmes and policies set out by political parties during election campaigns (Manin, Stokes & Przeworski, 1999: 29). For political parties to gain electoral support, there is a need for them to provide a linkage between the “institutions of government and the electorate at large” (Poguntke, 2002: 1). Lawson (1988: 16) argues that political leaders do this by placing themselves in positions where important functions need to be fulfilled.

Linked with this is the integration of voters into the political system (Randall & Svåsand, 2002a: 5). Civic engagement or participation is also important for the legitimacy of the political system. Some scholars (De Jager, 2010: 108; Simon, 2003: 20; Dalton *et al.*, 2011: 6) have referred to this as mobilisation, whereby the electorate is encouraged to participate in the political system. Political participation has taken on various forms over the last few

decades. It can loosely be described as people's activities that influence politics (Van Deth, 2014: 351). Van Deth (2014) identifies four features of political participation. Firstly, it requires an activity or action. Secondly, participation is linked to people in their role as citizens and not politicians or government officials. Thirdly, participation should be voluntary. Lastly, political participation deals with the political system in a broad sense. In this description, it is clear that political participation is not a unitary activity but encompasses various potential actions. Ekman and Amna (2012: 292) distinguish between *manifest participation* and *civil participation*. Manifest participation can take the form of formal political participation such as voting or activism/extra-parliamentary participation. Activism/extra-parliamentary participation can either be legal (e.g. signing petitions) or illegal (e.g. riots, violent protests).

A concern that has emerged over the last few decades has been the lack of public engagement in democratic politics and the decline in conventional political participation in the form of voting and partisan membership (Norris, 2009: 2). Political participation has evolved to also include unconventional modes of participation. Post-industrial generations have moved away from traditional organisations such as political parties and religious institutions to express themselves. This is increasingly done via social movements, social media, and transnational networks. Given the decline in party membership and lack of interest in partisan politics, it seems that parties are struggling to fulfil the function of mobilizing the electorate (Diamond *et al.*, 1995: 34; Poguntke, 2002: 15; Van Biezen, 2004: 2). Put another way, political parties have struggled in recent years to fulfil their linkage functions, while alternative organisations (social movements, interest groups) have filled this gap (Lawson, 1988: 17). Norris (2009: 10) makes the following point:

If new social movements have now become an important alternative avenue for informal political mobilization, protest, and expression among the younger generation, as many suggest, then this development has important implications for how we interpret and measure trends in associational life.

Through electoral campaigns and other actions, political parties still play an important role in getting people to participate in the political system. The next set of functions is related to democratic governance.

### 2.3.1.3 Functions to enhance democratic governance (accountability)

The functions that are of the greatest interest to this study are the ones linked to holding the incumbent government accountable – horizontally and vertically – and providing an alternative to the ruling party. Given the nature of democratic competition, not all participating political parties can win government power. Therefore, those who remain outside of the realm of governance play a crucial role in holding the incumbent party accountable and providing alternatives for the electorate. Opposition parties offer different policy proposals and they represent the interests of a considerable number of voters (Bonotti, 2011: 19). This is of particular importance in dominant-party systems, where a single party dominates electoral competition for a prolonged period. This will be elaborated on at a later stage.

Political parties also fulfil the function of promoting vertical accountability between the ruling/governing party and electorate (Manin *et al.*, 1999: 40; Kiiza, 2005: 3). According to Randall and Svåsand (2002a: 6), political parties fulfil this role by filtering popular demands and putting it together into programmes. Thus, political parties can become the vehicles through which the citizens can hold a government accountable. Furthermore, parties also fulfil the function of horizontal accountability by keeping watch over government actions and expressing dissenting views (Kiiza, 2002: 5; Randall & Svåsand, 2002b: 7; De Jager, 2010: 107). According to Kiiza (2002: 5), “Opposition parties are free to criticize the ruling party’s policies, ideas and programs *and* offer alternatives.” Thus, political parties that have not gained government power, become a ‘government-in-waiting’. Parties in opposition can play this role effectively if the system allows for them to “organize, speak, dissent and/or criticize the party in power” (Kiiza, 2002: 5). The next section will focus on the classification of different types of political parties. This is important in understanding the different types of parties in the Botswanan and South African cases, including the ruling and opposition parties.

**Table 2.1 Opposition party relevance**

<p><b><i>Functions to maintain a democratic political culture (legitimising)</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Functions to promote democratic participation (electoral participation)</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Functions to enhance democratic governance (accountability)</i></b></p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Political socialisation</li> <li>● Aggregating interests</li> <li>● Recruitment of political leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Representation</li> <li>● Integration/ Mobilisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Forming government</li> <li>● Holding governments accountable</li> <li>● Organising opposition</li> </ul>
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*Compiled by the author<sup>3</sup>.*

## 2.4 Political parties and democracy in the developing world<sup>4</sup>

Since the third wave of democracy (between 1974 and 1990), the focus has been on the state of new democracies in the developing world (Huntington, 1991: 12). Initially, there was great enthusiasm about the political, social, ideological, and economic changes brought about by democratisation. Democracies are said to be consolidated when they are accepted behaviourally, attitudinally, and constitutionally (Linz & Stepan, 1996: 16; Schedler, 2001).

Behaviourally, it means that there are no non-democratic elements that want to replace democracy with a non-democratic form of government. Furthermore, it also means that there is a broad acceptance of the democratic rules and that actors play within those rules of the democratic game (Schedler, 2001: 70). Attitudinally, consolidation takes place when a substantial proportion of people accept democracy as the best form of government, even during times of crisis. Thus, there must be a democratic consensus (Schedler, 2001: 75). Constitutionally, it refers to the fact that both governmental and non-governmental actors and institutions adhere to democratic rules and laws as a means of conflict resolution (Linz & Stepan, 1996: 16; Randall & Svåsand, 2001: 3). As discussed earlier in the chapter, political parties are expected to play a socialising role to encourage people to accept democratic norms and values.

However, the process of democratisation and democratic consolidation have been “plagued by a series of election and post-election fiascos” (Conteh-Morgan, 1997: 1). Concerns since

<sup>3</sup> All tables and figures have been compiled by the author, unless expressly stated otherwise.

<sup>4</sup> The concept of the developing world (also referred to as the third world) does not refer to uniformly similar societies, but rather to a range of countries with diverse cultures, histories, economies and political systems (Balaam & Dillman, 2014: 296). However, there are certain features that these societies share that set them apart from the so-called developed nations or first world countries. Developing countries have high levels of poverty, income inequality, illiteracy, low life expectancy, weak governments, lack of infrastructure, dependency on foreign aid, etc. (Balaam & Dillman, 2014: 296; Pinkney, 1994: 2).

the third wave include the inability to consolidate democracy and the dangers of democratic reversal (Huntington, 1991: 17). One of the potential obstacles to democratic consolidation is the struggles that political parties face in these democracies (Randall, 2007: 634). It is therefore important that political parties in these cases receive renewed attention because of the functions they can fulfil in a democratic context (Randall, 2007: 633). This section discusses the challenges and roles that political parties play in new democracies. Along with that, special attention will be devoted to the experience of democracy and party politics in an African context.

#### *2.4.1 Political parties in third wave democracies*

The experiences of authoritarianism and political repression have meant that political parties in many third-wave democracies have been weakly institutionalised (Mainwaring & Torcal, 2006; Karp & Banducci, 2007; Randall, 2007: 634; Reilly, 2013: 89). Mainwaring and Torcal (2006: 206) define party system institutionalisation in the following way:

An institutionalized party system, then, is one in which actors develop expectations and behaviour based on the premise that the fundamental contours and rules of party competition and behaviour will prevail into the foreseeable future. In an institutionalized party system, there is stability in who the main parties are and how they behave.

Thus, given this definition, it could be argued that if political parties are institutionalised as part of a party system, they become accepted as a political norm by, and are linked to, the citizens. However, political parties that operate in third-wave democracies have struggled to link themselves to the larger society in terms of ideology and political programmes (Mainwaring & Torcal, 2006: 204). The weak institutionalisation of political parties poses potential dangers to democracy.

Furthermore, multi-party competition – in many cases – surfaced in hostile environments, which has in turn led to a range of challenges (Gherghina, 2009: 1). Firstly, political parties had to operate in systems that had not seen any party competition for an extended period of time. Secondly, they lacked democratic experience (many countries had not had any experience of democratic politics) (Huntington, 1991: 21; Gherghina, 2009: 1). Lastly, these parties faced antagonism from the public regarding party politics because of their experiences of authoritarianism. Furthermore, according to Reilly (2013: 89), political parties

that have emerged out of situations of political conflict and repression are organisationally weak, focused on elections, and do not have a coherent ideology or agenda. They typically struggle to manage societal division and deliver public goods. Yet despite these challenges and difficulties that parties face in the developing world, political parties remain indispensable institutions of modern democracy. However, the circumstances within which parties function in the developing world compared to the developed world differ markedly (Randall & Svåsand, 2002b: 6; Mainwaring & Torcal, 2006: 204).

Many developing countries have experienced repressive regimes and political strife for extended periods of time (Conteh-Morgan, 1997: 1 – 2). Thus, the functions that parties fulfil in a democracy may differ slightly in different contexts. For instance, according to Randall and Svåsand (2002a: 8), political parties in new democracies usually play a key role in the transition to democracy in fulfilling the following functions: training political elites, institutionalising democratic values and practices, conflict resolution and organising responsible opposition. Similarly, Gherghina (2009: 1) argues that political parties in new democracies “fulfill relevant functions and play significant roles in the processes of regime change, democratization, and democratic consolidation.” Reilly (2013: 90) argues that political parties play an even more significant role in countries that are transitioning to democracy from conflict and political violence. Lodge and Fakir (2002: xix) make the following point: “In still divided and weakly integrated societies political parties are required to supply mechanisms for social inclusion.” Thus, despite the challenges that political parties face in developing world democracies, they still fulfil crucial functions that help to sustain a democratic political system.

The next section will deal with political parties and party systems in an African context. To gain insight into the actions from opposition parties in a Southern African setting, it is useful to focus on how African political parties perform in terms of the distinct functions as set out in the above sections. The focus is specifically on the challenges that African political parties generally face.

#### *2.4.2 Challenges to political parties in African democracies*

The third wave of democracy also brought about significant changes in most African – especially sub-Saharan African – political systems (Wiseman, 1996: 2; Bratton, 1997: 69; Ottaway, 1997: 1; Joseph, 1997: 363; Brown & Kaiser, 2007: 1131). Doorenspleet (2012: 284) found that more than half of Africans support democracy, which is encouraging for the

future of democracy. This support for democracy is also strong in countries that have had a challenging political past. However, since then, the enthusiasm for these transitions has cooled as many African democracies face serious challenges (Clapham, 1993; Bratton, 1997; Filatova, 2000; Kirschke, 2000). These challenges have come from various sources: political (e.g. resistance to democracy from political elites), economic (e.g. poverty and underdevelopment), and social (e.g. conflict caused by social cleavages). It is in this context that a discussion of African political parties and party systems become important.

#### *2.4.2.1 African political parties*

A central aim of those who have advocated for democratic reforms in most African countries has been the insistence on the establishment of multi-party, competitive systems. Wiseman (1996: 9) states: “What united pro-democracy demonstrators right across Africa was the rejection of both single-party and military rule and the demand for the introduction of a multi-party political system.” Thus, political parties became central to the democratisation process on the African continent. This section will discuss African political parties by using the framework of the democratic functions that parties fulfil. The aim of this discussion is to provide greater contextual clarity about the experiences of opposition parties in the dominant-party systems of Southern Africa.

##### *2.4.2.1.1 Legitimising functions*

One of the significant challenges to African democracy has been the lack of democratic consolidation. This consolidation process – referred to earlier in the chapter – has become a focus point for a number of scholars (Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub & Limongi, 1996; Linz & Stepan, 1996; Schedler, 1998). The aim here is not to discuss all the requirements for democratic consolidation or the circumstances under which it must occur. Rather, the objective here is to emphasise how African political parties contribute – or fail to contribute – to the quest to make democracy the ‘only game in town.’ This can be linked to the legitimising functions of political parties discussed earlier in the chapter.

Political parties are important in fostering respect for and appreciation of democratic politics, specifically via political education. Political parties also collate and represent the different interests of the electorate. However, because of the experience of non-democratic forms of government in most African countries, this proves to be problematic. Filatova (2000: 14) argues that the experience of non-democratic forms of government and its consequences (e.g. political violence, fraudulent elections, suppression of human rights, etc.) “add to the

perception that democracy is non-viable in Africa". Given this legacy and the weak institutionalisation of political parties, helping to make democracy the 'only game in town' becomes difficult.

In addition to this, democratic consolidation in Africa depends on whether people develop *intrinsic* support for democracy as opposed to *instrumental* support. Intrinsic support refers to "a commitment to democracy 'for better or worse'; as such, it has the potential to sustain a fragile political regime even in the face of economic downturn or social upheaval" (Bratton & Mattes, 2001: 448). In contrast, instrumental support for democracy is dependent on the performance of the democratic regime and whether it is providing material benefits to the people. This intrinsic support is central to maintaining the legitimacy of a democratic regime and is a crucial element of democratic consolidation (Schedler, 2001: 75).

Ake (1993: 242) argues that the support for democracy is instrumental in Africa and that the democratisation process has been fuelled by the desire to improve economic conditions and provide social and economic rights. Thus, the argument is that if African democracies fail to deliver economic goods, it will be difficult to sustain support among citizens. Furthermore, Ake (1993: 242 – 243) argues that liberal democracy which emphasises individualism, competition and capitalism is not compatible with African societies, which are:

...still predominantly pre-capitalist and pre-industrial. Primordial loyalties and pre-capitalist social structures remain strong. Apart from urban enclaves, African society is still essentially constituted as mechanical solidarity (Ake, 1993: 243).

However, Bratton and Mattes (2001: 449) argue that support for democracy in Africa goes beyond simply the economic basket of goods which Ake (1993) emphasised. They found in the three cases (Ghana, South Africa, and Zambia) that people supported democracy; in fact, two thirds of eligible voters in these countries indicated an attachment to democratic rules and values. However, the findings also showed that even though there was widespread support for democracy, many people were unsatisfied with how their democracy was performing (Bratton & Mattes, 2001: 473). They concluded that the consolidation of African democracies would remain performance-driven and linked to the performance of governments.



Doorenspleet (2012: 280) also found that in a variety of African countries there is support for democracy, but that there is great dissatisfaction with how democracies are functioning. Statistics from Afrobarometer confirm this as well. To the question: “Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works?”, the percentage of respondents who reported being satisfied was less than 50% (Afrobarometer, 2016). This seems to indicate that they have a role to play in educating the public on the benefits of democracy.

Furthermore, political parties may struggle to engender respect for democratic values and norms as a result of their own non-democratic tendencies. Olaleye (2003: 2), writing specifically on political parties in Southern Africa, states:

The observable trend among political parties in the region is that of highly hierarchical and centralized organizations where all decisions come from the top downwards and their application is implemented and controlled by the rank and file. Internal party democracy leaves much to be desired – many political parties are little more than the personal space for charismatic political godfathers.

Manning (2005: 715) states that the third wave parties emerged out of political elites’ desire for “electoral vehicles which would allow them to compete in the newly devised rules of the political game.” In other words: are African political parties vehicles for democratic consolidation? Or are they simply the devices of ambitious politicians seeking a piece of the political pie and access to resources? Thus, it is important to look at these case studies. The next section will discuss the extent to which African parties fulfil – or fail to fulfil – electoral functions.

#### *2.4.2.1.2 Electoral participation functions*

The electoral functions of political parties are linked to the mobilisation of the public to participate in elections. This also involves the representation of the electorate’s interests through electoral campaigns. An important question related to the electoral functions of African political parties is whether these parties can: a) represent the interests of the electorate, and b) integrate or mobilise the public to participate in democratic politics. The chapter has already alluded to the fact that political parties in general are finding it increasingly difficult to fulfil these functions. Is this the case for African parties as well?

The issue of representation and integration/mobilisation in Africa seems to take on a particular identity-based character. Many scholars argue that kinship ties, and specifically ethnicity, play a vital role in African politics (Ake, 1993; Clapham, 1993; Randall & Svåsand, 2001; Scarritt & Galaich, 2003; Salih & Nordlund, 2007; Teshome, 2009; Eifert *et al.*, 2010). According to Widner (1997: 66), “clientelistic ties or ethnic differences have more often than not constituted the main lines of cleavage in the emerging party systems.” This view is echoed by Manning (2005: 722), but he emphasises the role that political elites play in capitalising on social and ethnic differences for their own political gain. There is a clear indication then that political parties aim to mobilise people around ethnicity and other kinship ties.

Linked to this are the fragile connections between political parties and other independent associations (e.g. trade unions) in civil society. In some cases – for example, the Movement for Democratic Change in Zimbabwe – political parties emerge out of broad movements in civil society. However, it seems that in most African cases that political parties are not rooted in society through these organisations. This problem might be two-fold: a) it could indicate the weakness of civil society organisations in an African context because of the experiences of authoritarian or military rule, and/or b) the weak institutionalisation of parties – especially opposition parties – and their inability to create a linkage with the broader public.

In terms of the representation of the electorate’s interests, political parties – especially opposition parties – seem to be struggling to articulate people’s interests. Political parties have been disappointing in performing this function (Randall & Svåsand, 2001: 9). Manning (2005: 11) and Randall and Svåsand (2001: 9) agree that parties lack clear policies or do not care about presenting discernible policy platforms.

Another problem that is related to the function of representing the interests of the public is that there is not a lot of trust in political parties (Matlosa, 2006: 6; Bratton & Logan, 2015: 6). In emerging democracies (post-third wave) trust in political parties has fallen below 50%. Thus, if political parties are not trusted, how could they represent and articulate the interests of the electorate? African political parties, specifically opposition parties, face this dilemma. According to Matlosa (2006: 6), in fifteen African democracies public trust in ruling parties hovered at around 46% and was 23% for opposition parties. This is echoed by Bratton and Logan (2015: 6), who also found public support for opposition parties was well below the support shown for ruling parties.

In addition to this, there is an extensive fragmentation in African party systems. Manning (2005: 723) says that “while the absolute number of parties is high, the number of relevant parties is relatively low.” In other words, there are many parties that are established, but few of them have any significant impact. Mozaffar and Scarritt (2005: 415) argue that this is due to the fragmentation in ethno-political groupings and is likely to decrease the number of parties, in particular those who win parliamentary seats.

This situation also means that elections in Africa are largely uncompetitive. The ruling parties dominate legislative elections, while “the prospect of transforming ethnic, regional and religious cleavages and competition into cross-cutting party alliances has not been successful” (Salih & Nordlund, 2007: 59). This is especially relevant to the main question of this research. If ruling parties dominate elections and opposition parties are unable and unwilling to work with other groups, this will have an impact on the relevance of opposition parties in dominant-party systems. The next section will focus on the accountability functions that African political parties fulfil.

#### *2.4.2.1.3 Accountability functions*

Opposition parties and the accountability functions of parties in general are of special interest to this study. This will be of particular importance when discussing how opposition parties in Southern African dominant-party systems attempt to remain relevant. As mentioned earlier, not all parties are government-seeking organisations and it is certainly the case that not all parties win any form of government power. In this context, however, they can still play an important role in a) holding the government and ruling party accountable, and b) organising alternatives to what the ruling party is offering.

African opposition parties are generally regarded as fragile and fragmented organisations which struggle with the following: a) tactics and strategy – they do not offer alternative policies to those of the ruling party; b) division along social cleavages (race, ethnicity, culture); and c) cults of personality – parties are associated with an individual leader, and this tends to encourage authoritarian practices (Karume, 2004: 15). Teshome (2009: 810 – 816) also identifies a range of weaknesses, some of which are like the ones identified by Karume (2004). These include fragmentation; ‘personalistic’ parties that are dominated by an individual leader; failure to produce viable alternative policies; lack of history and experience; lack of a mass base; limited female membership; weak financial position; ethnicity, which limits a party’s recruitment and mobilisation; and frequent uncoordinated

election boycotts. Solomon (2011: 1) adds the following point: “The generally ineffective and moribund nature of much of the political opposition points to a grave democratic deficit in southern Africa.”

The weakness of African opposition parties means that they struggle, firstly, to hold the incumbent party and government accountable and also to organise sufficiently rigorous opposition. As mentioned earlier, opposition parties might also struggle because of their narrow mobilisation of ethnic and other kinship groups. This means that in most cases they are unable to launch a wide, concerted effort to remove an incumbent party. In addition to this, an Afrobarometer (2015) survey shows that only 40% of respondents indicated that they perceived opposition parties as viable alternatives to the ruling party. This is a clear indication that people generally do not have much trust in opposition parties.

The lack of popular support for opposition parties may also be linked to their inability to access resources and patronage networks (Levitsky & Way, 2010: 58 – 60). Furthermore, there is also a perception among Africans that opposition parties should rather cooperate with government after elections rather than monitor and criticise the government to hold them accountable (Afrobarometer, 2015). The next section discusses the type of party systems that have become dominant in the African context. This could provide greater insight into the nature of party politics and political competition – or lack thereof – in an African context.

#### *2.4.2.2 African party systems*

In many cases, the effectiveness of political parties and the contributions they make to democracy can be linked to the type of party system that they operate in. In an African context, the experience of colonialism has left most countries with the legacy of either military rule, dictatorship, or single-party dominance.

Since the third wave of democratisation, African countries have faced various difficulties in establishing multi-party democracy in the light of colonial and post-independence legacies. Carbone (2007: 1) makes the following observation about multi-party politics in post-independent Africa:

Multipartyism soon proved to be poorly rooted on the continent. It was not long before party pluralism was abandoned. In different ways, most African countries

opted for replacing it with one-party states or military regimes. In the space of a few years, authoritarian forms of government came to prevail virtually on the entire continent.

Thus, despite the advent of democratic regimes in Africa, the post-independence legacies have continued to linger. This has been evident in the prevalence of a single party's dominance of the political landscape. One-party dominant regimes (e.g. Zimbabwe) have dominated the post-independence of many African states. One-party regimes have generally been undemocratic and authoritarian. Initially, one-party systems formed in the wake of decolonisation when newly formed independent states were vulnerable to instability (Neuberger, 1974: 173). However, the repression of opposition and prevention of multi-party competition have in turn led to violent struggles between different groups. In many cases, power became concentrated in a particular social grouping, mostly ethnic groups (Bogaards, 2007: 178). There are various African countries that have a system where one party has become dominant in a multi-party system (Manning, 2005: 708; Mozaffar & Scarritt, 2005: 403; Doorenspleet & Nijzink, 2013: 1). There are a few potential reasons why this is the case.

Firstly, many ruling parties have their origins in liberation/nationalist movements that have mobilised people in the anti-colonial/liberation struggle (Doorenspleet & Nijzink, 2013: 11). People therefore identify with these organisations on the basis of their struggle legacy and this provides ruling parties with social capital. Secondly, these parties are able to transcend social cleavages and unite a divergent group of people, which in turn ensures broad support. This also provides a sense of stability in societies that have undergone an array of changes (Spiess, 2015: 3). Furthermore, the political culture that prevails in these societies is also conducive to keeping the incumbent party in power (Doorenspleet & Nijzink, 2013: 16).

This is evident in the continued 'politics of patronage' trend whereby patrons (political leaders) retain the loyalty of their clients (groups of supporters) through the provision of patronage. The ruling party in these systems become the central point that connects the patrons to the clients (Carbone, 2007: 10). Lastly, incumbent parties use their position to strengthen their grip on power and weaken challenges from opposing forces (Carbone, 2007: 4; Doorenspleet & Nijzink, 2013: 18).

The results of this trend have been African democracies that produce dominant-party systems where there is a very low turnover of power and where the incumbent party is able to consistently win elections with large majorities. This situation provides unique challenges to democratic consolidation – specifically the ‘two-turnover test’<sup>5</sup> – and the functioning of opposition parties in a system skewed against them.

**Table 2.2. Opposition party challenges**

<b><i>Challenges toward a democratic political culture</i></b>	<b><i>Challenges toward political participation</i></b>	<b><i>Challenges toward democratic governance</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Instrumental understanding of democracy</li> <li>● Non-democratic tendencies</li> <li>● Low trust in political parties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● High fragmentation of political parties</li> <li>● Low voter support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Weak opposition</li> <li>● Lack of horizontal accountability</li> <li>● Uneven distribution of resources between ruling and opposition parties</li> </ul>

## **2.5 Conclusion**

Opposition parties in dominant-party systems face many challenges. Their roles in these systems may be explained on the basis of two core assumptions of this study: a) the ruling party’s dominance is set to continue, and b) opposition parties play important roles in enhancing the consolidation of democracy by fulfilling electoral, legitimising and accountability functions. How they remain relevant in the two case studies depends on the strategies they employ to effectively fulfil these categories of functions.

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<sup>5</sup> The two-turnover test is when there are at least two alternations of power between different parties. This is related to the acceptance of election results (Schedler, 2001: 73).

## ***Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology***

### **3.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this research was to determine how opposition parties remained relevant in the two Southern African cases (Botswana and South Africa). The main objectives were a) analysing the functions opposition parties fulfil in a democracy and b) investigating the challenges they face in fulfilling these functions. In order to answer this question and achieve the objectives, a qualitative research approach was adopted.

Qualitative research tends to emphasise the “socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011: 8). Qualitative research allows for in-depth investigation of a research problem and insight into social phenomena that quantitative research cannot provide (Tuli, 2010: 98). In terms of this research, insight into opposition parties’ views/behaviours was vital in enabling in-depth investigation of the research question. Furthermore, qualitative research – in contrast to quantitative research – is not concerned with generalisation, cause/effect relationships or prediction (Yilmaz, 2013: 313). The focus is rather on depth of understanding.

Thus, qualitative research is not intent on making generalisations, but rather focused on gaining insight from the experiences of identified key informants. In this case, the focus was on only a few opposition parties and a few key informant interviews were conducted. The purpose was not to generalise the insights/findings to the experience of *all* opposition parties in dominant-party systems. Rather, the intent was to create understanding of how opposition parties in Botswana and South Africa remain relevant in a dominant-party system. This chapter will focus on the research design and methodology adopted to answer the research questions and achieve the objectives of the research.

### **3.2 Research Design: Comparative Case Studies**

A research design is a framework of action that forms the link between the research questions and the implementation of the research (Durrheim, 2008: 34). In other words, it constitutes a plan of action for the way that the research will be conducted. The focus of this study was on determining the relevance of opposition parties in dominant-party systems through a comparative case study. The units of analysis are opposition parties in each case.

One of the underlying motivations for this research was to gain a greater understanding of opposition politics in Southern Africa. This could be done only by undertaking a comparative analysis.

Comparative politics is an important subfield to political science and can be described as both “a subject and method of study” (Ishiyama, 2012: 3). As a method, the focus is on learning through comparison. As a subject of study, the emphasis is on exploring and understanding political phenomena in different contexts (Ishiyama, 2012: 3). The comparative method is focused on gaining knowledge and understanding about political phenomena, especially differences. Pennings, Keman, and Kleinnijenhuis (2006: 4) state the following:

The ‘art of comparing’ is thus one of the most important cornerstones to develop knowledge about society and politics and insights into what is going on, how things develop and, more often than not, the formulation of statements about why this is the case and what it may mean to all of us.

There are different approaches to comparison. Mahler (1995: 7 – 8) discusses Przeworski and Teune’s (1970) two general methods to comparative political analysis – “most similar systems” versus “most different systems”. The former method is focused on comparing two or more relatively similar systems and then identifying/exploring differences between these similar systems. The latter is focused on two or more essentially different systems (i.e., different countries) and searching for similarities between these systems (Mahler, 1995: 6). Mahler (1995: 7) argues that there are three categories of subjects that are compared: a) public policy (what governments do); b) political behaviour (e.g., voting behaviour, political elites, political stability, etc.); c) and governmental institutions (e.g., legislatures, courts, legal systems, political parties, etc.). In this research, the focus of comparison was based on political behaviour and institutions.

However, it must be noted that comparative inquiry does have some problems. Firstly, difficulties can arise from the levels of analysis and the conclusions that can be drawn from that (Mahler, 1995: 9). This includes over-generalisation whereby an observation is applied to every individual in a population. In this research, this would mean generalising the data gained to *all* opposition parties in the two cases and into other countries. Secondly, erroneous assumptions can be made about the functions of political institutions. In other



words, if two institutions look similar, they may not function in the same manner (Mahler, 1995: 10). For example, the executive in Botswana functions very differently to the executive in the South African case. The comparison of the two cases provided the opportunity to delve into each context, the opposition parties, their functions, and the challenges they experience.

The use of case studies allows an in-depth examination of a problem/phenomenon in one or more case sites over a period (Bhattacharjee, 2012: 40). Case studies are also focused on how and why questions (Rowley, 2002: 17). Case studies are focused on detail and intensive inquiry; the phenomenon is studied in its particular context; and a variety of data collection methods can be used (Ritchie, 2013: 54; Crowe, Cresswell, Robertson, Huby, Avery, Sheikh, 2011: 1). Furthermore, Yin (1981: 98) argues that a case study is an “empirical inquiry” that investigates “a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.” Similarly, Kaarbo and Beasley (1999: 372) define case studies in the following way:

We define a case study to be a method of obtaining a “case” or a number of “cases” through an empirical examination of a real-world phenomenon within its naturally occurring context, without directly manipulating either the phenomenon or the context. The comparative case study is the systematic comparison of two or more data points (“cases”) obtained through use of the case study method.

Yin (1981: 103) also argues that the following elements are vital to a case study: a) the design should be clear about the main topics that will be covered in the research; b) the individuals from whom information will be gathered; c) the unit(s) of analysis at the case level and within each case. In this research, the topics were related to the relevance of opposition parties in dominant-party systems. The individuals from whom information was gathered, were high level members of certain opposition parties. The units of analysis included the opposition parties in Botswana and South Africa.

There are also different types of case studies. The one applicable to this research, is a multiple or collective case study. This is an important research approach in comparative political analysis (McNabb, 2010: 237). Starman (2013: 33) states that in multiple case studies, the focus is studying every case as if it is a single case and then comparing it to the other case(s). There are also a variety of factors to keep in mind when conducting

comparative case study research. This includes: a clear research question that is focused on comparison; the carefully considered selection of cases; the creation of codes in each case; the comparison of the cases in terms of similarities and differences (Kaarbo & Beasley, 1999: 376 – 387).

Case studies are popular because they are flexible research designs (McNabb, 2010: 236). The advantage of using case studies is that a multitude of cultural, political and social factors linked to the phenomena are discovered (Bhattacharjee, 2012: 40). Furthermore, Bartlett and Vavrus (2017: 1) argue that comparative case studies are well suited for social research, especially “studies that consider how social actors, with diverse motives, intentions, and levels of influence, work in tandem with and/or in response to social forces to routinely produce the social and cultural worlds in which they live.” This is of particular significance for the proposed study that compares a phenomenon in two different contexts.

A difficult issue to overcome is the lack of clarity of what exactly is meant by the term ‘case study’ (Kaarbo & Beasley, 1999: 372; Starman, 2013: 31; Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017: 27). Starman (2013: 35) states that case study as a research method may appear vague due to its flexible nature. In addition, some argue that researcher bias plays a role in case selection. This bias can, for example, refer to a researcher’s prior knowledge of a case. Starman (2013: 36), however, refutes this criticism by arguing that prior knowledge can lead to a better research plan and a better theoretical foundation. A further potential limitation is the volume of data and the lack of sufficient time to analyse it (Crowe *et al.*, 2011: 7). Another criticism levelled against case study research is its perceived lack of scientific rigour and inability to generalise the findings. However, there are several ways in overcoming this, including: using a particular conceptual framework; respondent validation; and transparency.

In this research, two Southern African dominant-party systems were selected as cases. Botswana and South Africa were chosen for the following reasons: a) Southern African countries, thus shared developing world context; b) both are considered democracies; c) both can be defined as dominant-party systems. Despite these similarities they also have several interesting differences which could influence how opposition parties function. For example, different historical contexts and different electoral systems play a significant role in how opposition parties function. The Botswanan and South African cases provided a more interesting comparison because of their differences. The next section focuses on the main research method, namely key informant interviews.

### 3.3 Research Methodology and Data Collection

In this study, a variety of methods have been employed to gather and analyse data. These include interviews and a desktop literature review. This section will describe each method/ and discuss how it is linked to addressing the research question and objectives.

#### 3.3.1 Key informant interviews

In terms of primary data,<sup>6</sup> key informant/elite interviews were conducted with leaders within some of the opposition parties from the case studies. A key informant is someone who, “as a result of their personal skills, or position within a society, [is] able to provide more information and a deeper insight into what is going on around them” (Marshall, 1996: 92). Interviews – which resemble conversations – are one of the primary data-collection methods in qualitative research (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003: 139). The purpose of these interviews was to ascertain how the individuals a) perceive the conditions (hindrances and opportunities) within which their party functions, and b) the strategies the party adopts to gain more public support and become more relevant.

There are a variety of reasons why key informant/elite interviews are conducted; for example: to fill in gaps and clarify information; to try and understand respondents’ perceptions, beliefs, mindsets; to obtain quotable ‘quotes’, etc. (Pierce, 2008: 119). However, there are also limitations in using key informants for interviews. Firstly, the key informant may not be able to speak on behalf the larger organisation or other members (Marsh, 1996: 93). In some of the interviews the interviewee made it clear that their view might not represent that of the party or other members. In addition to this, the selection of key informants was influenced by certain factors and biases which could have influenced the findings (see 3.3.2.1). Furthermore, due to their positions in the party, some participants did not feel comfortable divulging sensitive information or answering questions. For example, one interviewee asked that some information that was divulged not be published in this research because of its sensitive nature.

However, the most significant motivating factor in deciding on key informant interviews was based on the quality of data that could be gathered (Marshall, 1996: 93). In this research, the information provided by the different participants provided greater insight into how

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<sup>6</sup> Primary data refers to data gathered directly by the researcher (Cassim, 2021: 33). This includes interviews, survey questionnaires, experiments, etc.

opposition parties function. This would not have been possible if interviews had been conducted with rank-and-file party members. These types of interviews have features such as a) they combine structure with flexibility (there is a topic guide/interview schedule, but it is flexible); b) they are interactive (the interviewee is encouraged to talk freely); c) they allow probes and other techniques in order to gain the most in-depth responses; and d) they are generative (new ideas/knowledge will be created during the interview) (Legard *et al.*, 2003: 141 – 142). In this research, the interviews were conducted in a flexible way that provided an opportunity for interaction and for the interviewee to answer questions. The questions in the interview schedule were also linked back to the theoretical framework (see table 2.1 and 2.2). Please see the interview schedule in addendum A.

### *3.3.1.1 Sampling methods & participants*

For this research, purposive sampling was employed. This refers to a selection of a small number of participants to gain in-depth information and insight into a phenomenon (Yilmaz, 2013: 313). In this case, the range of participants decided on was between eight and twelve (four to six interviews per case study). In the end, four interviews per case were conducted (eight in total). This type of sampling is also referred to as judgment sampling, because a deliberate choice is made when selecting participants (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassin, 2015: 2). The motivation for this type of sampling is to identify and select participants who are knowledgeable about the topic and are able to provide relevant insights into it. In this research, the focus was on participants who were noteworthy individuals within the party who could provide the necessary insights. Thus, normal rank-and-file members of parties were not approached. In this case, leaders within the respective parties were approached and interviewed. They provided good information that allowed for greater insights into how opposition parties try to fulfil these functions. The number of participants in the sample is based on data saturation and not generalisation, as in convenience sampling (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassin, 2015: 4).

The advantage of this type of sampling is the depth of information that may be elicited from a small number of participants, but there are also limitations. Firstly, there is potential for bias when selecting participants. In this case, bias did play a role during data collection for several reasons (personal contacts, personal political convictions, time constraints, etc.) In the Botswanan case, I relied on the contacts received from colleagues and focused on pursuing interviews with those individuals. Due to time constraints, there were only five days in which to complete the interviews. In the South African case, I also relied on personal

contacts for the provision of contact details of individuals with whom they had good relations with. Secondly, because of the limited number of participants, it is difficult to generalise the findings to other situations/cases (Yilmaz, 2013: 313). In this research, the main opposition parties were initially identified and contacted.

In Botswana, the focus was on the Umbrella for Democratic Change (an alliance of several opposition parties) and the Botswana Congress Party (BCP). At the time of the interview process, these were the two most significant opposition parties in Botswana. Please note that the BCP had not joined the UDC at that stage. The UDC was focused on because it emerged as the biggest opposition party after the 2014 elections. The interviews in Botswana were conducted first in the week of 21 – 25 August of 2017. In the Botswanan case, it was more appropriate to contact participants directly once I arrived. Contact prior to arrival would have been futile, thus no emails or requests for meetings were sent in advance. Participants from these different parties were approached only after I arrived in Botswana in August 2017 to do the data collection. There was a significant reliance on the use of personal contacts to get in touch with the relevant participants. It was challenging to make contact with an appropriate number of participants within the limited timeframe of a week. However, once contact was made, most participants were willing and able to take part in an interview. The interviews were conducted as follows: Moeti Mohwasa on Tuesday, 22 August; Kwenantle Gaseitsiwe on Thursday, 24 August; Taolo Lucas on Friday, 25 August; Noah Salakae on Friday, 25 August. The number of interviews I was able to conduct in Botswana influenced the number of interviews I would conduct in South Africa because the two cases needed to mirror one another. Thus, in the South African case, I also attempted to conduct four interviews so that it would be the same as in the Botswanan case.

In South Africa, the initial focus was on the Democratic Alliance (DA) and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). These two parties were selected because they are currently the biggest opposition parties with the largest percentage of electoral support. However, because of the lack of response from the EFF, another party was approached, namely the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP). In the case of the EFF, calls were made and emails were sent requesting participation from leaders within the party. Unfortunately, there were no responses to these requests. It is a significant limitation of this study that I was unable to interview members of the EFF. The ACDP is a small, niche party that has been active in Parliament since 1994 and provided insights into how a smaller party operated within this system. The interviews were conducted as follows: Helen Zille on Thursday, 8

March 2018; John Steenhuisen on Wednesday, 2 May 2018; James Selfe on Monday, 14 May 2018; Steve Swart on Monday, 4 March 2019.

**Table 3.1. List of interview participants**

<b>Surname</b>	<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Country</b>
Moeti Mohwasa	MM	BNF/UDC	Botswana
Noah Salakae	NS	BNF/UDC	Botswana
Kwenantle Gaseitsiwe	KG	BNF/UDC	Botswana
Taolo Lucas	TL	BCP	Botswana
Helen Zille	HZ	DA	South Africa
John Steenhuisen	JSteen	DA	South Africa
James Selfe	JSelfe	DA	South Africa
Steve Swart	SS	ACDP	South Africa

Table 3.1 provides a breakdown of the participants in each case, including their names, party, and country. In chapter 6, the acronyms listed in the table are used when quoting participants.

Once again, in some cases there was a reliance on the use of personal connections to make contact with participants. However, in most cases the offices of the different participants were contacted to request interviews. This was generally the most effective way to set up a meeting for an interview. Once again, as in the Botswanan case, most participants who were contacted (except from the EFF) were willing and able to conduct interviews. In addition to interviews, secondary data were collected in the form of a desktop literature review.

### 3.3.2 Desktop literature review

This study also relied on the collection and analysis of secondary data.<sup>7</sup> This was done via a desktop literature review which included an in-depth literature review and statistical data collected and tabulated from other sources (e.g. Afrobarometer). The literature review had two parts. The first part was focused on an in-depth review of studies that had been

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<sup>7</sup> Secondary data refers to research gathered by others that a researcher uses (Cassim, 2021: 33). This includes journal articles, statistical data from sources such as Afrobarometer, etc.

conducted on opposition parties in Africa, dominant-party systems in general, and opposition parties in dominant-party systems. The second part was focused on the context in Botswana and South Africa. These chapters provided the context for the data-analysis chapter.

Along with this, relevant statistical data were collected and tabulated to substantiate the literature review. For this, Afrobarometer was used. Afrobarometer is a non-partisan, pan-African research institution that is particularly focused on people's attitudes toward democratic governance, and social and economic issues (Afrobarometer, n.d.). Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face surveys in various rounds and provides researchers with the opportunity to access the datasets and to do online analysis. The data and analysis were easy to access and conduct with Afrobarometer providing the necessary tools on their website. The next section will focus on how the data analysis was conducted.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

The research predominantly focused on the data elicited from the semi-structured key informant interviews that were conducted. In this case, content analysis was done with the help of computer-assisted qualitative data-analysis software (CAQDAS) in the form of Atlas.ti. The analysis was a combination of an inductive and deductive approach, and it was comparative because it explored the similarities and differences between the Botswanan and South African cases. This section explores all these elements of the data-analysis process.

Atlas.ti software was used to analyse and interpret qualitative data (textual, graphic, audio and video data) by using coding and annotating activities (Smit, 2002: 65). The use of CAQDAS has a variety of advantages, but also important limitations. One of the most important advantages for the researcher is the ease and efficiency with which large transcripts can be managed (Cope, 2014: 322). Ramabaree (2013: 1) states that Atlas.ti is not just a qualitative analysis tool, but also provides important additional functions that help the researcher with their overall project. According to McNabb (2010: 301), Atlas.ti's key feature is its ability to visualize the analysis in the form of a conceptual graphic in order to display relationships/links in the data. Smit (2002: 70) states:

Atlas.ti renders a code-and-retrieve function and provides support for theory building by facilitating connections between codes to develop higher-order

classifications and categories, formulating propositions that imply a conceptual structure that fits the data.

However, there are some challenges/limitations in using CAQDAS. One of the challenges is to learn how to use the software, which can become time-consuming (Cope, 2014: 322). It was necessary in this case to take a short course presented by Stellenbosch University's Postgraduate Skills Office and learn to properly use Atlas.ti. This was a challenge because I had not used Atlas.ti before embarking on this research. Another potential limitation is that researchers can become more focused on the technical process than on the meaning of the data (Cope, 2014: 322). It was a challenge to remain focused on the research question and objectives in order to create meaning.

In terms of data analysis, it starts with reading meticulously through all of the data – in this case transcripts and interview notes – and breaking them down into smaller segments (Smit, 2002: 66). This could either be referred to as coding or categorising the data. This is essential in providing structure to the data so that a meaningful analysis can take place (McNabb, 2010: 289). There are various methods as to *how* these data can be coded/categorised. In this research, a combined approach (inductive and deductive) was used. This means that it had elements of both inductive and deductive approaches. In terms of inductive analysis, the focus is on looking for patterns in the data and identifying important differences in the interviews which was key in this research (Graneheim, Lindgren, & Lundman, 2017: 30). The interpretation moves from the data to theory.

The data analysis also relied on a deductive approach. This means that the researcher uses existing models and theory to create categories within the data (Graneheim *et al.*, 2017: 30). This was important because it helped to link the categories back to the analytical framework as set out in Chapter 2. This also ensured that the discussion of the findings was linked to those themes (see tables 2.1 and 2.2 in Chapter 2). In total, 16 codes were identified (see tables 3.1 and 3.2). The codes were grouped according to 'opposition party relevance' and 'opposition party challenges' and divided among three code groups or main themes. By combining an inductive and deductive approach, it helped to create extensive categories and an in-depth discussion of the data; thematic content analysis was used for this.



**Table 0.2. Codes: Opposition party relevance**

<b>Opposition Party Relevance</b>		
<b><i>Functions to maintain a democratic political culture (legitimising)</i></b>	<b><i>Functions to promote democratic participation (electoral participation)</i></b>	<b><i>Functions to enhance democratic governance (accountability)</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of political parties</li> <li>• Political culture</li> <li>• Political education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representing supporters</li> <li>• Presenting an alternative</li> <li>• Mobilising the electorate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central policy objectives</li> <li>• Collaborating with other organisations</li> <li>• Accountability role</li> </ul>

**Table 0.3. Codes: Opposition party challenges**

<b>Opposition Party Challenges</b>		
<b><i>Functions to maintain a democratic political culture (legitimising)</i></b>	<b><i>Functions to promote democratic participation (electoral participation)</i></b>	<b><i>Functions to enhance democratic governance (accountability)</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delegitimisation of opposition</li> <li>• Political ignorance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of electoral support</li> <li>• Electoral system</li> <li>• Party funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uneven playing field – lack of resources</li> <li>• Other intangible obstacles</li> </ul>

Thematic content analysis (TCA) is focused on identifying themes/patterns within the data (Friese, Soratto, & Pires, 2018: 8). Along with this, TCA provides the opportunity for rich description and interpretation of the data. It is also compatible with both the inductive and deductive coding/categorising approaches. A theme refers to a pattern in the data that is

prevalent and can be linked to the research question/objectives (Friese *et al.*, 2018: 8). In this research, the discussion of the themes was linked back to the analytical framework in Chapter 2 and the contextual chapters of the two cases (see tables 3.1 and 3.2). The next section focuses on the limitations experienced during the course of this research.

### **3.5 Scope of the study**

The study was delimited to two case studies namely Botswana and South Africa. As stated earlier, the two case studies provide interesting comparisons; they form part of the same region; and they are both democracies. Lastly, the time period of the study covered historical developments up to the most current situation, focusing on the 2019 election results. The historical context was investigated from the attainment of independence in Botswana's case (1966) and the advent of a multi-party, democratic dispensation in South Africa's case (1994). Furthermore, a selection of key opposition parties was focused on, which includes the UDC (an alliance of various opposition parties) and the BCP in Botswana, and the Democratic Alliance (DA), Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), and the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) in South Africa.

### **3.6 Limitations**

There were a few limitations to the study. Firstly, individuals declined or opted not to participate in the study. In these cases – as with the EFF – secondary data had to be collected (e.g. interviews conducted by others; bibliographies; other studies focusing on a similar topic). Furthermore, it was a challenge to conduct interviews in person given the time constraints, financial implications, and logistical coordination. This was the case in Botswana, where I only had a week to conduct interviews. In South Africa, some party members who had been approached were unavailable despite various attempts to set up a meeting. For example, both Rev. Kenneth Meshoe, leader of the ACDP, and Mmusi Maimane, former leader of the DA, were approached, but did not have time to conduct an in-person interview. In these cases, no other methods of communication were utilised because it is preferable to conduct key informant interviews in person (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003: 142). The next section discusses ethical considerations and processes that had to be adhered to.

### **3.7 Ethics**

The proposed study was a low risk one as the participants who were interviewed are spokespeople for political parties within democratic settings and therefore are not vulnerable

subjects/participants. Ethical considerations refer to the principles and rules that determine the nature of the conduct between researchers and subjects (Hopf, 2004: 334). In terms of qualitative research, there are a few important requirements. They include that participants provide their consent to participate in the study which includes the disclosure of the purposes of the study to them (Hopf, 2004: 335). In other words, leaders within these opposition parties had to give me consent to interview them and had to be informed about the purposes of the research. This was done at the beginning of each interview or when initial contact was made.

Along with that, participants must participate voluntarily in the proposed research (Babbie, 2002: 56). The ethical requirements as set out by Stellenbosch University were followed in order to protect the participants, the researcher and the tertiary institution. This included a consent form that stated clearly the purpose of the study and that the participants' identities would be protected. No interviewee objected to their identities being used. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and kept on a password-locked computer. The research proposal underwent an ethical clearance process as stipulated by Departmental Ethics Screening Committee (DESC). This was required because human subjects were involved in the study. The study was deemed low risk by the DESC and ethical clearance was provided.

Other problems that may have arisen during the interview process include participants who refuse to answer certain questions or who refuse to be recorded. This was mitigated because I was granted consent in each case to record the interviews. This was a low risk research project, since the aim was to interview spokespeople for opposition parties. These parties and spokespeople are part of the public domain and are not considered at-risk subjects. Furthermore, the questions that were asked are not of a sensitive personal nature and personal information was not required from the participants. Permission was granted to identify the participants in the research project. However, it was decided to keep the participants anonymous.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

This dissertation focused on exploring how opposition parties in Botswana and South Africa remained relevant and the challenges they face. In order to do that, a qualitative approach was adopted with the use of a comparative case study design. Key informant interviews and a desktop literature review were used to gather data. The interviews with key informants

provided the primary data for the study and were analysed by using Atlas.ti software and thematic content analysis. In addition to that, secondary data were gathered in the form of literature reviews and statistical data that had to be tabulated. There were also various limitations/challenges in relation to the research that had to be overcome – ranging from non-participation of party leaders in the interview process to challenges related to data analysis. Despite these challenges, I believe the research design and methodology were appropriate to investigate the main research question and achieve the objectives of the study.

## **Chapter 4: The Botswanan Context**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Botswana has long been considered Africa's democratic darling since gaining independence in 1966. It is the continent's oldest multi-party democracy and has not experienced an authoritarian government in contrast to many other post-independence African countries (De Jager & Taylor, 2015: 25). Since independence, the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) has retained government power and dominated the political process, which has led to the entrenchment of a dominant-party system. As a result, opposition parties have found it difficult to challenge the BDP's dominance. This is due to several factors, including organisation weaknesses, lack of party cohesion, and the lack of financial resources (Osei-Hwedie, 2001: 76).

Since the 2014 elections, opposition parties have grown bolder in their ambitions to challenge the BDP. Due to the loss of electoral dominance by the ruling party in 2014, opposition parties - under the banner of the Umbrella for Democratic Change - were confident ahead of the 2019 elections of unseating the ruling party ahead of (MM [BNF/UDC], 2017). However, the 2019 results reaffirmed Botswana's status as a dominant-party system and hence opposition parties' struggle to remain relevant in this context. The BDP managed to secure 53% of the vote and 38 out of 57 parliamentary seats (Independent Electoral Commission, 2019). The main challenger, the UDC, only managed to secure 36% of the vote and 15 parliamentary seats.

As per the research question and objectives, this chapter will focus on discussing the context within which opposition parties operate and the challenges they face. This will include describing a) the institutional framework in Botswana, specifically the structure of the government and electoral system; b) the political party context; c) introducing opposition parties of the case study; and d) the challenges that opposition parties face.

### **4.2 Institutional Framework**

Political institutions have played an important role in Botswana's democratic development since independence in 1966 (Sebudubudu & Mooketsane, 2016: 145). Strong institutions are vital to the success of any society. Generally, political institutions, governance and leadership in most African countries have been weak (Sebudubu & Mooketsane, 2016: 147). However, Botswana is considered an exception to this rule. It is one of the best performing

African countries when it comes to good governance (Seabo & Molefe, 2016: 36). Botswana has managed to show incredible economic growth, moving from being one of the poorest countries in Africa to becoming a stable, middle-income country (Sebudubudu & Lotshwao, 2009: 4).

This performance can largely be attributed to good governance. According to the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance (2018), Botswana is ranked 5th out of 54 African countries and has an overall score of 68.5 (out of 100) for governance. The average score for African countries is 49.5. Furthermore, Botswana ranks 34th out of 180 countries according to the Corruption Perception Index with a score of 61 out of 100 (Transparency International, 2019). In Africa, it is the second least corrupt country behind the Seychelles. Botswana has thus been successful in curbing corruption and maintaining professional, impartial institutions (Sebudubudu & Lotshwao, 2009: 7).

Furthermore, trust in and respect for government institutions is a vital component to the survival of a democratic regime: When people trust their institutions, they have confidence that those institutions perform in accordance with their expectations or at least account in the event of non-performance. This is especially essential for democracies as it is a part of the social contract between elected political representatives and voters (Seabo & Molefe, 2016: 37). According to Afrobarometer's (2018) most recent survey (Round 7), the majority of Botswanans have expressed trust in the President (executive), parliament (legislature), and courts (judiciary). In addition to expressing trust in these institutions, 80% of Botswanans also indicated that democracy was a preferable form of government above other options (Afrobarometer Round 7, 2018). However, according to Seabo and Molefe (2016: 36), there has been a decline in institutional trust among Botswanans. This, coupled with the downward trend in overall governance as measured by the Mo Ibrahim Index, is concerning. Under the Khama presidency, corruption worsened and there was increasing executive overreach. This led to the weakening of several state institutions, including the judiciary. However, the emergence and election of Mokgweetsi Masisi as President seems to have been a turning point for the BDP and government. He has focused on restoring democratic legitimacy, fighting corruption, and rebuilding relations with various organisations, including the media and trade unions (Brown, 2020: 716).

#### *4.2.1 Structure of government*

Botswana operates with a hybrid system, combining elements of the American Presidential system and the British Westminster parliamentary system "...but is much more similar to the British model with a number of unique features of its own" (Fombad, 2005: 319). In addition to this, Tswana institutions "have been preserved at the level of local administration, where chiefs still exercise important judicial functions" (Seidler, 2010: 24). The Constitution sets out the structure and powers of the Botswana government clearly and makes provision for the separation of powers between these different arms of government (Fombad, 2005: 318).

The legislative and executive branches of government are established through national elections every five years. Parliament consists of two branches: the National Assembly and the House of Chiefs (Constitution of the Republic of Botswana, 1997). The National Assembly is comprised of 61 members, of whom 57 are directly elected and four are specially elected by the President (Sebudubudu & Botlhomilwe, 2013: 118; Constitution of the Republic of Botswana, 1997). The National Assembly is mainly responsible for making law, while the House of Chiefs plays an advisory role to the National Assembly and the executive in matters relating to Botswana's tribes (Holm, 1987: 21; Constitution of the Republic of Botswana, 1997).

The executive is comprised of the President, vice-President and cabinet ministers, and is accountable to the legislature. The President, similar to South Africa, is responsible for appointing members of the cabinet, including the vice-President. The President is elected by Parliament and is both head of government and head of state (Constitution of the Republic of Botswana, 1997). However, while the President is elected by the National Assembly, he/she is not drawn from Members of Parliament, unlike South Africa (Poteete, 2012: 81). The President thus becomes a member of parliament as a consequence of holding the office of President. Effectively, the Presidential candidate of the party with the majority of seats in parliament is designated as President.

The judiciary consists of the High Court, Court of Appeal and magistrates' courts as well as the Judicial Service Commission. The judiciary is led by the Chief Justice - appointed by the President - who is the head of the High Court and President of the Judicial Service Commission (Constitution of the Republic of Botswana, 1997; Dinokopila, 2017: 7). The judiciary is considered as an important factor in contributing to democracy and constitutionalism in Botswana (Dinokopila, 2017: 3). The provisions of the Constitution

underline the rule of law and separation of powers. The Constitution clearly sets out the role and functions of the judiciary and establishes it as a separate arm of the state.

The judiciary in Botswana has generally been seen as independent and has been able to exercise control over executive functions (Fombad, 2005: 332). However, in recent years the independence of the judiciary has been eroded (Ibrahim Index of African Governance: Botswana, 2018). In 2018, Botswana had a score of 66.5 (out of 100), compared to 88 in 2013 and this is also an indication that the executive is dominant in its relationship with the judiciary. To a large extent, the actions of Ian Khama during his presidency contributed to this erosion. The President *alone* has the power to appoint the Chief Justice of the High Court and the President of the Court of Appeal (Constitution of the Republic of Botswana, 1997). The President is also responsible for appointing the judges of the High Court on the recommendation/advice of the Judicial Service Commission (Dinokopila, 2017: 8). Furthermore, the judiciary is identified as the Administration of Justice, a department in the Ministry of Defence, Justice and Security (Dinokopila, 2017: 7). This means that the judiciary's budget is dependent on the Ministry as determined by the Minister and not the Chief Justice.

In this arrangement, the executive - predominantly the office of the President - is the dominant arm of the state (Sebudubudu & Botlhomilwe, 2013: 118). The President is a uniquely powerful figure in Botswana and is involved in all spheres of government: "The executive presidency in Botswana symbolises the bastion of political power," (Molomo, 2000: 97). The powers of the President are far-reaching and include: appointing and dismissing Cabinet Ministers and heads of the armed forces; the Secretary to the Cabinet; Attorney General; Permanent Secretaries; Commissioner of Police; Commander of Armed Forces; Chief Justice and Judge President; and super-scale officers (Botlhale & Lotshwao, 2013: 41; Constitution of the Republic of Botswana, 1997). This Presidential supremacy is strengthened by fragmented opposition parties and one-party dominance (Sebudubudu & Lotshwao, 2009: 10). The powers of the President were well illustrated during the presidency of Ian Khama, a divisive and controversial figure.

Since independence, successive Presidents have exercised their discretionary governing powers. However, since the ascendancy of Ian Khama to the presidency, delegative democracy has intensified and is being consolidated.



Within a short period of four years, President Khama has introduced many policies, mostly through directives (Lotshwao & Suping, 2013: 349).

In addition to this, the President has extensive legislative influence as well. Firstly, Parliament is comprised of the National Assembly and the President. Secondly, the President is an *ex officio* member of Parliament with the right to speak and vote in Parliamentary proceedings. Thirdly, the President has the power to dissolve Parliament (Constitution of the Republic of Botswana, 1997). The legislature is also seen as a department in the Office of the President, without its own independent budget or without the ability to appoint its own staff (Bolthale & Lotshwao, 2013: 42).

Despite the constitutional provisions on paper whereby Parliament can hold the executive accountable, this does not happen in reality. In fact, the President is not constitutionally accountable to Parliament according to section 47.2 of the Constitution, which states the President can “act in his own deliberate judgment and shall not be obliged to follow the advice tendered by any other person or authority” (Constitution of the Republic of Botswana, 1997). This executive dominance has meant that the legislature in Botswana has become a passive ‘rubber’ stamp of government legislation and policies (Sebudubudu & Osei-Hwedie, 2006: 38). It is unable to adequately fulfil its oversight role and effectively keep the executive accountable. In short, Parliament can be described as ‘feeble’ (De Jager & Sebudubudu, 2017: 23). All of the above illustrate the disproportionate power the executive has over the other two branches of government. Sebudubudu (2017: 146) states: “The powers of the executive not only give it a dominant position over other branches of government, especially the legislative branch, but also they can undermine the functioning of those branches.” The following section focuses on the electoral system and its influence on Botswana's political landscape.

In summary, the executive in Botswana dominates both the legislature and judiciary due to the President's far-reaching powers. As discussed, under the Khama-presidency, the reach of these powers became concerning and had an eroding effect on democratic institutions. In addition, Parliament is weak and unable to perform its oversight function. This has a negative impact on opposition parties' effectiveness to hold government and the ruling BDP accountable. An additional contributing factor to this, is the electoral system. The next section will focus on the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system and the impact of that.

#### 4.2.2 Electoral system

There is consensus that Botswana has established a system of free and fair, competitive elections (Tshosa, 2006: 52). Since gaining independence in 1966, Botswana has adopted a Westminster-style parliamentary system based on a first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system (Molomo, 2005: 30). The Constitution of Botswana (Republic of Botswana, 1966) states: "Botswana shall be divided into as many constituencies as there are Elected Members of the National Assembly and each of those constituencies shall return one Member to the National Assembly." These Members of the National Assembly are responsible for electing the President. The National Assembly increased from 31 to 32 seats in 1972, 32 to 34 seats in 1982, 34 to 40 seats in 1993, and finally from 40 to 57 seats in 2004 (Parliamentary Research Service, 2016). The population has grown from approximately 560 000 in 1965 to 1.7 million people in 2004 (Burchard, 2012: 109; World Bank, 2019).

Up until 1997 the elections were overseen by a Supervisor of Elections, whose core function was to supervise the registration of voters for the election of the National Assembly (Mogalakwe, 2015: 110). The 1965 and 1969 elections were supervised by a British protectorate official, George Winstanley. For the 1974 and 1979 elections, the Permanent Secretary to the President (PSP) was the Supervisor of Elections, much to the dismay of opposition parties. The central concern was the lack of independence from the President due to the fact that the PSP reports to the President (Lekorwe & Tshosa, 2005: 50). The role of Supervisor of Elections was eventually moved away from the PSP to a new Supervisor of Elections, which became an institution ultimately accountable to the National Assembly (Mogalakwe, 2015: 111; Lekorwe & Tshosa, 2005: 50).

However, there were still many concerns about the independence of the Supervisor of Elections, which led to the creation of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) in 1997 (Mogalakwe, 2015: 111). The establishment of the Independent Electoral Commission was an important moment in Botswana's democratic history. It signalled a desire to further entrench democratic values and institutions. The introduction of the IEC was preceded by a national referendum in 1997 on electoral reforms (Lekorwe, 2006: 68). The IEC was specifically established to replace the Supervisor of Elections, which was a controversial position. The IEC's independence and role have been entrenched in the amended Constitution of 1997 (Republic of Botswana, 1966). The amended section stipulates that the IEC is broadly responsible for: a) conducting and supervising elections; b) ensuring that

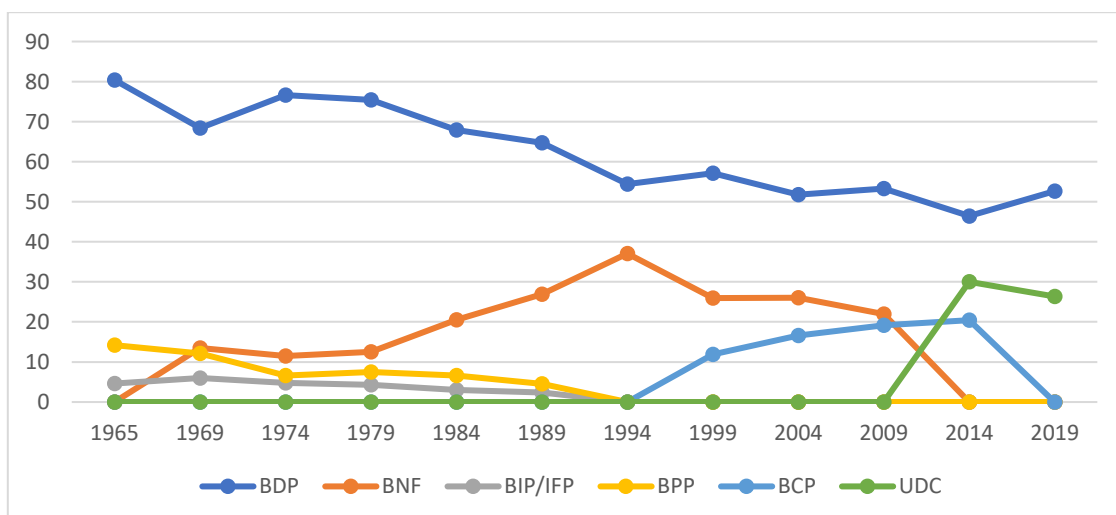
elections are free and fair; and c) registration of voters. The IEC is considered an independent and competent institution, able to facilitate free and fair elections (Freedom in the World: Botswana, 2019).

Despite these electoral reforms, it can be argued that election results reflect an uneven playing field which skews the results in favour of the ruling BDP (Sebudubudu, 2017: 152). This electoral system has ensured emphatic victories for the BDP, winning an overwhelming percentage of the parliamentary seats (Molomo, 2005: 31). One of the key factors contributing to this is rooted in the first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system. Molomo (2005: 34) states:

The predominant party system that has been evident in Botswana's political practice is a result of the FPTP electoral system and of vote splitting between the opposition parties. In the first instance, the system precipitates an uneven political playing field, generously rewarding the ruling party with parliamentary seats even though its popular vote has been declining from the 1990s. On the one hand, this has produced a dominant ruling party and a stable government. On the other hand, it has frustrated opposition parties' efforts to translate their growth in the number of votes into parliamentary seats.

As shown in figure 4.1, there has been a steady decrease in the BDP's share of the votes since 1965. Burchard (2012: 112) also demonstrates that the electoral competitiveness in the constituencies has increased significantly since the 1980s.

**Figure 4.1: Botswana election results – 1965 to 2019.**



*Data derived from EISA, and De Jager and Meintjes (2013: 5). Note that not all parties that have participated in elections since 1965 have been included in the tables.*

Interestingly, Botswana's voter turnout has fluctuated significantly over the years. As indicated in Table 4.1, voter turnout was at its highest in the 2014 and 2019 elections. However, it is a concern that just 53% of the voting age population participated in the 2019 elections. This is, however, an improvement on turnout in the 1990s and early 2000s that were less than 50% of the voting age population.

**Table 0.1. Voter participation: 1965 - 2019**

Year	Voter Turnout	Total vote	Registration	VAP Turnout	Voting age population	Population
2019	83.51 %	772,208	924,709	53.47 %	1,444,142	2,283,255
2014	84.75 %	698,409	824,073	55.09 %	1,267,719	2,155,784
2009	76.71 %	555,078	723,617	62.20 %	892,339	1,990,876
2004	76.20 %	421,272	552,849	44.00 %	957,540	1,561,973
1999	77.11 %	354,463	459,662	41.98 %	844,338	1,592,528
1994	76.55 %	283,375	370,173	44.63 %	634,920	1,443,000
1989	68.24 %	250,487	367,069	47.90 %	522,900	1,245,000
1984	77.58 %	227,756	293,571	54.18 %	420,400	1,051,000
1979	55.24 %	134,496	243,483	46.37 %	290,033	783,873
1974	31.22 %	64,011	205,016	26.21 %	244,200	660,000
1969	54.73 %	76,858	140,428	37.46 %	205,200	570,000
1965		140,793		69.42 %	202,800	520,000

*Data derived from International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), 2019.*

However, despite this decrease in the popular vote, the BDP has managed to retain government power relatively easily due to the FPTP system's 'winner-take-all' mechanism in which the election results are based on a simple majority. De Jager and Meintjes (2013: 238) state: "Despite an overall downward trend in support for the ruling party, the opposition is unlikely to win any election under the FPTP system." The next section is focused on the political party context, including a discussion on the ruling BDP and the most significant opposition parties.

### 4.3 The Political Party Context

Since independence in 1966, the BDP has dominated the political landscape in Botswana. It has managed to establish itself as the predominant party and while various opposition parties have emerged, many have faltered in their challenge. This section seeks to explore the BDP and its legacy along with the most significant opposition parties in recent years. It includes a brief discussion on the history/origins of each party and the type of party – as discussed in Chapter 2 – each one is. It is interesting to note that the opposition parties that are discussed are more left-wing and radical than the BDP who have enjoyed the support from the former colonial administration and societal groups such as the Tswana ethnic groups. In addition, the BDP has benefitted from traditional, conservative Tswana culture that opposes radicalism.

#### 4.3.1 *The dominant party: The Botswana Democratic Party (BDP)*

The process of independence and the formation of the BDP were closely linked events (Molomo, 2000b: 66). The attainment of independence in Botswana was a peaceful process whereby Britain willingly relinquished power (De Jager & Taylor, 2015: 28). Two factors contributed to this. Firstly, even though Britain had established the Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1885, it never fully colonized the territory (Beaulier & Subrick, 2006: 108; De Jager & Taylor, 2015: 28). This meant that Britain did not make extensive investments there and were quite willing to hand over power to local leaders. Secondly, these local leaders - in the form of the BDP - were supported by and actively collaborated with the colonial administration and other prominent societal groups (Molomo, 2000b: 66; Good & Taylor, 2008: 754).

The BDP was created in 1962 and led by the popular Seretse Khama (Makgala & Botlhomilwe, 2017: 58). It was formed by a well-educated, cattle-owning elite who were exposed to liberal values through their education in foreign institutions (De Jager & Taylor, 2015: 27). The result was a party that espoused a moderate and tolerant political ideology. Khama also did not manifest the nationalistic views of many other African leaders elsewhere, instead opting to support a gradual end to British rule (Good & Taylor, 2008: 753; Beaulier & Subrick, 2006: 109). The BDP also received the support of the chiefs who viewed the party as being led by one of their own in the form of Khama (Selolwane, 2002: 72). The chiefs also assumed that the BDP would be more tolerant and accommodating of traditional leaders. This translated into vital political support for the BDP, which was able to appeal to rural communities (Beaulier & Subrick, 2006: 109). Makgala and Botlhomwilwe

(2017: 58) state: “The BDP appealed to conservative elements such as tribal royals and European settlers in most parts of the country and it grew rapidly”. The BDP was seen as the natural successors to the British and essentially became a ‘government in waiting’.

The formation of the BDP was also in reaction to the more radical Botswana People’s Party (BPP) that was founded in 1960 (Mokopakgosi & Molomo, 2000: 5). The BPP was established by activists associated with the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan African Congress (PAC) in South Africa (Mokopakgosi & Molomo, 2000: 4). The party was the “first political party to engage in sustained nationalist politics in colonial Botswana” (Selolwane, 2002: 70). The BPP moulded itself as a liberation movement opposed to white racism, continued British rule, chieftainship and the dominance of whites in the public service (Maundeni & Seabo, 2013: 32). Its anti-colonial agenda was seen as too radical by the colonial administration and other traditional social forces (Mokopakgosi & Molomo, 2000: 5). The absence of a liberation struggle or violent decolonisation process did not radicalise people or lead to support for an organisation like the BPP. This meant that from the outset the more moderate BDP was preferred by the colonial administration and conservative Botswana society at large. Maundeni and Seabo (2013: 29) argue that the BDP was formed by those who were opposed to pan-Africanism and radicalism. These groups included chiefs who wanted to keep their positions; prominent businesspeople; the dominant Tswana ethnic groups; and the conservative electorate.

Another factor that played an important role in the BDP becoming the ruling party was the lack of political consciousness and mobilisation among ordinary citizens. As a result of the minimal British involvement in Botswana and less pronounced exploitation, the nationalist desire for independence was subdued (Mokopakgasi & Molomo, 2000: 4). In reality, decolonisation was an elite-driven project with very little input from the general population. In addition to this, conservative social values and respect for authority meant that citizens would more readily accept the moderate, Seretse Khama-led BDP than the militant, more radical BPP. Furthermore, due to a lack of political mobilisation the voters at independence were apathetic, passive, and unquestioning of local sources of authority (Good & Taylor, 2008: 755).

All of these factors meant that the BDP was able to secure an overwhelming victory in the first elections in 1965 and establish themselves as a dominant ruling party (Makgala & Botlhomilwe, 2017: 58). The BDP has appealed to large portions of the Botswanan society.

The BDP has features of a catch-all party and elite/cadre parties (see the Electoral Parties section in Chapter 2). It can be linked to the elite/cadre parties because it is driven by party elites and dominated by a group of leaders at the centre, especially when considering its origins. In addition, the BDP seeks to attract and appeal to a broad range of voters. This is linked to catch-all parties who are focused on increasing electoral support. However, the economic performance of the BDP-led government ensured that the ruling party continued to enjoy electoral support. Selolwane and Shale (2008: 4) state that the discovery of diamonds capacitated the state to create economic growth and subsequent wealth redistribution across society. This economic performance, which included job creation and poverty alleviation, placed the ruling party in a position to gain legitimacy and support throughout Botswana society (Osei-Hwedie, 2001: 66). This also makes Botswana a unique African case because the incumbent party was able to foster the necessary economic development that benefitted society.

However, incumbency and dominance have had their own consequences. The BDP has experienced some serious splits within its ranks, which has undoubtedly weakened the party. Factionalism in the BDP has mostly been linked to intra-party power struggles. In the early 1980s, two factions (Kwelagobe and Merafthe) emerged that had differing views on how the BDP should approach elections (Buchard, 2013: 113). In addition to this, two reports were released that implicated people in the Kwelagobe faction in corruption. The Kwelagobe faction accused the Merafthe faction of being behind the investigations. This type of factionalism characterised intra-party politics in the 1990s. Makgala (2019: 138) states: "Since the early 1990s, the BDP's central committee elections have been fought between hostile factions who have neither ideological or policy issues but are rather underpinned by personal antipathies and the pursuit of private interests." The 2009 central committee elections were fiercely contested between two hostile factions – one (the A-Team faction) was supported by then President Khama, and the other (Barapathi faction) led by Daniel Kwelagobe, a party veteran (Makgala, 2019: 138). This eventually led to a split in the party and the creation of the Botswana Movement for Democracy (BMD).

The most recent split was caused by a rift between former President Ian Khama and his successor, President Mokgweetsi Masisi (Nganje, 2020: 12). Khama subsequently left the BDP – a party founded by his father – and helped to establish a splinter group, the Botswana Patriotic Front. The origins of this rift lie in the prosecution of Khama's security chief, Isaac Kgosi, as well as Presidential secretary, Carter Morupisi (Morton, 2019). Increasing

corruption under the Khama-led BDP played an important role in the turn of events. However, despite the split, the BDP managed to win 38 out of the 57 parliamentary seats and more than 50% of the vote (Nganje, 2020: 12). This victory marks a new era for the BDP without the impact and influence of the Khama family. The next section is focused on opposition parties.

#### *4.3.2. The opposition*

The history of opposition parties in Botswana can be traced back to the attainment of independence in 1966. However, due to the establishment of the BDP as a dominant party, opposition parties have found it difficult to unseat the ruling party. Because of the nature of the electoral system, there have been numerous coalition attempts between opposition parties. Unfortunately, most of these have proven unsuccessful. The latest attempt in the form of the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) is an attempt to pool resources and unseat the BDP.

##### *The Botswana National Front*

The most influential opposition party in Botswana was created a few months after the 1965 elections. The Botswana National Front (BNF) was initially an attempt to unite the factions that were created by the split in the BPP (Molomo & Molefe, 2005: 100; Makgala & Botlhomilwe, 2017: 58). The party was created by Dr Kenneth Koma, a Soviet-educated communist who advocated a radical, socialist ideology (Makgala & Botlhomilwe, 2017: 58). Ideologically, the BNF was not very different from the BPP, but it soon replaced the struggling BPP as the official opposition party in the late 1960s. The main aim of the BNF was to create a 'front' in order to unite all opposition to the BDP-government under the aegis of one movement (Mokopakgosi & Molomo, 2000: 5). This included a variety of interests, including parts of the civil service, trade unions and some chiefs. The BNF clearly illustrate features of left-wing parties as discussed in Chapter 2, emphasising the disadvantages of capitalism and an equal distribution of material wealth. There are also elements of mass parties present in the BNF, especially the focus on collaboration with other organisations such as trade unions.

From the 1980s onward, the supporters of the ruling party and the BNF were from similar ethnic groupings, including the Bangwato, Bakalanga, Bakwena and Bangwaketse. The major divide in support between the BNF and BDP was based on rural and urban differences (Selolwane & Shale, 2008: 5). Despite the growth in electoral support, it did not win a



significant number of seats in parliament - five in 1984 and three in 1989 (Rule, 1995: 22). This is an indication of how the first-past the-post electoral system has favoured the ruling BDP, but also how the BNF was ideologically unattractive to a conservative Tswana society because of its radical, socialist aims and objectives.

The 1994 elections were significant because the BNF translated electoral support into seats in Parliament (Molomo & Molefe, 2005: 105). It managed to increase its electoral support from 27% in 1989 to 37.1% in 1994 and, more importantly, win 13 seats in Parliament (Rule, 1995: 22). This improvement was the result of a combination of factors. Firstly, on the basis of the 1991 census, a new delimitation of seats was ordered (Rule, 1995: 22). There were six new urban constituencies in Gaborone (three), Francistown, Lobatse and Palapye. This made it possible for the BNF to increase its share of the seats because it largely drew support from urban areas. Secondly, the BDP government was beset by corruption scandals and economic setbacks at the start of the 1990s (Osei-Hwedie, 2001: 69). By the beginning of the 1990s, the BNF had consolidated its position as the main opposition party in Botswana (Mokopakgosi & Molomo, 2000: 7). However, internal contradictions made it increasingly difficult to maintain unity. Maundeni and Lotshwao (2012: 57) describe the BNF in the following terms: "...the BNF is characterised by associational membership such as trade unions, student associations and others who do not necessarily share the same social origin and conflicted for the dominance of party."

The tension between these different groupings/factions became increasingly apparent from 1984 (Mokopakgosi & Molomo, 2000: 7). Eventually, conflict and factionalism in the BNF led to a serious split and the formation of the BCP (Botswana Congress Party) in 1998 (Maundeni & Lotshwao, 2012). This tendency to split would continue into the 2000s and would severely hamper the BNF's electoral performances (see figure 4.1).

### *The Botswana Congress Party*

The BCP was formed in 1998 following a split within the ranks of the BNF between socialists and social democrats (Lotshwao, 2011: 104). Eleven of the BNF's thirteen Members of Parliament left and formed the BCP (Botlhomilwe & Sebudubudu, 2011: 100). This had a significant impact on the opposition's performance in the 1999 elections, with the BDP benefitting from the disarray in the opposition ranks. It was able to improve on its 1994 performance, winning 33 seats and 57% of the vote as opposed to 26 seats and 54% of the vote in 1994 (Supervisor of Elections, 1994; Independent Electoral Commission, 1999). In

contrast, the opposition collectively could only win seven parliamentary seats in the 1999 elections. The BCP did poorly and only managed to win one parliamentary seat and 12% of the vote (see Table 4.2; Independent Electoral Commission, 1999). The BNF's support dropped from 37% (1994) to 26% (see Table 4.2) and it only managed to win six seats as opposed to the 13 they won in the 1994 elections (Supervisor of Elections, 1994).

The BCP's agenda and vision have not differed markedly from that of the BNF's (Molomo, 2000b: 72). They also display leftist ideological inclinations, focusing on the issues of social justice and the equitable distribution of wealth. Similar to the BNF, the BCP is focused on fostering a social democratic system with an equitable distribution of resources. Molomo (2000b: 72) states:

...the BCP and BNF believe in social democracy and that economic growth must be matched by an equitable distribution of resources reflecting a large measure of social justice. Both parties have defined a niche for themselves for defending the interests of the unemployed and poor, largely those who stand on the losing side of rapid economic development.

Unlike other splinter groups that have emerged from the BNF, the BCP showed electoral growth in the succeeding elections (see figure 4.1; Lotshwao, 2011: 105). During the 2004 elections, the BCP did not take part in an electoral pact between the BNF, BPP, and Botswana Alliance Movement (BAM), when the parties came to an agreement not to run against each other's candidates (Poteete, 2012: 84). The BCP wanted to establish itself as viable alternative and prioritised the following issues in its manifesto: HIV/AIDS; the economy, education and job creation; eradication of poverty; and a change of the electoral system to a mixture of FPTP and PR (Sebudubudu & Osei-Hwedie, 2005: 20). However, despite receiving more votes (16%), it only managed to secure one parliamentary seat (Parliamentary Research Service, 2016: 24).

During the 2009 elections, the BCP formed an electoral pact with BAM, while negotiations with other opposition parties broke down (Poteete, 2012: 84). Collectively, the two parties won five parliamentary seats (BCP = 4; BAM = 1) and 21% of the vote (BCP = 19%; BAM = 2%) (Independent Electoral Commission, 2009). In 2010, the BCP and BAM officially merged under the aegis of the BCP (Poteete, 2012: 96). During the 2014 elections, the BCP opted not to participate in an alliance between opposition parties in the form of the Umbrella

for Democratic Change (Makgala, 2019: 139). The BCP won 20% of the vote, but managed to win only three parliamentary seats. In 2019, the BCP joined the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) and participated under the UDC-banner.

### *The Umbrella for Democratic Change*

Over the last 50 years there have been various attempts to create opposition party coalitions in order to compete with the BDP. Due to the 'winner-takes-all' nature of the FPTP electoral system, the driving force behind opposition party coalition attempts has been the idea of strength in numbers (Molefhe & Dzimbiri, 2006: 117). The belief is that if opposition parties pool their resources, they will be able to remove the BDP. Seabo and Masilo (2018: 61) state: "The opposition has only come close to threatening its dominance in 1994 and 2014 election when opposition obtained 13 seats in parliament and 20 respectively."

The UDC was formed in 2012 with the intention of unseating the ruling BDP in the 2014 elections (Van Wyk, 2018: 485). In 2014, three parties – Botswana Movement for Democracy, Botswana People's Party, the BNF – decided to pool their resources and work together. It is important to note the influence of the trade unions in establishing the UDC. The 2011 public service strike of close to 10 000 workers affiliated with the Botswana Federation of Public Sector Unions (BOFEPUSU) was a watershed moment (Makgala, 2019: 139). The dissatisfaction with the BDP government was exploited by opposition parties and the UDC was formed, with the support of BOFEPUSU. Brown (2020: 705) argues that the UDC "represents a union and continuation of most of the major opposition parties that have ever existed on the left of the political spectrum in Botswana." The UDC – similar to the BDP – have features of a catch-all party, but can be put on the centre-left of the political spectrum. The primary focus is on winning as many votes as possible. This is based on a broad appeal to voters, but not necessarily a strong identification with the party.

The 2014 elections were the most competitive and led to the BDP losing its traditional strongholds to the UDC (Sebudubudu, 2017: 144). Sebudubudu (2017: 144) states: "The 2014 election results suggest that the BDP was saved by vote splitting between the BCP and UDC." The newly formed alliance made an immediate impact by winning 30% of the vote and 17 parliamentary seats (Independent Electoral Commission, 2014). In the aftermath of these elections and the success of the UDC, the BCP joined the coalition in 2017 with the aim of unseating the BDP in the 2019 elections (Freedom in the World: Botswana, 2018). There was a further change in the coalition before the 2019 elections,

when the Botswana Movement for Democracy (BMD) was expelled from the UDC (Brown, 2020: 707). Thus, in 2019 the coalition was made up of the BNF, BPP, and BCP. Unfortunately, as shown in Table 4.2, the UDC managed to win only 15 parliamentary seats and 35.89% of the vote. This, despite the split and public fallout with former President Ian Khama that the BDP experienced before the elections.

The coalition attempts in the 1990s were unsuccessful, but the latest incarnation in the form of the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) hope to perform better than previous coalition attempts and eventually unseat the BDP. According to Molomo and Molefe (2005: 114), “the only hope for opposition parties to unseat the BDP is to unite and contest elections under the banner of one political party.” It remains to be seen whether the latest attempt at a coalition will be successful in maintaining unity and posing an electoral challenge to the ruling party, whose dominance has been entrenched for over 50 years. The next section will focus on the challenges that opposition parties in Botswana face.

#### **4.4 Challenges to Opposition Parties: Weak or Weakened?**

Since the first elections in 1965, opposition parties in Botswana have found it difficult to appeal to the largely conservative electorate, represent an electoral threat to the BDP, and maintain unity. The performance of the ruling party has also made it difficult for opposition parties to attract voters. The BDP has been credited with leading Botswana from being one of the poorest countries in the world to a developmental state through the implementation of sound economic policies and good democratic governance (Osei-Hwedie, 2001: 66). This has endeared the BDP to the electorate and explains why it has remained in power for over 50 years. Opposition parties, in turn, have failed to check the ruling party’s power and to provide a viable governing alternative (Sebudubudu & Osei-Hwedie, 2010: 86).

Opposition parties have struggled on various fronts to launch an effective challenge to the BDP. There are two broad reasons for this. The first is their own weaknesses, which include organisational weakness, a lack of financial resources, internal squabbles that lead to party fragmentation, and the inability to provide adequate ideological and policy alternatives to that of the BDP (Molomo, 2000; Mokopakgosi & Molomo, 2000; Selolwane, 2002; Maundeni & Seabo, 2013; Makgala & Botlhomwilwe, 2017). Opposition parties have been their own worst enemies, especially when it comes to intra-party splits and the failure to launch an effective coalition that could challenge the ruling party. Secondly, they have been weakened by an uneven playing field, that is the disparity in resources between the ruling party and

opposition parties. Levitsky and Way (2010: 58) state that a playing field is uneven when: a) state institutions are abused for partisan ends; b) the ruling party is constantly favoured above opposition parties; and c) the opposition's ability to compete during elections is severely impeded.

#### *4.4.1 Political culture*

The political culture of a polity is a key indicator of the widespread acceptance of a political system. This is particularly important in relation to democracy. Political culture is important in forging a stable democracy and political parties play an important role in fostering widespread acceptance of democratic norms and values. Political culture can be defined as "the beliefs and values concerning politics that prevail within both elite and the mass" (Diamond, Linz & Lipset, 1995: 19).

There are certain elements in the traditional values of the Batswana that correspond with democratic values. These include moderation, non-violence, consensus and discussion (Sebudubudu, 2017: 141). Shale (2009: 69) states:

Elections in Botswana have been essentially free of violence. This is largely attributed to the Tswana culture, which is based on non-violence, moderation, community consensus and public discussion. This underlies Botswana's democratic political culture.

These traditional values helped to facilitate a peaceful transition from colonial rule to democracy. In addition, this has created political stability. The BDP has also successfully portrayed itself as a moderate organisation while other political parties have been viewed as more radical (Sebudubudu, 2017: 144). However, these traditional values also include deference and obedience to authority – these values are not always compatible with democratic values. These conservative values in Tswana culture have made the Batswana uncritical of their political leaders.

It is, however, encouraging to see that Botswanans generally demand, support, and are satisfied with democratic rule. Over 60% of Botswanans indicate a demand for full democracy, while 79.7% prefer democracy to any other form of government (Afrobarometer,

2018). Most Botswanans are also satisfied with democracy.<sup>8</sup> Clearly, there is strong support for democratic institutions, practices, and processes. However, this support does not necessarily translate into widespread support and trust in opposition parties. In fact, opposition parties are distrusted.

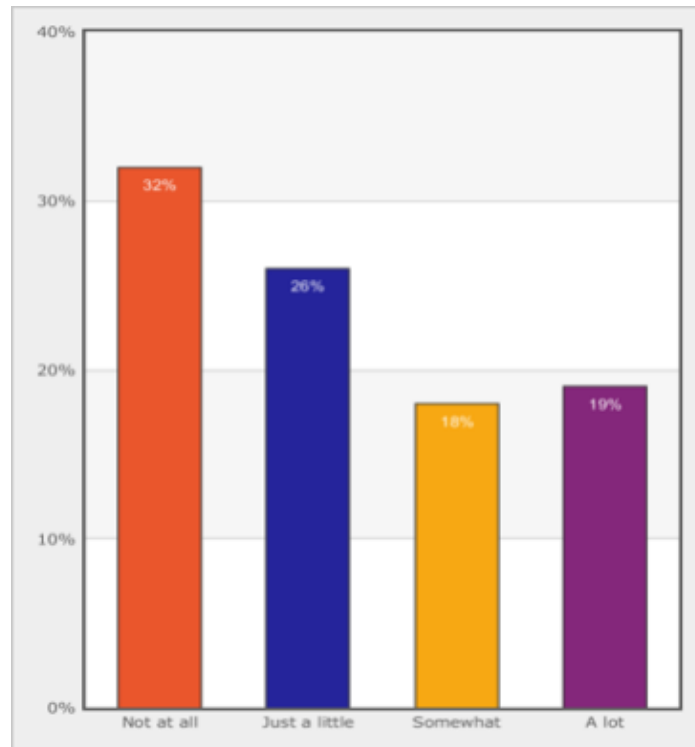


Figure 0.2. Trust in opposition parties<sup>9</sup> (Afrobarometer, 2018).

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<sup>8</sup> 39.4% indicated that they were fairly satisfied and 18.9% indicated that they were very satisfied (Afrobarometer, 2018).

<sup>9</sup> The survey question for this was: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? Opposition Political Parties. The response categories were 'not at all', 'just a little', 'somewhat', 'a lot', 'refused', and 'I don't know'.

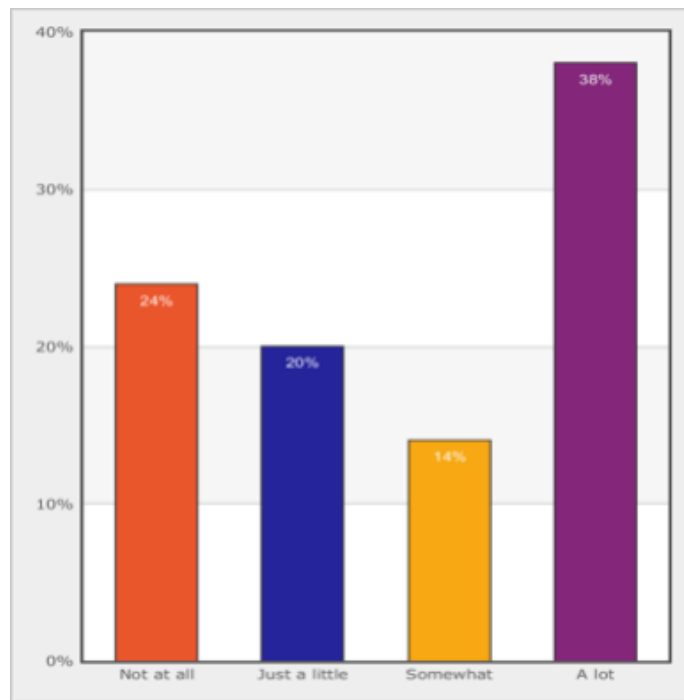


Figure 0.3. Trust in the ruling party<sup>10</sup> (Afrobarometer, 2018).

Data from Afrobarometer Round 7 (2018) that found that only 19% of Botswanans expressed a lot of trust in opposition parties (see Fig. 4.2) as opposed to 38% who express a lot of trust in the ruling party (see Fig. 4.3).

**Table 0.2. Trust in opposition parties (Round 2 - Round 7).**

Category	Total	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
		2002/200	2005/200	2008/200	2011/201	2014/201	2017/201
		3	6	9	2	5	8
<b>Not at all</b>	38.0%	53.4%	29.4%	42.8%	37.3%	33.3%	31.8%
<b>Just a little</b>	25.8%	27.8%	21.1%	25.1%	26.5%	28.3%	25.7%
<b>Somewhat</b>	18.7%	10.5%	22.8%	17.2%	19.5%	23.6%	18.4%
<b>A lot</b>	13.8%	3.7%	21.6%	12.8%	13.1%	12.8%	19.2%
<b>Don't know</b>	3.7%	4.6%	5.2%	2.1%	3.6%	2.0%	4.8%

Source: Afrobarometer, Round 7 (2018).

<sup>10</sup> The survey question for this was: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? Ruling party. The response categories were 'not at all', 'just a little', 'somewhat', 'a lot', 'refused', and 'I don't know'.

**Table 0.3. Trust in the ruling party (Round 2 - Round 7).**

Category	Total	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
		2002/20	2005/20	2008/20	2011/20	2014/20	2017/20
		03	06	09	12	15	18
<b>Not at all</b>	20.3%	25.1%	21.6%	11.4%	19.3%	19.8%	24.5%
<b>Just a little</b>	20.6%	29.4%	17.4%	13.7%	22.3%	20.5%	20.2%
<b>Somewhat</b>	23.0%	29.3%	21.8%	25.1%	24.7%	23.4%	13.6%
<b>A lot</b>	34.2%	13.7%	37.1%	48.6%	32.0%	35.6%	38.5%
<b>Don't know</b>	1.9%	2.6%	2.1%	1.3%	1.6%	0.6%	3.2%

Source: Afrobarometer, Round 7 (2018).

Trust in opposition parties has improved over the years (see Table 4.3). This is evidence of the development in democratic political culture. However, there is still a lot more trust in the ruling party than in opposition parties. The latest round indicates that 38.5% of Botswanans place a lot of trust in the ruling party in comparison to only 19.2% for the opposition. Close to 60% of people also expressed distrust ('not at all' and 'just a little') of opposition parties, whereas this was just more than 40% for the ruling party. This distrust is linked to challenges that opposition parties have experienced, including a lack of resources, internal weaknesses, and radical policies which do not appeal to a conservative electorate.

#### 4.4.2 The uneven playing field: access to resources

One of the biggest challenges opposition parties face is the lack of resources. In Botswana's case, this is related to aspects such as party funding, access to state institutions, access to the media, etc. Sebudubudu (2017: 152) argues that even though opposition parties are able to compete for political office, the competition is skewed in favour of the ruling party. There are three main reasons for this: a) campaign finances/resources; b) media bias in favour of the ruling party; and c) an electoral system that disadvantages the opposition.

The inability of opposition parties to acquire resources is starkly evident when comparing it to the BDP's access to resources. This is why opposition parties have found it difficult to nominate candidates, effectively organise electoral campaigns and mobilise the electorate (Osei-Hwedie, 2001: 61). Botswana does not provide public party funding – despite various calls to do so – and this hinders parties and candidates from properly engaging with voters (Sadie, 2020: 57). This has affected opposition parties, which struggle to raise sufficient



funds. Shale (2009: 68) states: “Absence of party funding, coupled with incumbency, advantage the ruling party as it has access to many sources of funding, while opposition parties are under-resourced and depend on variable sources of funds.”

In turn, the BDP has exploited incumbency to its advantage (Sebudubudu & Botlhomilwe, 2011: 98). Because the government is a major client of most private companies, these companies are eager to win and retain its favour (De Jager & Meintjes, 2013: 6). This means that most private companies would provide funding to the incumbent BDP, which effectively controls the purse strings of the government rather than opposition parties. Thus, the BDP has massive resources at its disposal while opposition parties are reliant on contributions from individual party members and people sympathetic to their cause (Sebudubudu & Botlhomilwe, 2013: 121). Private funding is not regulated and could potentially lead to corrupt practices (Sadie, 2020: 59). There are also no strict provisions in place to compel political parties to disclose the origins of their funding (Molomo & Sebudubudu, 2005: 149; Shale, 2009: 68).

Furthermore, opposition parties have struggled to gain access to the media, in particular state media. This is also reflected in the various low rankings Botswana gets in relation to media freedom (Mosime, 2015: 46). According to Freedom House, Botswana scores a 2 out of 4 for media freedom (Freedom in the World: Botswana, 2020). There is a sense that the government is growing increasingly intolerant of the media, in particular privately-owned media (Sebudubudu, 2017: 150; Freedom in the World: Botswana, 2019). This growing intolerance, in turn, has a negative impact on opposition parties’ ability to gain parity with the ruling party in terms of exposure. Mosime (2015: 47) argues that the BDP has monopolized the traditional forms of communication and this has placed opposition parties at a distinct disadvantage:

The answer lies, I argue, in the ruling party’s historical monopoly on communication; especially through preventing other political parties using the *kgotla* (a traditional community space for open communication), and its monopoly of the use of state media through its direct control of the Department of Information and Broadcasting and the three national broadcasters (Radio Botswana1 [RB1], Radio Botswana2 [RB2] and Botswana Television [BTV]).

There have been complaints that the state-owned media (*Daily News*, two channels of Radio Botswana and Botswana Television) are biased towards the ruling party and provide more coverage of the BDP than opposition parties (Sebudubudu & Maripe, 2013: 20; Freedom in the World: Botswana, 2019). In addition, the government can control the content broadcast and shared by state-owned media. This means that opposition parties get very little coverage by state-owned media outfits and are unable to communicate their agendas to the public (Sebudubudu & Botlhomilwe, 2013: 123). However, privately owned media have covered the opposition parties sufficiently, but once again, these parties' lack of funding has played a role in their lack of public visibility (Tsie, 2011: 33). Private media tends to largely be available in urban areas, thus portions of the population do not get access. The private media have also been important in exposing government scandals and corruption (Shale, 2009: 70). However, government has placed pressure on these media outlets to retract reports on such events.

Social media have become an alternative avenue for especially opposition parties to communicate and campaign. Facebook and Twitter were relatively cheap tools for parties and individual candidates in the last two elections (Nganje, 2020: 12). Social media platforms like Facebook have provided greater and more equitable access and have revitalised electoral campaigns (Masilo & Seabo, 2015: 111). In addition to the lack of resources, opposition parties have experienced factionalism and internal splits that have hampered their efforts to unseat the BDP.

#### 4.4.3 Internal weaknesses

Opposition parties in Botswana have also been plagued by various internal weaknesses that have made it difficult for them to launch an effective challenge to the BDP. Factors such as factionalism/internal splits, ineffective and unclear policy alternatives, and weak ideological objectives have hampered opposition parties. This is reflected in the lack of trust in opposition parties, as discussed above. Because of these weaknesses, opposition parties lack credibility among the electorate (Sebudubudu & Osei-Hwedie, 2010: 93).

One of the biggest internal weaknesses that face opposition parties *vis-a-vis* the ruling party is their inability to present the electorate with more attractive policy alternatives (Molomo, 2000b: 68; Selolwane, 2002: 69). The BDP has managed to win the support of voters nationwide, drawing its support mostly from the Tswana-speaking tribes who make up 50% of the population (Osei-Hwedie, 2001: 65). While there are very few opposition parties who

are able to draw support nationwide, the political culture in Botswana is largely influenced by Tswana culture, which is conservative, places a strong emphasis on risk aversion and is focused on consensus (Tsie, 2011: 32; Sebudubudu & Botlhomilwe, 2013: 124). Thus, most Botswanans are not in favour of change or parties that offer radical programmes. The BDP has always striven to portray itself and its policies as moderate, while opposition parties have been perceived as radical organisations (Sebudubudu, 2017: 144).

The Botswana People's Party (BPP) - established in 1960 - was a militant, leftist party that appealed to the urban marginalised, but was unable to appeal to the majority of voters (Makgala & Botlhomilwe, 2017: 58). The party was formed by migrant workers in South Africa who had been exposed to anti-apartheid forces (Makgala & Botlhomilwe, 2017: 58). It was focused on fighting against colonial rule and racism and promoting the interests of the poor working class in urban areas. Thus, because of its radical ideological stance it appealed to only a small section of the electorate. The BPP, in their quest to appeal to the urban working class, opted to openly reject traditional leadership and hereditary power (Selolwane, 2002: 72). This had a negative impact on their electoral effectiveness, because the chiefs used their influence to discourage people to vote for the BPP. The result was that the BPP could manage to win only three parliamentary seats in contrast to the 28 seats of the BDP in 1965 (Molomo, 2005: 32). The BDP in turn was seen as an antidote to the radical BPP and was able to garner the support of the largely conservative, moderate voting population.

Another significant internal weakness pervasive in opposition parties is factionalism. This has led to splits within parties, the creation of new parties, and the inability of opposition parties to align and present a united front (Osei-Hwedie, 2001: 62). Selolwane and Sale (2006: 6) state there has been a pattern where parties split, unity talks are held, and then a new party is created from the factions. This was evident even before the first elections in 1965, when the Botswana People's Party (BPP) experienced internal squabbles and eventually a devastating set of splits shortly before the 1965 elections (Mokopakgosi & Molomo, 2000: 5; Selolwane, 2002: 70; Maundeni & Seabo, 2013: 32). The result of this was the creation of the Bechuanaland Independence Party (BIP). The BPP never recovered from these splits and has remained a small party, plagued by factionalism and declining electoral support (Molomo & Molefe, 2005: 102; Maundeni & Seabo, 2013: 32). This factionalism would become a feature of Botswana opposition party politics and has contributed to the weakness of the opposition.

The BNF emerged and would go on to become the BDP's main challenger. However, since the late 1980s, the BNF has been beset by factional splits which has led to the formation of various splinter groups including the United Socialist Party (PUSO), the Social Democratic Party (SDP), the Botswana Workers' Party (BWP), the Botswana Labour Party (BLP), the Botswana Congress Party (BCP) and the National Democratic Front (NDF) (Molefhe & Dzimbiri, 2006: 116; Selolwane & Shale, 2006: 9; Tsie, 2011: 26). In fact, most opposition parties that formed have been breakaway groups from the BNF (Sebudubudu & Osei-Hwedie, 2010: 88). This fragmentation has also damaged the public image of opposition parties as a viable alternative to the ruling party (Osei-Hwedie, 2001: 62).

Linked to the fragmentation within opposition parties is the failure to successfully unite and pose a collective electoral challenge to the BDP. There were attempts in the 1990s and 2000s to form coalitions, but none were successful (Brown, 2020: 713). The first serious attempt was the creation of the Botswana Alliance Movement (BAM), which united some of the smaller parties, including the BPP. The BNF and BCP were part of the negotiations, but never joined. Eventually, the BPP left the coalition and BAM fell apart.

#### **4.4. Conclusion**

Since its independence and first democratic elections in 1965, Botswana has been admired as Africa's democratic darling and economic success story. It has not experienced the same arduous, militant journeys to independence like most of its counterparts in Southern Africa. The BDP established itself – with the help of the British and traditional leadership – as the predominant party and has enjoyed widespread and sustained support. However, since the 1990s, the ruling party has experienced a steady decline in the popular vote. This decline in popular support emboldened opposition parties, which formed the UDC to try and unseat the ruling BDP. Even though the election results in 2014 indicated that the opposition coalition was close to unseating the ruling party, the 2019 elections reaffirmed the BDP's firm grip on power.

The BDP's incumbency has also had an important impact on state institutions. The executive, in particular the President, wields wide-ranging powers. These powers were especially exercised with fervour during the Ian Khama presidency. The President's powers overshadow the functions of both the legislature and judiciary. The legislature is weak and unable to hold the executive accountable. Even though the judiciary is considered to be independent, there have been challenges to its independence in the last few years.

The electoral system is considered a major factor in the maintenance of a dominant-party system. The first-past-the-post/majoritarian system has made it possible for the BDP to maintain control in parliament despite a decline in support. Opposition parties are unlikely to unseat the ruling BDP soon with a FPTP system in place. The impact of the FPTP system is exacerbated by the disparity in its access to resources – the uneven playing field – between the ruling party and opposition parties. This is linked to issues of party funding and access to the media.

In addition to this, opposition parties must contend with a high level of distrust from the public. This distrust is linked to the inability of opposition parties to present the electorate with viable alternatives. Furthermore, opposition politics have also been characterised by intra-party factionalism as well as the collapse of coalition attempts. However, in the UDC they have found a possible challenger to the BDP. The opposition's fortunes seemed to have turned under the Ian Khama presidency, but since his exit, voters have returned to the BDP. It remains to be seen whether the opposition can erode BDP support or whether the BDP can rejuvenate itself after years of decline.

## **5. The South African Context**

### **5.1 Introduction**

South Africa has long been considered a political miracle as a result of its peaceful rather than violent transition from apartheid to democracy in 1994. The African National Congress (ANC) has dominated every election since 1994 by using its liberation movement credentials and consistently winning the support of the majority of registered voters (De Jager & Parkin, 2017: 2). However, in recent years the ANC's dominance has slowly been eroded for a number of reasons: corruption and state capture;<sup>11</sup> poor socio-economic performance; and increased pressure from opposition parties and civil society organisations. The 2016 local municipal elections proved to be a watershed moment for the ANC and in turn for the trajectory of South Africa's political future. Firstly, opposition parties were able to wrest control from the ruling party in Johannesburg, Tswane and Nelson Mandela Bay, albeit through coalition agreements (De Jager & Parkin, 2017: 8). Secondly, it pointed to the ANC's electoral decline as a reflection of the electorate's disillusionment with the ruling party's corruption and inability to deliver on its policies (Engel, 2016: 103).

With the election of Cyril Ramaphosa as ANC President in December 2017 and his subsequent elevation to the presidency in 2018, there was a sense of expectation and renewed hope. However, a variety of challenges - most prominently the failing of the electricity supplier, Eskom - have tempered that renewed optimism. In addition to that, Ramaphosa has also faced resistance from within his own party from those who were previously loyal to Zuma (Greenstein, 2018; Calland, 2019). Despite the sense of disillusionment and cynicism, the ANC still managed to win a majority in 2019. Even so, election results have been reflective of both the continued downward trend for the ANC as well as the inability of opposition parties to pose a serious electoral challenge to the ruling party.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide context in relation to South Africa's dominant-party system, specifically the role opposition parties play and the conditions under which they function (see Chapter 1) in an attempt to answer the research question: How do the opposition parties in Botswana and South Africa remain relevant in dominant-party systems?

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<sup>11</sup> State capture refers to the "looting of state organs and companies by elements of the ANC, spearheaded by Jacob Zuma during his two terms as President" (Schulz-Herzenberg & Southall, 2019: 6).

It will focus on: a) the institutional framework in South Africa, specifically the structure of the government and electoral system; b) the political party context; c) introducing the opposition parties of the case study; and d) outlining the challenges that opposition parties face.

## **5.2 Institutional Framework**

The transition from white minority rule to black majority rule had significant social, political, economic and institutional consequences. The structure of government and the electoral system were results of the negotiated transition (Graham, 2015a: 98 - 99). The functions and parameters of government institutions are clearly set out in the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996). However, the impacts of the legacy of apartheid and the failure of the current state to address these socio-economic challenges, inequality, and fractious social relationships have been exacerbated.

According to the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (2018), South Africa is ranked 7th out of 54 African countries and has an overall score of 68 (out of 100) for governance. The average score for African countries is 49.5. However, despite being on the higher end of the scale of the Ibrahim Index, corruption is endemic. South Africa ranks 70th out of 180 countries according to the Corruption Perception Index, with a score of 44 out of 100 (Transparency International, 2019). Among African countries, South Africa ranks 9th out of African countries (in comparison to Botswana which is second in Africa) and is 34th in the world and has a score of 61. Currently the consequences of corruption in the form of state capture and its impacts are the most dangerous threat to South African democracy.

Another concern is the lack of trust in important institutions displayed by the public. According to Afrobarometer's Round 7 survey (2018), more than 50% of South Africans have expressed distrust in the President (executive) and more than 60% expressed distrust in Parliament (legislature). This contrasts with the Botswanan case where most people expressed trust in the same institutions (see Chapter 4). The judiciary is the only branch of government that elicits an expression of trust from the majority of South Africans. Even though democracy is the preferred form of government for most South Africans according to the latest survey, it is concerning that this support for democracy has declined sharply since 2011 (Afrobarometer Round 7, 2018).

These public attitudes, coupled with the high levels of government mismanagement and corruption, pose major challenges to the survival of democratic institutions. It is therefore

even more important to have an effective opposition that can hold the ruling party accountable. The following section will focus on the structure of government (judiciary, legislature, executive) and the electoral system since 1994.

### *5.2.1 Structure of government*

The South African Constitution (1996) clearly sets out the functions and parameters of all government branches and state institutions. South Africa has a parliamentary system with a President as head of state and head of government, and where Parliament and the executive are independent (Graham, 2015a: 106). Furthermore, South Africa has adopted a unitary government with federal features in the form of co-operative government (De Jager, 2013: 152; Graham, 2015a: 103). This means that government has three spheres: national, provincial and local, with national government, in practice, being dominant over the other two spheres. Furthermore, the Constitution also sets out a very clear separation of powers between the judicial, legislative and executive branches of government (Republic of South Africa, 1996). De Jager (2012: 152) states:

The 1996 Constitution provides the foundation for a liberal democratic government - constitutionalism, rule of law, separation of the three branches of government, and the provision of checks and balances through the recognition of independent statutory bodies. South Africa's constitutional framework is nevertheless not without its flaws, nor is it free from political pressures exerted by the dominant party.

Judicial authority is vested in the courts and orders/decisions by the courts are binding on all persons or institutions of the state (Republic of South Africa, 1996: 82). The judiciary includes: Constitutional Court, Supreme Court of Appeal, High Court, Magistrate's Courts, and any other courts established through an Act of Parliament. The Chief Justice is the head of the judiciary and "exercises responsibility over the establishment and monitoring of norms and standards for the exercise of the judicial functions of all courts" (Republic of South Africa, 1996: 82).

The judiciary is considered essential to the continued survival of South African democracy with one of the key elements of this being constitutional supremacy (Malherbe, 2010: 64). This in effect means that the Constitution is the supreme law of the land and all policies, pieces of legislation and state institutions must adhere to constitutional principles (Republic



of South Africa, 1996: 3). The judiciary is tasked with upholding constitutional principles and ensuring that other branches of the government adhere to these principles. The Constitutional Court is the custodian of this function.

The Constitution (Section 165[1, 2]), in principle, guarantees judicial independence and non-interference and, in practice, the judiciary has remained unscathed and independent. In many ways, the judiciary - in particular, the Constitutional Court - has acted as the last line of defence against corruption, encroachments on constitutional supremacy, and defiance of the rule of law. However, in the recent past - especially during Jacob Zuma's tenure - there have been attempts to undermine the functioning of the courts (Graham, 2015a: 110). Despite this, South Africa ranks second out of 54 African countries for judicial independence with a score of 92.2 out of 100<sup>12</sup> (Ibrahim Index of African Governance: South Africa, 2018). Furthermore, and more impressively, South Africa ranks first for independence and transparency of the judicial process with a score of 100 according to the Ibrahim Index of African Governance. This contrasts with the Botswanan case, where the judiciary has been weakened in recent years (see Chapter 4). The judiciary has become the institution that opposition parties have turned to in order to keep the government accountable. This ranges from opposing controversial legislation/policies to addressing corruption.

The legislature in South Africa consists of the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) and is collectively responsible for making legislation (Republic of South Africa, 1996: 22). The National Assembly has 400 elected members and the NCOP has 90 members, 10 delegates from each province (Republic of South Africa, 1996: 26; 31). The legislature's role in South Africa is clearly set out in the Constitution and includes a) making laws and b) holding the executive accountable (The Republic of South Africa, 1996: 29 - 30; Section 55 [1-2]). According to the Constitution (Section 92[1-3]), the executive (President and Cabinet Ministers) is individually and collectively accountable to the legislature. However, despite these provisions in the Constitution, the legislature is viewed as weak, unable to hold the executive to account, and effectively a 'rubber stamp' of the ruling party's policies (Taljaard & Venter, 2010: 37; Graham, 2015a: 107). This is similar to the Botswanan case, where the executive, in particular the President, can dominate the legislature (see Chapter 4).

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12 Botswana, in contrast, scored 66.5 (see Chapter 4).

Because of the electoral dominance of the ANC and the party list system, the executive can dominate the legislature (Graham, 2015a: 107). Members of Parliament (MPs) are expected to toe the party line, with most of the party leadership occupying positions in the executive. Munzhedzi (2017: 82) states:

...the executive has a substantial influence in Parliament in that more often than not most members of the executive come from the same political party as the majority of members in Parliament. Whenever members of the executive have to account in the legislature, the opposition parties often argue that there's an element of bias and protection.

The legislature is therefore unable to fulfil its oversight function over the actions of the executive. An example of this was the Nkandla<sup>13</sup> case whereby the legislature was unable to hold the President to account according to Constitutional provisions (Munzhedzi, 2017: 83). The judiciary, in the form of the Constitutional Court, had to intervene and 'remind' the legislature of its role and duties. In effect, the judiciary has had to step in to fulfil the oversight role that the legislature has failed to do. In his Nkandla judgement, Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng ruled that then President Zuma did not uphold the Constitution and that Parliament failed by absolving the President from any wrongdoing (Mogoeng, 2016).

Executive power is vested in the President, who acts as both the head of state and head of government, and Cabinet Ministers who are the political heads of their departments (Republic of South Africa, 1996; Venter & Mtimkulu, 2010: 41). The executive is responsible for implementing national legislation, developing and implementing national policies, co-ordinating the functions of state departments, and initiating legislation (Republic of South Africa, 1996: 47). The President has the power to appoint the Deputy President and ministers and "assigns their powers and functions, and may dismiss them" (Republic of South Africa, 1996: 48).

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13 The Nkandla case refers to the so-called security upgrades of President Zuma's residence in Nkandla. It was deemed by the then Public Protector (Thuli Madonsela) that many of the upgrades were non-security features and determined that the President had to take remedial action and provide payment for all non-security features (Public Protector, 2014: 442).

The President is required to be a member of Parliament before becoming President. Once he/she is elected by Parliament, the President is no longer a member of Parliament (Republic of South Africa, 1996: This also means that the executive is drawn from and accountable to the legislature (Graham, 2015a: 107). The President is also responsible for assenting to and signing Bills; referring Bills back to the National Assembly to reconsider their constitutionality; and summoning the National Assembly and NCOP for special/extraordinary sittings (Republic of South Africa, 1996: 46). Cabinet ministers are members of Parliament and are individually and collectively accountable to Parliament (Graham, 2015a: 106). However, despite these constitutional provisions, parliamentary oversight over the executive is proving to be a challenge:

Far from fully understanding the nature and significance of its oversight functions, the current NA (National Assembly) in South Africa remains ineffective in holding the executive accountable. MPs ordinarily defer to their caucus and do not act independently (Chirwa & Ntliziywana, 2017: 146).

The President in South Africa is more constrained than his or her Botswanan counterpart, who has wide-ranging powers. This includes still being able to speak and vote in Parliament - something that the President in South Africa is not able to do (see Chapter 4). In addition to this, the Botswanan President is not constitutionally accountable to the legislature (Constitution of the Republic of Botswana, 1997). This is not the case in South Africa. The difference between the two case studies in this instance can be traced back to the hybrid system in Botswana of an American-styled presidency and British parliamentary system. The South African government follows the British parliamentary system more closely. However, in both cases, the weakness of the legislature is due to the dominance of the ruling party and weakened opposition.

In summary, there are concerns about the effectiveness and the ability of the opposition to keep the ruling party in check. The ANC's dominance in the legislature has made it a rubber-stamp for the executive or the party leadership. The judiciary, thus far, has remained independent and able to check executive overreach. However, the judiciary cannot be expected to fulfil the accountability role that the legislature is supposed to. This institutional context thus highlights the need for strong, effective opposition parties and the challenging institutional context in which they operate. The following section will focus on South Africa's electoral system and its impact.

### 5.2.2 Electoral system

Elections in South Africa are generally deemed to be free and fair (Freedom in the World: South Africa, 2019). Elections are held to determine the make-up of the national, provincial and local/municipal spheres of government. Since 1994, South Africa has adopted a system of proportional representation (PR) based on a closed party list for both national and provincial elections. In practice, this means that a political party will gain seats in Parliament based on the percentage of votes that the party received in the elections (Electoral Commission of South Africa, 2020). In terms of local elections, there is a mix of proportional representation (PR) and the ward/constituency-based system. The Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) - formerly known as the Independent Electoral Commission - is responsible for managing elections in South Africa.

As stated earlier, elections in South Africa are deemed free and fair with the electoral process being awarded the highest score (12/12) by Freedom House (Freedom in the World: South Africa, 2020). A large part of that can be attributed to the function the IEC fulfils. The IEC's purpose, role and responsibilities are clearly set out in the Constitution (1996: 96). The IEC is one of the Chapter 9 institutions supporting democracy. Its role is to a) manage elections (national, provincial and local); b) ensure elections are free and fair; and c) declare election results (Republic of South Africa, 1996: 96). In addition to this, the IEC fulfils many other functions, such as maintaining the voters' roll, registering and maintaining a list of parties, promoting voter education, conducting research in terms of electoral matters, etc. (Graham, 2015a: 118). The IEC is also considered an independent body and able to deliver free, fair and credible elections (Maphunye, 2019: 33). Generally, the IEC has also enjoyed the support of the public, with trust increasing significantly between 1999 and 2010 (Maphunye, 2019: 34). However, during the 2019 elections, the IEC experienced declining levels of trust in the wake of the impact of state capture.

The PR system was a carefully considered electoral system during the transition from apartheid to democracy on the basis of its perceived benefits in terms of nation building and inclusivity (De Jager, 2015: 146). This is important, since the PR system provides legitimacy to the political system because it allows minority groups to be represented (Venter, 2017: 29). Furthermore, because of the emphasis on representation, the PR system can be viewed as more democratic than the majority/'first-past-the-post' (FPTP) system present in Botswana.

**Table 5.1. Election results: 1994 - 2019.**

PARTY		1994	1999	2004	2009	2014	2019
<b>ANC</b>	%Votes	62.64	66.35	69.69	65.90	62.15	57.50
	Num. of seats (out of 400)	252	266	279	264	249	230
<b>ACDP</b>	%Votes	0.45	1.43	1.60	0.81	0.57	0.84
	Num. of seats (out of 400)	2	6	7	3	3	4
<b>COPE</b>	%Votes	-	-	-	7.42	0.67	0.27
	Num. of seats (out of 400)	-	-	-	30	3	2
<b>DP/DA</b>	%Votes	1.73	9.56	12.37	16.66	22.23	20.77
	Num. of seats (out of 400)	7	38	50	67	89	84
<b>EFF</b>	%Votes	-	-	-	-	6.35	10.80
	Num. of seats (out of 400)	-	-	-	-	25	44
<b>FF+</b>	%Votes	2.17	0.80	0.89	0.83	0.90	2.38
	Num. of seats (out of 400)	9	3	4	4	4	10
<b>IFP</b>	%Votes	10.53	8.85	6.97	4.55	2.40	3.38
	Num. of seats (out of 400)	43	34	28	18	10	14
<b>NP/NNP</b>	%Votes	20.39	6.87	1.65	-	-	-
	Num. of seats (out of 400)	82	28	7	-	-	-
<b>PAC</b>	%Votes	1.24	0.71	0.73	0.27	0.21	0.19
	Num. of seats (out of 400)	5	3	3	1	1	1
<b>UDM</b>	%Votes	-	3.42	2.28	0.85	1	0.45
	Num. of seats (out of 400)	-	14	9	4	4	2

*Data derived from the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC). Note that not all parties that have participated in elections since 1994 have been included in the tables, hence the numbers do not tally. The number of seats is out of a total of 400 potential seats.*

As shown in the case of Botswana (see Chapter 4), the percentage of votes in the FPTP system is not necessarily reflected in the number of seats that a party obtains. In addition, there is a lack of representation in a FPTP system. In contrast, parties in South Africa are assigned seats in Parliament based on their percentage of the votes as shown in Table 5.1.

In Botswana, the FPTP system has meant that smaller parties are unable to translate their electoral gains into parliamentary seats. It has also led to several attempts between opposition parties to try and work together in order to pool their parliamentary seats. In the South African case, the PR system has meant that the opposition remains splintered with various smaller parties able to win parliamentary seats. There are currently 318 registered parties nationally (Electoral Commission of South Africa, 2020). During the 2019 elections, a total of 49 parties appeared on the ballot papers (Electoral Commission of South Africa, 2019). There has, therefore, never been a substantial effort in the South African case to form opposition coalitions on a national or provincial level. The proliferation of political parties and the difficulty associated with multi-party coalitions in parliamentary executives are considered weaknesses of the PR system (Venter, 2017: 30).

Despite its strengths in terms of representation and inclusivity, there is another major weakness to this electoral system. This is the lack of accountability of elected representatives toward voters (Venter, 2017: 27). The reality is that elected members of Parliament are more responsive and accountable to party leadership than to voters (Faller, Glynn & Ichino, 2013: 2). Venter (2017: 26) states: “However, members of the NA (National Assembly) are not accountable to electoral constituencies and voters of such constituencies. Strong, and in effect, centralised, power is put in the hands of the party leadership”. For example, opposition parties introduced numerous motions of no confidence against former President Jacob Zuma based on various corruption-related charges (Wilkinson, 2017). A motion of no confidence requires a majority of the National Assembly to pass it (Republic of South Africa, 1996: 52). It is thus no surprise that each motion of no confidence failed because of the ANC’s majority in Parliament.

Furthermore, opposition parties have found it difficult to keep the ruling party accountable in the legislature. As seen in Table 5.1, the ANC has won landslide elections with relative ease,

while opposition parties have been left fighting for the remaining seats. As a result, the ANC has pushed through legislation and policies without needing to consider opposition party interests. This has meant that opposition parties have turned to the courts. The ANC has also been able to direct and dominate the political discourse. The inability of the opposition to offer viable alternatives and keep the ruling party accountable could be a potential explanation for the steady decline in voter participation.

Since 2009, voter turnout has declined with every election, the lowest being in 2019, when only 66.05% of the registered voters participated in comparison to 73.48% in 2014. What is even more concerning is that less than 50% of eligible voters (47.28%) chose to vote in 2019. This is another sharp decline from 2014 (53.77%). This is lower than in the Botswanan case. According to Table 5.2, more than 10 million eligible voters decided not to register. South Africa's most recent voter turnout is comparable to other low-turnout countries in terms of eligible voters (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2020: 4).

**Table 5.2. Voter participation: 1994 - 2019**

Year	Voter Turnout	Total vote	Registration	VAP Turnout	Voting age population	Population
2019	66.05 %	17,671,616	26,756,649	47.28 %	37,372,792	55,918,443
2014	73.48 %	18,654,771	25,388,082	53.77 %	34,691,652	54,002,000
2009	77.30 %	17,919,966	23,181,997	56.57 %	31,678,238	49,052,489
2004	76.73 %	15,863,554	20,674,926	56.77 %	27,944,712	42,768,678
1999	89.28 %	16,228,462	18,177,000	63.86 %	25,411,573	42,424,823
1994	86.87 %	19,726,610	22,709,152	85.53 %	23,063,910	40,436,000

*Data derived from International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), 2019.*

Low voter turnout reflects apathy and disillusionment with the democratic process (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2020: 4). De Jager and Parkin (2017: 8) state:

Voter turnout in the last three national elections (2004 – 2014) shows that less than 60 percent of eligible voters decided to vote, and it is clear that many are opting out of the democratic process of elections. Instead of voicing their discontent by punishing the ruling party at the polls and voting for an opposition

party, citizens are increasingly using non-conventional methods of political participation.

Age is a significant factor in determining whether individuals cast a vote (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2020: 27). There has been a steady decline in participation by young voters (18 – 29). Younger South Africans are less likely to participate in elections because they do not have strong party loyalties. They are also not persuaded or mobilised by other networks/institutions (social network, organisations, media) to participate. Instead, young South Africans tend to “rely on current, short-term political and economic evaluations when deciding whether to vote or not” (Schulz-Herzenberg, 2020: 27). Greater disengagement from younger voters will continue to have a negative impact on voter turnout and the subsequent stability of democratic rule.

The political party context also provides insight into the choices made by the electorate and how effectively state institutions can function. The ANC has dominated the South African political landscape since 1994. It has built its dominance on its liberation struggle history and role in establishing a democratic order. In short, it presents itself as the only legitimate option. There have been numerous opposition parties since 1994, but none have come close to posing a viable challenge to the ANC. The next section will focus on how the ANC has established its dominance and how key opposition parties have evolved since 1994.

### **5.3 The Political Party Context**

The ANC has effectively used its reputation as a national liberation movement to entrench its support base and its position as dominant party. This has left the ANC with the advantages – and pitfalls – of incumbency. Opposition parties, in turn, have struggled to compete with its electoral dominance and have also found it difficult keeping the ruling party accountable. However, growing discontent with corruption and maladministration has provided opposition parties with opportunities.

#### *5.3.1 The dominant-party system and the dominant party*

The ANC, the oldest liberation movement in Africa, has effectively utilised its anti-apartheid legacy and liberation movement credentials to establish itself as South Africa's dominant ruling party. Butler and Southall (2015: 1) describe this dominance as follows:



It has been the party of national government for more than two decades and it controls eight out of the nine provincial governments. The liberation movement has more than a million members. Its internal elections, candidate list processes, and 'deployments' determine who occupies key public offices. Its extended ideological and programmatic deliberations shape the policy agendas of the national government.

It has also portrayed itself as a party loosely based on African nationalism (Schrire, 2001: 137). Thus, for the last two decades the ANC has relied on the symbolic value of its liberation legacy more so than on its performance in government. Initially, ANC rule under the leadership of Nelson Mandela filled South Africans with hope and the promise of racial harmony and goodwill (Southall, 2014: 49). The ANC saw its role when it came into power as a mission to transform South African society, in particular to empower black South Africans (Schrire, 2001: 139).

However, poor economic performance, endemic corruption which has brought parastatals such as Eskom and South African Airways to their knees, and high levels of crime, unemployment and poverty have slowly eroded the ANC's legitimacy and electoral support. In addition to this, internal factions following the Mbeki era and more recently with the election of Cyril Ramaphosa as ANC President, have contributed to and exacerbated corruption and poor service delivery. The ANC's inability and/or unwillingness to deal with corrupt members derives mainly from the tenuous unity within the party and the need to portray itself as united (Duvenhage, 2020). This has damaged investor confidence, economic growth and the state's ability to deliver basic services. The ANC displays features of cartel parties as discussed in Chapter 2. One key feature of a cartel party is that the lines between the state and party become blurred – this is certainly the case in South Africa. The ANC has used its cadre deployment policy to gain access and control of state institutions and its resources. Furthermore, cartel parties vest power in the party in public office instead of the party on the ground. This is also the case in terms of the ANC.

According to the Quality of Government dataset (in De Jager & Parkin, 2017: 12), South Africa's quality of government in 1994 was relatively high, but since then it has declined sharply. In the years after the Mandela presidency the sobering reality of apartheid inequalities, the failure to provide the necessary socio-economic relief and the ruling party's increasing tendency towards corruption have led to public dissatisfaction. A total of 68% of

South Africans believe that the country is moving in the wrong direction (Afrobarometer Round 7, 2018). South Africans are also not confident about the government's ability to curb corruption, with 70% expressing the view that the government is doing badly to fight corruption (Afrobarometer Round 7, 2018).

In addition to poor performance, infighting has resulted in factions and splits within the party. These splits are similar to the ones the BDP have experienced and may a consequence of its incumbency. The first of these splits occurred in 2008 with the ousting of Thabo Mbeki. In 2005, Zuma faced allegations of corruption in his relationships with associates linked to the arms deal and was subsequently dismissed by Mbeki as Deputy President. This decision was not unanimously popular in the ruling party and caused a split in the party (Southall, 2009: 317). In 2007, Jacob Zuma won a bitterly fought party leadership battle against Mbeki to be elected as ANC President. Zuma and his supporters insisted that the National Prosecuting Authority's pursuit of the corruption case was politically motivated (Southall, 2009: 318). In September 2008, Judge Chris Nicholson dismissed the corruption charges against Zuma and stated that there had been potential political interference (Russell, 2009: 251). This sequence of events led to the ANC recalling Mbeki as President. In reaction to this, disgruntled Mbeki supporters formed the Congress of the People (COPE).

The second major split occurred after the expulsion of Julius Malema, ANC Youth Leader, in 2012 following various infractions which led to disciplinary processes (Out! ANC upholds Julius Malema's expulsion, 2012). Malema had become increasingly insubordinate to and critical of the ANC's leadership, in particular Jacob Zuma. His expulsion from the party left him in the political wilderness within the ANC and prompted Malema alongside other expelled ANC Youth League members (including Floyd Shivambu) to form the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) in 2013. The EFF went on to become the third largest party in the 2014 and 2019 elections.

More recently, a change in leadership from Zuma to Cyril Ramaphosa has also exposed further fault lines in the ruling party. Ramaphosa won the ANC leadership race against Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma at the ANC's 2017 national conference with a slight margin of 179 votes (Hunter, 2017). In addition to this, the top six of the ANC was split between members of the two factions.<sup>14</sup> The election of the ANC's new leadership also prompted the forced

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<sup>14</sup> These factions refer to a pro-Zuma faction, which supported Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma's failed Presidential bid, and the Ramaphosa faction, which supported investigations into state capture. The pro-Zuma faction was

resignation of Jacob Zuma as state President (Tromp & Patel, 2018). There are similarities between the Khama and Zuma cases. Even though Khama voluntarily seceded power to his successor and Zuma more reluctant to be removed, both former presidents have had some conflict with their predecessors. In the case of Khama, it has been more overt than in Zuma's case. Both Ramaphosa and Masisi have been tasked to rejuvenate their respective parties.

The initial reaction to Ramaphosa was one of relief and renewed hope (Southall, 2018). However, Ramaphosa has had the difficult task of juggling both pressing matters of state, such as the weak economy and failing state-owned enterprises, with tumult among the inner factions of his own party. Thus, instead of bold changes, the Ramaphosa presidency has been characterised by an incremental, cautious approach in order to appease various stakeholders and factions (Calland, 2019). These factors have presented the ANC with serious challenges to its electoral dominance and will be increasingly decisive in years to come. Booysen (2011: 5), however, makes the following statement:

A cohering, broadly trusted and in-charge ANC, the popular argument seems to be, will better serve the interests of South Africa than an ANC that crumbles and has *no* prospect of gaining mastery of government, and specifically of policy and delivery. Opposition parties are certainly not trusted to take over.

Thus, despite all of the ANC's failings and increased societal pressure, it seems that it still presents a significant obstacle to opposition parties. The next section will focus on opposition parties in South Africa.

### 5.3.2 *The opposition*

Opposition parties in South Africa have struggled to present any viable electoral challenge to the ANC since 1994. There have been a vast number of opposition parties that have come

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comprised of the so-called 'Premier League' - Supra Mahumapelo (former North West Premier), Ace Magashule (former Free State Premier) and David Mabuza (former Mpumalanga Premier and current Deputy President) (Umraw, 2017). They were instrumental in increasing ANC membership in their respective provinces. In the case of Mahumapelo and Magashule, they encouraged their delegates to support the Dlamini-Zuma presidency whereas in Mabuza's case, the support was split. Eventually, Ramaphosa narrowly won the ANC leadership by 179 votes (Umraw, 2017). Due to the closeness of the race and their influence, Magashule and Mabuza were elected as Secretary-General and Deputy President respectively (Friedman, 2018).

and gone since 1994, with a few that have consistently gained electoral support and seats in Parliament. The focus will be on three parties in this discussion: the Democratic Alliance (DA), Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), and the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP). The choice of these parties is based on a) their support and influence, in particular the DA and EFF, and b) the fact that they have been around for at least two elections. In 2019 the DA won 20% of the vote (84 seats) and the EFF 10% (44 seats). The ACDP was chosen here because it is one of the smaller parties which has influenced policies and Bills in Parliament and has been consistently represented since 1994. It can also be described as a niche party (see Chapter 2) with a very clear support base. All three parties also provide examples of very different ideological and structural organisations.

### *The Democratic Alliance (DA)*

The DA can trace its origins back to the liberal Progressive Party, which was founded in 1959 to oppose the apartheid state (Mottiar, 2015: 108; Democratic Alliance, 2019). In 1989, there was a merging of several liberal parties and splinter groups, and the Democratic Party (DP) was formed and became the official opposition to the NP. The Democratic Alliance was formed in 2000 after the merger of the New National Party (NNP) and Democratic Party and has emerged as the main opposition party since 2000. This merger, however, did not last long with a number of NNP members breaking away in 2004 to join the ANC. The DA has a liberal ideological basis with its focus on a market economy, non-racialism, constitutional supremacy, and equal opportunities (De Jager, 2015: 155). It lists the following as its key values: freedom; opportunity; fairness; openness; separation of powers; federalism; diversity; non-racialism; social market economy; constitutionalism and the rule of law; separation of party and state; redress of inequalities (Democratic Alliance, n.d.)

The DA has experienced continual electoral growth since 1994, culminating in its electoral high point of 22.23% in the 2014 national elections (see Table 5.1). According to Miti (2017:76) former DP/DA leader Tony Leon was instrumental in changing the party's fortunes after a poor performance in the 1994 elections, winning only 1.73% of the vote and seven parliamentary seats. Leon focused on containing and preventing ANC dominance. He also focused on building a party that provided vocal opposition to the ruling ANC (Mottiar, 2015: 108). In 2006, there was a resolution that the party needed to focus on growing its support among black voters (Mottiar, 2015: 108). One of the biggest challenges that the party has faced - and still faces - is to project itself as a diverse party for all South Africans (De Jager, 2013: 165). Even though it is one of the most diverse parties – 50% of its provincial

leadership is black – but is still portrayed as a white party. To an extent the party has managed to win over support from Afrikaners, coloureds, Indians and a proportion of the black vote. Under Helen Zille, who became party leader in 2007, there was a concerted effort towards changing the party's image and incorporating young, black leaders (such as Mmusi Maimane and Lindiwe Mazibuko) into important party positions (Mottiar, 2015: 108). The DA's electoral performances in the 2009 and 2014 national elections and 2016 local elections encouraged the party to be even more ambitious for the 2019 elections. The DA has also had access to government in governing the City of Cape Town since 2006 (De Jager, 2013: 166). It has been the only opposition party in the period between the 2014 and 2019 elections to govern provincially. Its ambitions for the 2019 elections were as follows: to win and govern in Gauteng; to win and govern in the Northern Cape; and to retain the Western Cape with a bigger majority (Jolobe, 2019: 92). In the end the party failed to meet these goals. Jolobe (2019: 95) states the following:

Ultimately, the party was not able to devise a strategy to counter the 'Ramaphoria' effect. The instability of policy ideas, the ideological war over diversity and race, and the implosion of key coalitions in important moments, all contributed to a poor showing at the polls. The party's electoral growth ended in 2016 and flat-lined dramatically in 2019.

Under the Zuma years, the DA gained support because of its call to form a united front. It is now a party in transition and faces an uphill battle to reclaim lost ground and win over new voters.

### *The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)*

An opposition party that has significantly reshaped opposition politics and interactions with the ruling party over the last few years is the EFF. The EFF was built on the foundation of ideological convictions of the ANCYL during Julius Malema's term as the Youth League's President (Essop, 2015: 217). Since its creation in 2013, the EFF has managed to garner public attention and a lot of media coverage, which was unusual for a newly formed party (Mbetse, 2014: 35). The EFF has placed its focus on the disenfranchised, unemployed and poor (Adams, 2018: 102; Roberts, 2019: 98). Adams (2018: 114) argues that the EFF represents a portion of the South African population that feels excluded from the current social contract as set out in the Constitution.

This is also linked to its conviction that the post-1994 epoch secured only political freedom and what is required now is economic freedom (Essop, 2015: 214). It has made the following principles the foundation of its vision for South Africa: land expropriation without compensation; nationalisation of banks, mines and other strategic industries; increasing government and state capacity; provision of free education, healthcare, sanitation and housing; large-scale protected industrial development in order to stimulate job creation; development of the African economy; accountable, transparent and corruption-free government and society (Mbetse, 2015: 40).

It has moulded itself as a left-wing populist party that draws on Marxist-Leninism. This corresponds with the discussion of left-wing parties in Chapter 2. The EFF has characterised itself as a militant and radical organisation (Essop, 2015: 214). The EFF has had to build up its support base, largely focusing on enticing voters away from other parties. Its desire is to occupy a space different to that of the ruling party and other opposition parties (Essop, 2015: 214). Mbetse (2015: 36) argues that the EFF "fits into a global pattern of populism in electoral politics". However, the EFF's emergence has been controversial, with many questioning its commitment to democracy and constitutional restraints (De Jager & Parkin, 2017: 5). On the one hand, the EFF's conduct in Parliament challenging Jacob Zuma's government and corruption and their defence of the Constitution gained support (Roberts, 2019: 98). On the other hand, its tactics in disrupting Parliament have earned the EFF a reputation for being disorderly, disrespectful, anarchic and even fascist (Roberts, 2019: 99). Mbetse (2015: 39) argues that the EFF's unbecoming conduct in Parliament is linked to its positioning as a populist party:

In challenging the rules and conventions of politics and the institutions through which politics is conducted and mediated, they set themselves apart from the elite and identify themselves as part of the people. . . The EFF's disdain for parliamentary rules and its challenging of the legitimacy of parliamentary conventions are a part of the same phenomenon.

It remains to be seen whether or not these tactics will keep resonating with the electorate and whether the EFF can increase its share of the vote.

#### *Smaller parties*

There are also a few smaller parties that have played their role as opposition to the ruling ANC, in particular in Parliament. These parties play an important role because they are able

to use their members as whistle-blowers, fight corruption, propose or oppose new bills, and most importantly, use their seats to bargain with larger parties (Hakizimana, 2019: 1).

The African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) has been in Parliament since 1994 but has not managed to win more than 2% of the popular vote or to gain 10 or more seats (see Table 5.1). Despite this, the party did make gains in the 2019 elections and was able to introduce a private member's bill on paternity leave that was signed into law late 2018 (Africa, 2019: 125). The ACDP's formation in 1994 was claimed to be based on divine guidance and a "call from God" to its founder and leader, Rev. Kenneth Meshoe (Lodge & Scheidegger, 2006: 15). The party declares the following as its principles in its 2013 constitution:

3.1 We believe there is one Creator God, eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe in the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

3.2 We believe the Holy Bible to be the inspired, inerrant written word of God and the final authority above all Man's laws and government.

3.3 We believe civil government is under the authority of God.

3.4 We believe that biblical principles provide the proper foundations for civil government's role to ensure personal freedom, family values, justice, peace, security, national unity and reconciliation for the nation and its citizens (African Christian Democratic Party, 2013: 4 – 5).

Its initial aim was to bring "God back into government" and the party has focused on moral issues, namely its opposition to abortion and homosexuality, along with its support of the death penalty. This morally conservative stance can also be seen in its 2019 election manifesto, which calls for the amendment of laws and policies that undermine family values (African Christian Democratic Party, 2019). The South African population is overwhelmingly Christian with Statistics South Africa estimating that of the 58 million people in South Africa, over 43 million identify as Christian (South Africa's people, 2019). It is therefore interesting that the ACDP is not garnering more support given these statistics. It may be because, even though most people identify as Christian, Christianity is diverse with various branches and denominations ranging from ultra-conservative to more liberal groupings.

The ACDP has a hierarchical structure with considerable power residing in its President and the Guardian Committee, who ensure that "the policies of the party remain true to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and that they are Biblically sound" (African Christian Democratic Party, 2013:

7). However, one of the main weaknesses of the party is that leadership is centralised around Rev. Meshoe (Africa, 2019: 126). In addition to this, the party struggles to garner wider support because of the perceptions of extreme conservatism and the fact that it represents an intensely religious constituency. Despite these opposition parties' efforts to win more votes and keeping the ruling party accountable, they have been weakened by a number of factors. The next section explores the challenges facing opposition parties.

#### **5.4 Challenges to Opposition Parties: Weak or Weakened?**

Since 1994, opposition parties have struggled to compete with the electoral dominance of the ANC, as shown in the previous section (see Table 5.1). The ANC's legacy as a liberation movement and the narrative that it had defeated apartheid and delivered democratic rule have been powerful tools in its electoral arsenal. Together with its – albeit gradually declining – electoral dominance, trust in the ANC as a ruling party has been dissipating over the years. According to Afrobarometer Round 7 (2018), most South Africans do not express trust in the ANC (36% not at all; 23.6% just a little). Opposition parties, however, have fared worse, with 41.2% of South Africans expressing no trust at all in them and 28.7% expressing just a little trust. This provides an indication of how opposition parties have struggled to portray themselves as legitimate alternatives to the ANC. In addition to this, opposition parties have been unable to launch an effective challenge to the ANC for a number of reasons: a) a political culture that is not conducive to supporting opposition parties; b) an uneven playing field in terms of resources as recognised by Levitsky and Way (2010); and c) internal weaknesses such as splits/factionalism, organisational weaknesses, political scandals, etc. The next section will focus on these factors.

##### *5.4.1 Political culture*

Political culture is important in forging a stable democracy and political parties play an important role in fostering widespread acceptance of democratic norms and values. Political culture can be defined as “the beliefs and values concerning politics that prevail within both elite and the mass” (Diamond, Linz & Lipset, 1995: 19). For democracy to be widely accepted, there needs to be intrinsic support for its norms, values and practices. Yet African political parties face some challenges in terms of their functions of sustaining a democratic political culture (see table 2.2 in Chapter 2) that could be summed up as follows: a) an instrumental understanding of democracy, b) non-democratic tendencies, and c) low trust in political parties. There is also a lack of understanding of opposition parties and the role they play.



As discussed in Chapter 2, there is a difference between the instrumental support for democracy and intrinsic support. Intrinsic support is “a commitment to democracy ‘for better or worse’; as such, it has the potential to sustain a fragile political regime even in the face of economic downturn or social upheaval” (Bratton & Mattes, 2001: 448). Instrumental support is linked to the performance of the regime in delivering material goods to the electorate. Most South Africans supported the transition to democracy because it carried the promise of a more prosperous future. However, the socio-economic circumstances have not changed significantly; levels of inequality, poverty and unemployment remain high. Von Fintell and Ott (2017: 78) state that “more than two decades into South Africa’s democratisation, optimism appears to have dissipated as the inertia of socio-economic development clouds the initial euphoria that accompanied the shift to democracy.”

As a consequence of these debilitating socio-economic realities, corruption and poor governance, South Africans are becoming increasingly dissatisfied and disillusioned with democracy. According to Afrobarometer’s Round 7 (2016/2018) survey, only 54% of South Africans prefer democracy above other non-democratic options (Mattes, 2019: 7). In terms of demand for democracy, it is even more concerning that only 23% of respondents registered a demand for democracy (Mattes, 2019: 9). This puts the country in the bottom five<sup>15</sup> of African democracies in terms of demand for democracy. South Africans are also generally dissatisfied with democracy and on average 62% of South Africans would forego a democratic regime for one that would deliver law and order and socio-economic benefits (Dryding, 2020: 11). This is a clear indication that most South Africans demonstrate instrumental – not intrinsic – support for democracy. The more South Africans reject democracy, the more difficult it will be to sustain democratic norms, values, and practices, including the value of voting and using the ballot box to “turn the rascals out”.

Despite these challenges, failures, and setbacks, the ANC continues to portray itself as a liberation movement and, subsequently, the only party that could rule legitimately. It has used its liberation movement history as social capital to garner widespread electoral support. However, this has also meant that opposition parties are viewed and labelled as political *enemies* rather than *opponents*. This perception is also clearly illustrated in an ANC National General Council document, which makes the following statement (African National Congress, 2015: 122):

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15 In contrast, Botswana is in the top ten with 80% of Botswanans preferring democracy.

The Fifth Parliament has been characterised by unity of the opposition with the intention of destabilising Parliament. This has been demonstrated through the attempted motions of no confidence targeting ANC leadership in Parliament; the unruly and disobedient behaviour, walk outs; and flagrant disregard of electoral doctrines that underpin the role and character of the democratic Parliament.

The increased rejection of democracy and negative perceptions of opposition parties have an impact on the level of trust placed in these parties. This is reflected in the data from Afrobarometer Round 7 (2018).

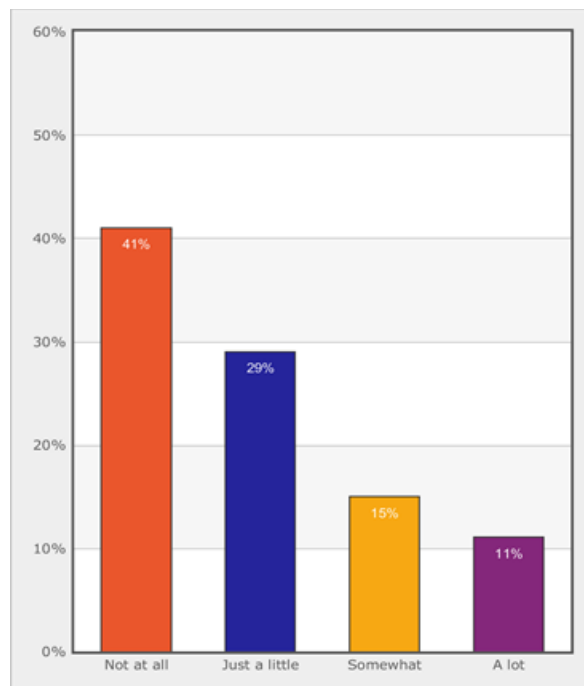


Figure 0.1. Trust in opposition parties<sup>16</sup> (Afrobarometer, 2018).

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<sup>16</sup> The survey question for this was: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? Opposition political parties categories were 'not at all', 'just a little', 'somewhat', 'a lot', 'refused', and 'I don't know'.

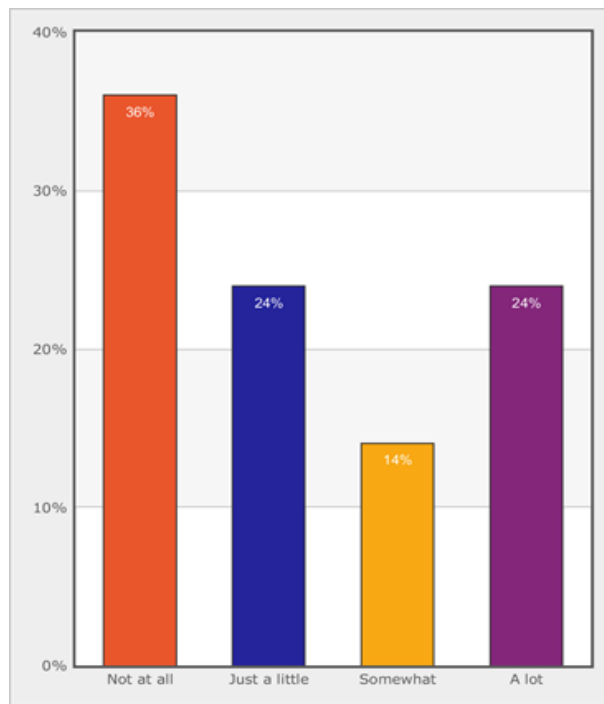


Figure 0.2. Trust in the ruling party<sup>17</sup> (Afrobarometer, 2018).

Distrust ('not at all' and 'just a little') in opposition parties is higher (70%) than in the ruling party (60%). It is interesting to note that distrust in both opposition parties and the ruling party has increased markedly in the last few Afrobarometer surveys (Round 5, 6, and 7) (see tables 5.3 and 5.4). This can be attributed to increasing socio-economic challenges (unemployment, poverty), corruption, and poor governance. Many people have lost faith in political parties who offer many electoral promises, but who manage to deliver on only a few of these. This is particularly the case of the ANC who have lost support, especially during the Zuma years. This general distrust in political parties also point to South Africans' dissatisfaction with democracy.

**Table 5.3. Trust in opposition parties (Round 2 - Round 7).**

Category	Total	R2 2002/2003	R3 2005/2006	R4 2008/2009	R5 2011/2012	R6 2014/2015	R7 2017/2018
<b>Not at all</b>	33.7%	44.3%	34.3%	28.6%	26.1%	29.5%	41.3%
<b>Just a little</b>	30.2%	31.7%	28.2%	29.6%	31.0%	31.3%	28.8%
<b>Somewhat</b>	20.9%	10.3%	20.0%	23.8%	30.5%	23.9%	15.5%

<sup>17</sup> The survey question for this was: How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say? Ruling party. The response categories were 'not at all', 'just a little', 'somewhat', 'a lot', 'refused', and 'I don't know'.

<b>A lot</b>	8.5%	2.2%	8.8%	8.3%	9.4%	12.1%	11.1%
<b>Don't know</b>	6.7%	11.5%	8.7%	9.7%	3.0%	3.2%	3.2%

Source: Afrobarometer Round 7 (2018).

**Table 5.4. Trust in the ruling party (Round 2 - Round 7).**

Category	Total	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7
		2002/200	2005/200	2008/200	2011/201	2014/201	2017/201
		3	6	9	2	5	8
<b>Not at all</b>	23.0%	25.4%	13.0%	20.1%	14.9%	31.7%	36.1%
<b>Just a little</b>	25.1%	35.0%	21.3%	22.5%	23.1%	24.4%	23.6%
<b>Somewhat</b>	24.7%	23.6%	27.3%	26.0%	32.5%	22.1%	14.3%
<b>A lot</b>	23.3%	8.7%	34.4%	23.6%	28.5%	20.8%	23.8%
<b>Don't know</b>	3.9%	7.4%	4.0%	7.8%	1.0%	1.0%	2.1%

Source: Afrobarometer Round 7 (2018).

In terms of opposition parties, distrust ('not at all') increased by 15% between 2012 (26.1%) and 2018 (41.3%). Distrust ('not at all') in the ruling party increased by 21% between 2012 (14.9%) and 2018 (36.1%). Even though distrust in the ruling party has increased more sharply, opposition parties generally have less trust bestowed on them. Opposition parties in South Africa face various challenges to be viewed as legitimate contenders for state power. Opposition parties are also weakened because of an unequal access to resources.

#### 5.4.2 The uneven playing field: access to resources

A common issue that opposition parties face in South Africa is the lack of resources (access to funding, access to the media, access to institutions) (Levitsky & Way, 2010). In contrast, the ruling ANC has privileged access to these resources, thereby creating an uneven playing field. As discussed in Chapter 2, Levitsky and Way (2010: 182) deem the playing field uneven when: a) state institutions are abused for partisan ends; b) the ruling party is constantly favoured above opposition parties; and c) the opposition's ability to compete during elections is severely impeded. Furthermore, opposition parties are weakened and kept weak by this situation.

In contrast, incumbency has been a great asset to the ANC in terms of access to resources (De Jager & Meintjes, 2013: 12). Firstly, the ANC receives the most public funding because of its dominance in Parliament. In South Africa, political parties represented either on a national or provincial or both are entitled to public funding (Electoral Commission of South Africa, 2019). In the latest IEC report of 2018, a total of R140 729 576 was made available for party funding, with the ANC receiving R83 580 697.60 of that (Electoral Commission of South Africa, 2018: 7). The remaining R57 million was split between the remaining 14 represented parties (see Table 5.5).

**Table 5.5. Political party funding**

<i>Party</i>	<i>National</i>	<i>Provincial</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>African Christian Democratic Party</b>	R610 393.33	R343 641.99	R954 035.32
<b>African National Congress</b>	R80 571 921.08	R3 008 776.52	R83 580 697.60
<b>Democratic Alliance</b>	R27 467 700.36	R3 008 776.52	R30 476 476.88
<b>Economic Freedom Fighters</b>	R8 392 908.44	R3 008 776.52	R11 401 684.96

*Data derived from the IEC's Represented Political Parties' Fund Annual Report 2017/2018. Note: Not all parties are listed.*

This differs drastically from the Botswanan case where no public funding is made available to parties. This has placed opposition parties at a distinct disadvantage in comparison to their South African counterparts, who at least receive some funding. The ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) is able to garner enough private funding because of its relationship with various private sector actors (see Chapter 4).

Parties, however, cannot function with public funding alone and therefore need various avenues to seek private funding. The matter of private funding in South Africa is a controversial one. Until recently, parties were not legally obliged to disclose the sources and amounts of donations they receive from private donors (De Jager, 2015: 158). Many political parties - the ANC and DA, in particular - have been reluctant to reveal their private donors. Korte and Weissenbach (2010: 151) state:

...it is possible to 'buy' political influence through secret donations. The connection between donors and political parties is often not visible, and party

funding can become a back door through which internal party democracy is seriously undermined.

This has been a cause for concern when looking at the ruling party's interactions with private donors like the controversial Gupta family and the late Gavin Watson-led Bosasa. The ANC has thus been able to cultivate neo-patrimonial relationships with key actors by using its incumbency as a key attraction.

Emboldened by electoral success, and in command of state resources, post-liberation elites have collapsed boundaries between state and society, adopted the lifestyles and pretensions of their colonial forebears, and cynically engaged in projects of personal enrichment under the cover of programmes of indigenisation (Butler & Southall, 2015: 4).

In addition to this, the ANC has also controversially used its investment arm, Chancellor House, to raise funds for the party (De Jager & Meintjes, 2013: 13). This has mainly been possible because of its privileged access to government tenders (De Jager, 2017: 158). One of the most telling examples of this conflict of interests was when a subsidiary of Chancellor House, Hitachi Power - whose chairman was an ANC cabinet minister - was awarded a tender of R38.5 billion to supply boilers to two power stations (Jolobe, 2010: 210; De Jager, 2017: 158). This is an illustration of the potential for corruption inherent in incumbency and how the ANC is in a more favourable financial position than opposition parties. However, this situation prompted the long overdue passing of the Political Party Funding Act of 2018 (signed into law in January 2019) (Pasensie, 2020). The Act requires political parties to disclose funding above the R100 000 threshold within 30 days of receiving the donation (Republic of South Africa, 2018: 10). This is seen as an important step towards ensuring accountability and transparency, and to deter corruption (Pasensie, 2020).

Access to the media is another valuable resource for political parties. South Africa is considered to have an independent, diverse and independent media sector (De Jager & Meintjes, 2013: 14; Freedom in the World: South Africa, 2019). The media have played an important role in keeping the government and ruling party accountable (Graham, 2015b: 182; Freedom in the World: South Africa, 2019). The media, in the form of investigative journalism, have also been instrumental in exposing corruption scandals, such as the arms deal, Nkandla case, and the Gupta-linked state capture, among a few. However, despite

this, the media in recent years have come under increasing attack and scrutiny (African Media Barometer, 2018: 5).

Generally, the independent media have had a combative relationship with the ANC, while the ruling party has accused the media of being anti-ANC (De Jager & Meintjes, 2013: 14; Graham, 2015b: 182). The exception to this rule was the controversial, Gupta-owned – now closed – African News Network (ANN7) news channel and *New Age* newspaper, which reported favourably on the ANC government (African Media Barometer, 2018: 33). Furthermore, the media have been a target of the ANC's policy of cadre deployment, whereby members of the ruling party are strategically deployed throughout various public and private institutions (De Jager, 2013: 159). In terms of the media, this has been the case for the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). The SABC under Hlaudi Motsoeneng, as the CEO, placed an emphasis on more 'positive' new stories, thus limiting reporting on government corruption and 'bad news' (Graham, 2015b: 183). Those who were unwilling to toe the line were removed, such as the 'SABC 8'<sup>18</sup> (De Jager & Meintjes, 2013: 15; African Media Barometer, 2018: 12). However, despite seemingly more preferential coverage of the ANC by the SABC, the media in general have also provided significant coverage of opposition parties (Duncan, 2019: 133).

The ANC's policy of cadre deployment has also had a significant impact on many state institutions and has placed the party in a more favourable position than opposition parties. The ANC has portrayed cadre deployment as an important aspect of its National Democratic Revolution (NDR), which seeks to transform South African society (De Jager & Parkin, 2017: 14). However, this access to state institutions is a way of gaining a competitive resource advantage over opposition parties. In recent years this has not been confined to partisan interests, but located to those in government, in particular Jacob Zuma. Opposition parties simply do not have the same amount of access to these institutions and are not afforded the same privileges that incumbency brings to the ruling party. The next section will focus on the internal weaknesses of opposition parties.

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18 The SABC 8 refers to journalists who were dismissed for objecting to former Chief Operations Officer, Hlaudi Motsoeneng's policy of not airing footage of violent protests (African Media Barometer, 2018: 12).

### 5.4.3 *Internal weaknesses*

Opposition parties in South Africa have found it difficult to gain widespread electoral support, despite declining support for the ANC in recent years. This is a result of a lack of access to resources, but also stems from internal weaknesses that have plagued opposition parties. These weaknesses include the inability to provide attractive alternatives to the ruling ANC, political scandals, and inner party fractures.

One of the biggest weaknesses of opposition parties is that they are unable to provide attractive alternatives to the ruling party. A trend that has emerged throughout Southern Africa is that the electorate does not respond well to constant criticism of government by opposition parties (Lekalake, 2017). Instead, opposition parties need to focus on their policy alternatives and highlight those to the electorate. Mngomezulu (2015: 93) says about the ANC's performance in the 2014 national elections:

First, the party benefitted from its past history, its political image as a liberation movement. Second, the opposition had nothing of substance to offer, except highlighting the challenges the ANC was faced with.

Opposition parties have thus struggled to gain widespread support because of the ANC's legacy as a liberation movement and their inability to appeal broadly to the South African electorate. For example, the Democratic Alliance (DA) has tried – and largely failed – to appeal to black voters, because it is still seen as a 'white' party even when it had Mmusi Maimane as its leader (Mngomezulu, 2015: 92). This broad-based appeal will become even less after the recent ruptures in the DA which saw Maimane resign as leader and Helen Zille return as Chairperson of the DA (Friedman, 2019). John Steenhuisen was eventually elected as DA leader by a landslide in November 2020, defeating Mbali Ntuli (Erasmus, 2020).

The EFF has emerged as the third largest party since the 2014 general elections, winning 6.35% in 2014 and 10.8% in 2019. However, even though the EFF has emerged as a significant opposition party, its manifesto is too radical and impractical for the average voter (Mngomezulu, 2015: 93). Furthermore, since the ANC is a catch-all party that dominates electoral support, smaller parties have become niche parties focusing on entrenching a limited support base (De Jager & Meintjes, 2013: 11). Parties like the ACDP and Freedom Front Plus (FF) are examples of this trend.



Other weaknesses that have hampered opposition parties are internal fractures and political scandals. The Democratic Alliance experienced damaging ruptures before and after the 2019 elections. After their successful campaign during the 2016 local elections, the DA were ambitious about the 2019 elections (De Jager & Parkin, 2017: 8). However, fundamental policy disagreements, problems in the metros that they won in 2016, and highly publicized splits contributed to the party losing support in the 2019 elections (Jolobe, 2019: 87 - 92). Fault lines emerged in 2018 between the so-called 'classic liberals' and 'Afro-liberals' in terms of the party's position on race and race-based policies, such as Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) (Jolobe, 2019: 89). This revealed deep fractures in the party in terms of key policies. What deepened this crisis was the resignation of the DA's policy chief at the time, Gwen Ngwenya, who portrayed the party as directionless in terms of policies and strategy (Jolobe, 2019: 91). She has since returned.

In addition to this, the coalition governments that it forged in Johannesburg, Nelson Mandela Bay and Tshwane, started to fall apart (Jolobe, 2019: 90). The DA lost power in Johannesburg after the resignation of Herman Mashaba in protest at the return of Helen Zille to leadership in the DA's federal executive (Kotze, 2019). Stevens Mokgalapa was removed as mayor of Tshwane after a string of controversies. Athol Trollip was removed in Nelson Mandela Bay through a motion of no confidence supported by the ANC, EFF and UDM (Jolobe, 2019: 90). The DA also experienced damaging splits in the run up to the 2019 elections. One of the most high-profile splits came in the City of Cape Town where the relationship between then mayor Patricia de Lille and the DA's leadership broke down (Kotze & Bohler-Muller, 2019: 366). The fallout from that split was that De Lille resigned from the party and formed a new party, GOOD, and divided the DA's support base in the Western Cape.

The EFF, to a less damaging extent, has also experienced factionalism within its ranks (Roberts, 2019: 101). The EFF also experienced a significantly higher parliamentary turnover (64%) of Members of Parliament (MPs) than average (25%) between 2014 and 2019. The recent elective conference also revealed some internal factions, such as the student wing of the EFF supporting Dali Mpofu to replace Malema-favoured Floyd Shivambu as Deputy President (Smit & Maeko, 2019). There is also criticism that the militaristic and authoritarian nature of the EFF is discouraging gender equality within the party (Roberts, 2019: 101). There are doubts about whether it will be able to garner more widespread support and if it has reached a radicalised ceiling. The EFF's hostile and aggressive approach to many

issues and its focus on racially divisive issues, such as land, might not appeal to a large portion of the electorate.

In addition to this, the EFF has also been implicated in the VBS scandal<sup>19</sup> in that the family members of the leadership (Julius Malema and Floyd Shivambu) benefitted from the looting of millions of rands from the bank (Roberts, 2019: 105). These allegations emerged in October 2018, when it was revealed that almost R2 billion was stolen by various stakeholders, including people connected to the ANC and EFF. However, the EFF denied the allegations and claimed that it was simply negative propaganda (Kotze & Bohler-Muller, 2019: 366). However, increasing claims of misuse of party finance and controversies linked to party funding will be one of the major challenges the party faces going forward.

Opposition parties face various external (resources, political culture) and internal (factionalism) weaknesses in South Africa's dominant-party system. Despite these challenges, failures and weaknesses, opposition parties remain crucial in keeping the ruling party in check and delivering democratic goods.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

The establishment of a liberal, constitutional democracy in 1994 and the emergence of the ANC as a dominant ruling party have been defining features of South African politics over the last 25 years. The institutions established after 1994 have sought to entrench multi-party, competitive democracy, but in many ways have failed to live up to the provisions of the 1996 Constitution. The ANC's electoral dominance has had an influence on the effectiveness of many of these institutions, in particular Parliament. However, the South African Constitution and the court system have been instrumental in checking executive power. The Constitutional Court in particular remains a key institution in the defence of the democratic principles of the Constitution.

The electoral system of proportional representation has provided various political parties with a national platform and an opportunity to convert their votes into seats. However, a consequence of South Africa's PR closed-list system is that accountability to the electorate

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<sup>19</sup> The VBS scandal is based on revelations that the bank had become insolvent due to approximately R1.8 billion funds stolen by "its owners, managers and the politically connected over a three-year period" (Roberts, 2019: 105).

is hampered. Members of Parliament tend to be more responsive and accountable to party leaders than to their constituencies. This has a negative impact on Parliament's oversight role. This is particularly a problem because of the dominance of the ANC in the legislature, where more than 50% of the MPs are ANC members. Opposition parties thus struggle to effectively keep the ruling party accountable in Parliament or have their policies and interests enabled.

Furthermore, opposition parties also experience various challenges, firstly in terms of access to resources and, secondly, in terms of their own internal weaknesses. The ruling ANC, given its electoral dominance and incumbency, has access to a wider variety of resources, in particular financial and institutional resources. Despite the provision for public party funding, smaller parties struggle to match the resources of the ANC. South Africa's media industry is relatively varied and diverse. Media coverage is fair, in particular the private media. The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) has experienced various challenges in recent years and has been accused of reporting more favourably on the ruling party and government.

Opposition parties have also experienced various internal weaknesses that have hampered their appeal to South African voters. In fact, opposition parties appear to be less trusted than the ruling party. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, opposition parties have failed to provide attractive alternatives to the ruling party. Secondly, the main opposition parties (DA and EFF) have recently experienced internal tensions and controversies that have made them less attractive to the ruling party. Thirdly, there is a general lack of trust in and understanding of the role of opposition parties in a democratic setting.

South Africa's political landscape is still dominated by the ANC, and if the ruling party improves its performance in government, it should remain dominant for the foreseeable future. However, there are many challenges that are negatively influencing the ANC's overall appeal. It remains to be seen whether opposition parties can capitalise on the ruling party's weakening appeal and track record of poor governance or whether the status quo will continue. The next chapter will focus on the analysis and discussion of the data to understand how these opposition parties remain relevant in the dominant-party context.

## **Chapter 6: Analysis and Discussion**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The focus of this research is on how opposition parties in the dominant-party systems of Botswana and South Africa have remained *relevant*. In addition, an important sub-question centred on the challenges that opposition parties face in these two cases. As set out in Chapter 2, this concept of ‘remaining relevant’ is linked to the three categories of democracy-supporting functions (legitimising, electoral and accountability functions). This forms part of the wider interest in the health of democracy in dominant-party systems and prospects for democratic consolidation in these cases. Furthermore, in order to understand how opposition parties have remained relevant, it is also important to consider the contexts within which they operate and the challenges they face.

In this chapter, the qualitative data are discussed and analysed, focusing on general themes and key differences between the two cases. Interviews were conducted with eight key informants across both cases - four participants from Botswana and four participants from South Africa. The interviews with participants in Botswana were conducted in 2017, while the ones in South Africa were conducted in 2018 and 2019. Moeti Mohwasa, Kwenantle Gaseitsiwe, Noah Salakae, and Taolo Lucas are from Botswana. At the time of the interviews, the BCP had not yet joined the UDC coalition. Helen Zille, John Steenhuisen, James Selfe, and Steve Swart are from South Africa. All participants consented to be interviewed and recorded. The interviews were coded and analysed by using Atlas.ti software.

The discussion of the data in this chapter will be linked to the three democracy-supporting functions as set out above: functions toward preserving a democratic political culture (legitimising); functions toward promoting political participation (electoral); and functions toward enhancing democratic governance (accountability). This is linked to concept of remaining relevant, hence the term ‘opposition relevance’. Furthermore, the challenges that opposition parties face in fulfilling these functions will also be discussed.

## 6.2 Parties of Pressure: Opposition Parties in Dominant-party Systems

This section will discuss and analyse the notions of *opposition relevance* and *opposition challenges* in relation to the three categories of democracy-supporting functions. These categories served as the main theme/code groups when the interviews were coded and allow for an in-depth discussion and analysis of the quotes from the interviews linked to the different codes. The codes within these themes were split between how opposition parties remained relevant and the challenges they face in fulfilling their functions. It is important to note that in the two cases that codes might refer to the relevance of opposition parties while the same codes may indicate challenges for other opposition parties.

The comparison of the South African and Botswanan key informant responses provides interesting insights into the similarities and differences in the experiences of opposition parties in these dominant-party cases. Most of the quotes have been linked to the following codes: the mobilisation of the electorate (*opposition party relevance*) and the uneven playing field (*opposition party challenges*). This already provides some insight into how opposition parties attempt to remain relevant and the potential challenges that they experience. The breakdown of the total quotes per code is listed in tables 6.1 and 6.2 below.

**Table 6.1. Codes related to opposition party relevance.**

<b>Opposition Party Relevance</b>			
<b>Code group/main theme</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Total coded quotations</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Functions toward maintaining democratic political culture (legitimising)</b>	Importance of political parties	9	6.00%
	Political culture	6	4.00%
	Political education	11	7.40%
<b>Functions toward promoting democratic participation (electoral participation)</b>	Representing supporters	12	8.00%
	Presenting an alternative	10	6.70%
	Mobilizing the electorate	37	24.90%
<b>Functions toward enhancing democratic governance (accountability)</b>	Central policy objectives	20	13.40%
	Collaborating with other organisations	22	14.80%

	Accountability role	22	14.80%
<b>Total</b>	9	149	100%

*Compiled by the author, derived by using Atlas.ti.*

**Table 6.2. Codes related to opposition party challenges.**

<b>Opposition Party Challenges</b>			
<b>Code group/main theme</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Total coded quotations</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Functions toward maintaining democratic political culture (legitimising)</b>	Delegitimisation of opposition	8	10.5%
	Political ignorance	6	7.90%
<b>Functions toward promoting democratic participation (electoral participation)</b>	Lack of electoral support	8	10.5%
	Electoral system	6	7.90%
	Party funding	6	7.90%
<b>Functions toward enhancing democratic governance (accountability)</b>	Uneven playing field	31	40.80%
	Other intangible obstacles	11	14.50%
<b>Total</b>	7	76	100%

*Compiled by the author, derived by using Atlas.ti.*

In terms of opposition party relevance, the mobilisation of the electorate stands out with 37 quotes (see table 6.1). What was evident during the interviews was that most of the actions taken by opposition parties were related to getting people to support them at the ballot box. The uneven playing field emerged as the most prominent challenge with 31 quotes (see table 6.2). This was especially a concern in the Botswanan context when looking at party funding, both public and private. These functions toward relevance and the challenges opposition parties face will be discussed in the following sections.

### **6.3 Opposition Relevance**

Opposition parties fulfil important functions that support democracy. These functions have been linked to the attitudinal, behavioural, and structural elements of democratic consolidation. There are three categories: functions to maintain democratic political culture

(legitimising); functions to promote democratic participation (electoral participation); functions to enhance democratic governance (accountability). In total, 9 codes were assigned across the three categories. In this section, each category and its codes will be discussed.

### 6.3.1 Functions toward Maintaining a Democratic Political Culture (Legitimising)

The first code group/main theme is linked to the function that political parties have in legitimising the democratic political system, its institutions, and procedures – in short, the role they play in making democracy widely accepted and consolidated. The questions in the interview schedule linked to this function led to the creation of three codes in terms of opposition relevance. These include: the importance of political parties, political education, and political culture. There was a total of 26 quotes related to opposition relevance codes for legitimising functions. Out of these 26 quotes, 6 were related to political culture; 11 focused on political education, and 9 were linked to the importance of political parties. This spread is reflected in Figure 6.3. Clearly, political education is seen as an important strategy in relation to legitimising functions. The political culture code specifically focused on whether opposition parties and the functions they fulfil are widely accepted. The importance of political parties is related to how they contribute to democracy. Lastly, political education focused on the role opposition parties play in educating the public and how informed the participants believed the public was about democracy.

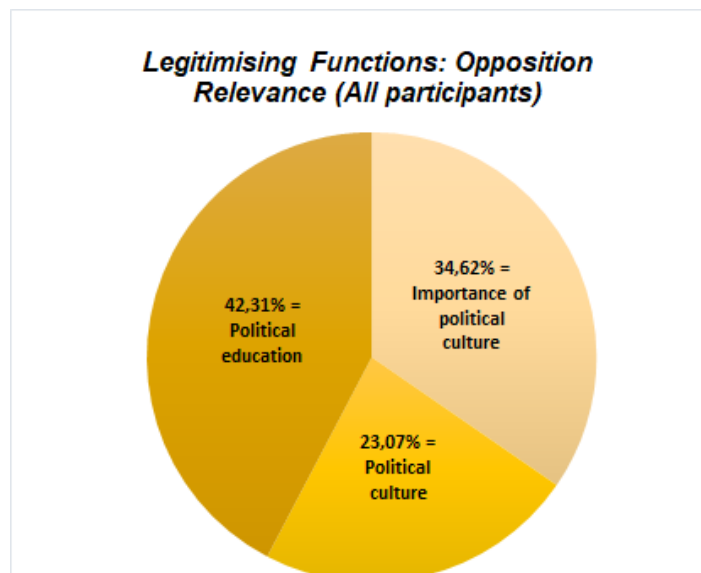


Figure 0.1. Legitimising functions: Opposition relevance (all participants). Compiled by the author, derived by using Atlas.ti.

There are significant differences between the two cases (see Figures 6.2). South African participants placed far more emphasis on political culture than their Botswanan counterparts did. In contrast, Botswanan participants discussed political education more extensively than their South African counterparts. In terms of the importance of political parties, there was a relatively equal distribution.

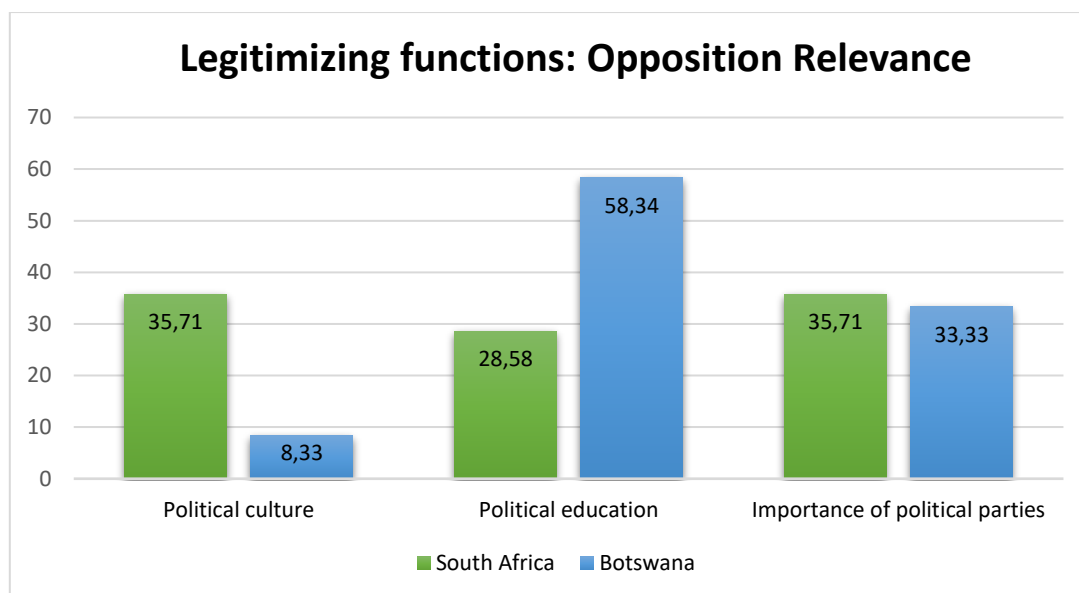


Figure 0.2. Legitimising functions: relevance. Compiled by the author, derived using *Atlas.ti*.

#### *Importance of political parties*

Political parties and the functions they perform are crucial in legitimising a democratic political system. This includes the role played by both an incumbent/ruling party plays as well as by those in opposition. KG [BNF/UDC] (2017), stated the following, which reflects the legitimising role that political parties play:

They make them account, so their relevance is to give people an opportunity to see outside the box, alright, wherein they also have an opportunity to see how they can improve their lives in the event they decide to change the existing ruling party. So, their importance goes a long way in nurturing democracy, in giving people an alternative in the ensuring to people that their lives can be bettered than the way they are.



In both cases, providing an alternative and holding the ruling party accountable were viewed as important elements of the functions that opposition parties fulfil. However, in the South African case this came up more often than it did in the Botswanan case:

- “So it’s to ensure accountability, set out the alternative policy platform to the problems facing society and then, three, try to become a new government through mobilising votes in a peaceful way” (HZ, 2018);
- “Well, the obvious thing is to hold the governing party accountable. . . The second thing that we do is, we provide what we believe are alternatives to the dominant narrative in South Africa” (JSelfe [DA], 2018);
- “I believe, obviously, firstly opposition parties have a role to play in terms of ensuring that there’s democracy in the country and also by offering an alternative voice” (MM [BNF/UDC], 2017).

The focus on providing an alternative can also point to why the mobilisation of the electorate was seen as a key strategy and this was the code that had the most quotes. In addition to providing an alternative, JSteen [DA] (2018) states that “the goal of every political party is to attain power.” NS [BNF/UDC] (2017) also emphasised the importance of mobilizing people around a common goal: “For me, I believe that political parties must organise people around a certain goal, ensure that there is shared aspirations around that area and work together to achieve them.”

In both cases, opposition parties had similar views on the responsibilities that political parties – especially opposition parties – have in a democratic political system. This is related to offering alternatives and holding the ruling party accountable. There is also a clear focus on how important opposition parties are for the democratic process. In new democracies, political parties “fulfil relevant functions and play significant roles in the processes of regime change, democratization, and democratic consolidation” (Gherghina, 2009: 1). This is of particular significance in the South African case, where there was a transition from an authoritarian regime to a democratic dispensation. The next section will focus on the role opposition parties play in political education.

### *Political education*

This code included responses about how well informed the public is about democratic politics; this varied between participants. Furthermore, this code also included responses about what opposition parties did to educate the public about democracy. There is a marked difference between the Botswanan and South African cases, with a lot more emphasis on

political education in Botswana than in South Africa. In the Botswanan case, all participants provided feedback on how opposition parties contribute to political education. In contrast, not much was said in the South African case about what opposition parties do in relation to political education.

In the South African case, most participants felt that South Africans were relatively aware of and informed about politics and the democratic system:

- “Yes, of course. I think that South Africans, given the struggle for freedom, I think a lot of people are very attuned to politics and the political system and I think there’s great interest publicly about what happens in parliament and what’s going on” (JSteen [DA], 2018);
- “I think we are making progress and I think sometimes the progress is quite rapid. For example, when we see major political contestations played out in the legal arena, a lot of concepts are aired and analysed and broadly discussed that then become part of the national conversation” (HZ, 2018);
- “Yes, indeed. I think that, broadly speaking, I think many people are aware of the fact that we live in a constitutional democracy. They are aware of their constitutional rights” (SS [ACDP], 2019).

A factor that potentially plays a role in this perception is the experience of an oppressive system such as apartheid. This has made the public generally attuned to constitutional rights and sensitive to issues of rights violations.

Participants from Botswana placed an emphasis on the role parties and politicians play in political education. This was specifically related to their constituencies and their interactions with them:

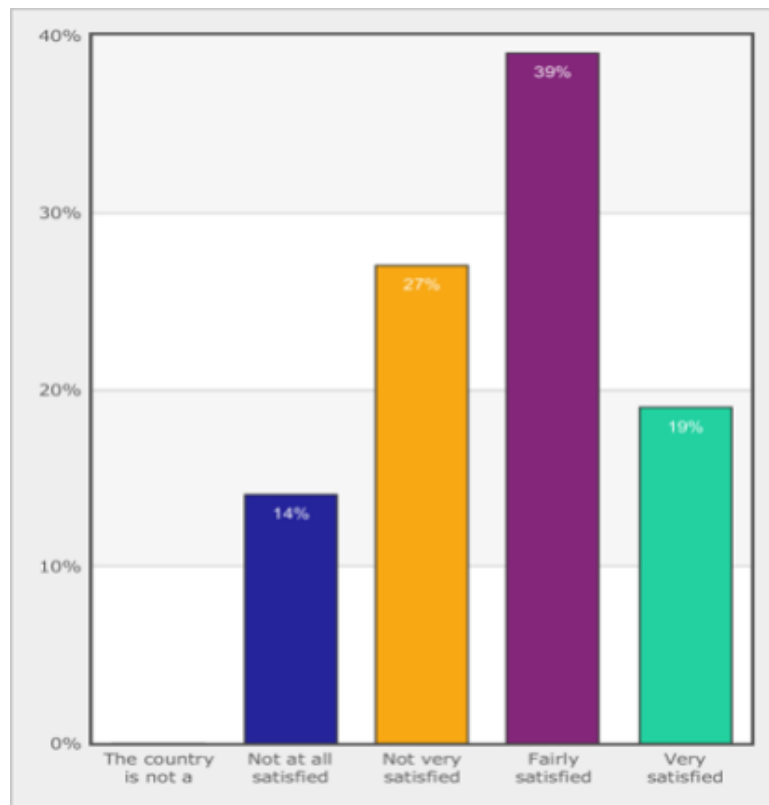
- “So every time when parliament goes on recess, like it went on recess, I go to my constituency, address kgotla meetings. . . The kgotla system, you can’t find it anywhere in the world. It’s only in Botswana. You have to call every ... after meet ... parliament or any engagement that you feel you need to share with your constituents, you go to a kgotla, where the chief, the traditional chief is there, just to ensure that nobody misbehaves” (NS [BNF/UDC], 2017);
- “The only access we have to the general electorate is through political rallies, where we go to speak at an open platform” (KG [BNF/UDC], 2017);

- “Maybe by way of political rallies, we do so. By way of some newsletters or manifestos, pamphlets that we produce at a party level, where we get an opportunity, write letters to various columns in the media” (MM [BNF/UDC], 2017);
- “Yes, we do. And we have several structures of the party, ranging from ward structures, constituency, regional and national structures. In all these structures we expect party cadres from time to time to mount workshops and educational programmes for members. . . . But we also do that through regular party conferences. We view our conferences as a platform for political education as well” (TL [BCP], 2017).

The issue of political education is linked to the public’s awareness and acceptance of the democratic system and the political culture, which will be discussed in the next section.

### *Political culture*

A democratic political culture is important in cementing democratic values, institutions and practices. This is also linked to the public’s demand for, support of, and satisfaction with democracy. In Botswana’s case, 80% of people support democracy and there is a high demand for democracy, with 62% of Botswanans expressed a demand for full democracy. In addition, over 50% of Botswanans expressed satisfaction with democracy (see Figure 6.7).



*Figure 0.3. Satisfaction with democracy in Botswana<sup>20</sup>.  
(Afrobarometer, 2018).*

Included in a democratic political culture is the acceptance of opposition parties and the role they play in democracy. In terms of the two cases, the responses from participants ranged from positive to negative. In general, in both cases participants felt that opposition parties were accepted by the public.

In the South African case, participants indicated that their presence have improved conditions for opposition parties:

- “Now it’s becoming more issue-based and people are more open to support, say, the EFF, you know, the DA, so there’s growth, we’re experiencing growth as well. People are starting to become more issue-based, starting to look, I don’t know what the size of that is, but people are maturing, I think. The voters are maturing” (SS [ACDP], 2019);
- “But I think that people understand what our role is. I think that there’s a general understanding about what role an opposition performs. And I think that parliament helped that tremendously and particularly the public access to

parliament on the TV channel and the fact that parliament has been the crucible of the national debate again on a variety of issues I think has helped that” (JSteen [DA], 2018);

- “I certainly think the culture for opposition parties is much better than it was 24 years ago. 24 years ago it was really difficult to wear a DA t-shirt in the township. Today it’s quite routine. . . So while we’re still very much a one party dominated system, things have got a lot easier for opposition parties” (HZ, 2018).

In the Botswanan case, even though opposition parties were accepted, the conservative culture and aversion to change proved to be challenges rather than factors that contributed to their relevance.

The acceptance of democracy and all its values, institutions and processes are crucial to its consolidation and survival. This is of particular importance when looking at people’s participation in democratic processes. The next section will focus on functions toward promoting democratic participation, specifically electoral participation.

### *6.3.2 Functions toward Promoting Democratic Participation (Electoral Participation)*

The second code group/main theme is linked to the function of opposition parties in fostering political participation. Three codes, relating to opposition party relevance, were created by drawing on the interview schedule and responses from participants. These include: presenting an alternative, representing supporters and mobilizing the electorate. There are interesting similarities and significant differences when comparing the two cases.

The opposition relevance codes for electoral functions were linked to: presenting an alternative (10 quotes); representing supporters (12 quotes); and mobilising the electorate (37 quotes). In total, this code theme had 59 quotes in total. The general trends show that the mobilisation of the electorate was the strongest focus for participants in terms of opposition relevance. Mobilisation of the electorate is linked to the efforts by opposition parties to encourage the electorate to vote. This is central to the survival of any democracy – people need to vote (conventional participation) and parties need to mobilise the electorate to participate. Representing supporters was focused on *how* opposition parties fulfilled their mandates and what they did in the legislature. Lastly, presenting an alternative was related

to the alternative platform that opposition parties provided and what their electoral aims were for the 2019 elections.

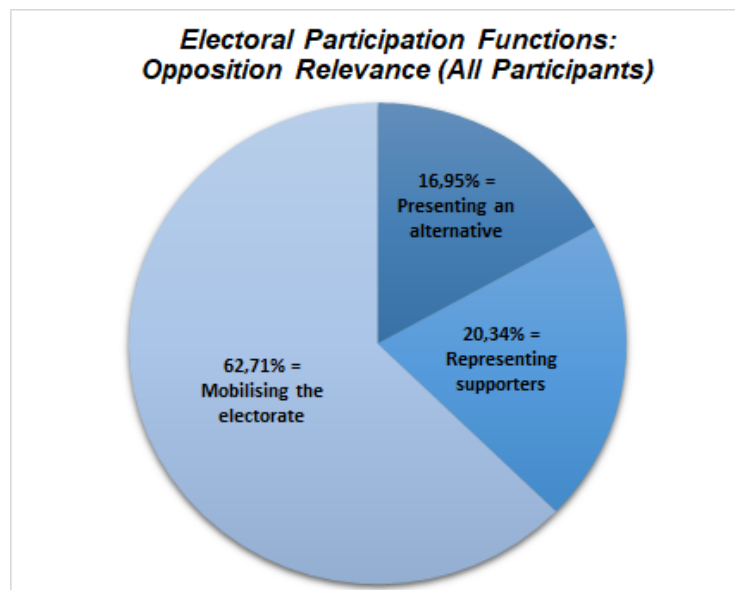


Figure 0.4. Electoral participation functions: Opposition party relevance (all participants).

Compiled by the author, derived by using Atlas.ti.

When comparing the two cases, there are striking similarities but also differences (see Figures 6.8). In both cases, mobilisation of the electorate was the most significant strategy – not just in terms of electoral functions, but across all the functions. The split of the quotes was also even with South African participants providing 18 of the 37 quotes and Botswanan participants 19 of the quotes. However, there were differences in terms of the other two codes. In Botswana, more emphasis was placed on presenting an alternative than in South Africa. This is perhaps linked to the fact that Botswanan participants were confident of an electoral victory in 2019. In South Africa, representing supporters was focused on more.

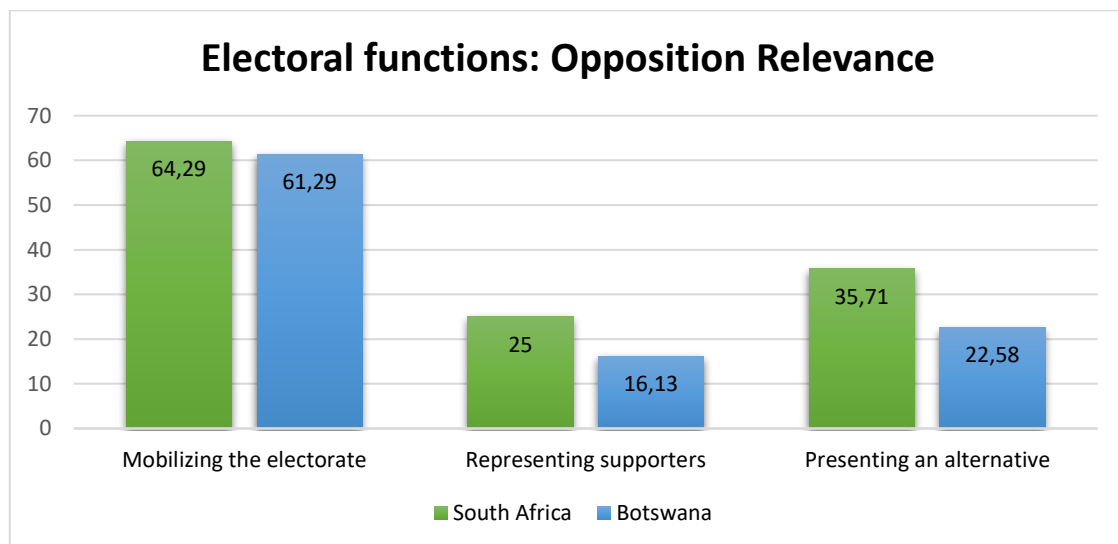


Figure 0.5. Electoral functions: relevance. Compiled by the author, derived using Atlas.ti.

### *Presenting an alternative*

This code was linked to the respective 2019 elections, and as per the figures, there are differences in the number of quotations linked to this. Furthermore, there are also clear differences in expectations. In the Botswanan case, participants were confident about the chances of the coalition (Umbrella for Democratic Change) winning the 2019 elections and expressed the expectation of victory:

- “We want to take power. We want to take power. We haven’t come at that stage yet as to how many constituencies we’ll like to win, but obviously ... what do you call it? ... majority of 51 per cent. Yes, if we can get that and it takes us to power, then there’s no problem, because I believe change is imminent” ( NS [BNF/UDC], 2017);
- “Yes, we are looking at unseating the BDP in the next elections” (MM [BNF/UDC], 2017);
- “Frankly speaking, our objective is to remove the ruling party, and nothing will stop us from doing that. So, next time you call me, you may hear that there’s a new government in place” (KG [BNF/UDC], 2017);
- “So we believe that if we pool our resources together, pull our numbers together, then a possibility exists that we win and unseat the ruling party” (TL [BCP], 2017).

Despite the confidence and high expectations, the UDC coalition failed to unseat the BDP, as discussed in Chapter 4. However, their confidence was based on the performance of

opposition parties and the ruling party in previous elections, particularly in 2014. This would also provide context as to why some opposition parties opted for a coalition as a strategy to gain more support and potentially win power. In the Botswanan case this has proven relatively effective for opposition parties.

In contrast, the South African participants were more conservative in their 2019 election expectations. In fact, two of the four participants did not want to indicate what their party aimed to win. The focus for the DA was to grow its share of the vote and potentially winning power in Gauteng. JSteen [DA] stated the following on the question of what percentage of the vote the party wanted to win in 2019 elections: “27% of the vote nationally, retain the Western Cape, and govern Gauteng either on our own or a coalition.” However, Cyril Ramaphosa’s ascendancy to the ANC leadership did have an impact on the perception of the DA’s chances. JSteen [DA] (2018) continued:

Well, obviously those are significantly revised downwards. I mean, if we had carried on with the Zuma presidency I think that we’d probably be hoping to put together an opposition coalition. But given the changed political environment it’s obviously, it’s made that hill a little bit steeper to climb.

This corresponds with the perception that Jacob Zuma’s behaviour and actions as ANC leader and state President benefitted opposition parties. As discussed in Chapter 5, the DA encountered various difficulties and its electoral support declined from 22.23% in 2014 to 20.77% in 2019 (see Table 5.1 in Chapter 5). In contrast, some of the smaller opposition parties gained electoral support, including the EFF, Freedom Front Plus and the ACDP.

SS [ACDP] (2019) also emphasised the importance of growing in terms of electoral support: “All political parties aim to grow. Statistics are showing we are growing. From one percent at the moment, by-elections we’re getting 13 percent, 10 percent.” In addition – and potentially providing insight into smaller parties’ strategies – they try and use their share of the vote to influence larger opposition parties: “So the aim is governance. How that’s going to translate, I think the DA is very concerned about us in the Western Cape. But we would be committed to co-governance to keep the ANC and the EFF out.”

In both Botswana and South Africa, if there is a possibility of gaining political power, opposition parties are more willing to cooperate with one another. In the Botswanan case



this has evolved into a formal coalition with the aim of winning government power. In the South African case, opposition parties only use this strategy on an ad hoc and strategic basis. The electoral systems in each respective case also have an influence in the aims and approaches of opposition parties to elections.

### *Representing supporters*

One central function in relation to political participation is the representation of voters' interests. This is related to the party's policy objectives, manifestos, and issues that concern voters. In addition to that, this is also related to *how* opposition parties advocate on behalf of their supporters in parliament.

In the South African case, participants emphasised representing a particular set of values that supporters subscribe to, but could also attract new voters:

- “Well, we tend to focus on areas that we recognise through our extensive polling system are hot button issues for voters and potential voters. So you obviously have to service your core constituency, but at the same time you've got to be raising issues which matter to people who you would like to vote for you” (JSteen [DA], 2018);
- “So we have to represent a set of values and principles and we have to represent the people who support that set of values and principles. But it's not necessarily only in that specific number of people's interest that we do that, if I'm making myself clear” (HZ, 2018).

The DA illustrates elements of an electoral party, specifically catch-all parties, as discussed in Chapter 2. Catch-all parties are focused on winning as much electoral support as possible. Thus, they are willing to move away from strict ideological convictions toward an attractive electoral mandate to win as many voters as possible (Sartori, 2005: 17).

The ACDP has a narrower support base because it subscribes to narrower Christian values. However, they also attempt to win support from other groups in society. SS [ACDP] (2019) stated:

Obviously other issues we would be concerned about, freedom of religion, so when there are threats to freedom of religion, we would mobilise around that. I

remember, here when I say, not only Christian support, we have support across the board, from atheists, because of our value system.

Opposition parties in South Africa would focus on these issues in Parliament. However, a small party like the ACDP tends to be selective in the issues that represent their supporters: “Yes, I think it’s one chooses your battles. Very much you choose because we are a smaller party, we are stretched pretty much. So you would focus on an area that would represent your constituency” (SS [ACDP], 2018).

In the Botswanan case, participants focused on how opposition parties advocated on behalf of their constituencies:

- “But you’ll have certain issues, specifically from your constituency, which you want to bring to the attention of the National Assembly and the only way you can do that is at Parliament, where you can air, during the budget speech, that we in our constituency have challenges of A, B, C, D” (KG [BNF/UDC], 2017);
- “If there are issues surrounding lack of proper implementation of certain policy, then you go to the responsible or concerned minister and tell him or her, look, there’s this problem in my constituency, can you try to address it, because there’s this policy, there’s this programme, there’s this this this. This is how we tend to represent our constituents who take us to parliament” ( NS [BNF/UDC], 2017).

Members of Parliament are directly accountable to their constituents in Botswana’s first-past-the-post system. This means that in Botswana elected representatives need to actively engage with and be responsive to the constituents who voted for them. If they are not, then they will likely not be voted for again. In the South African case, it is different, with the party as a whole and not individuals being held accountable for how supporters/constituents’ interests are represented. Linked to this is the mobilisation of the electorate.

### *Mobilising the electorate*

In both cases, this code has the most quotations (37) and enjoyed the most intense focus for most participants. This is seen as a crucial strategy for opposition parties – the more voters they can mobilise to vote for them, the more influence they ultimately have. However, more than that, it also indicates that opposition parties are vital in promoting and legitimising

a democratic political system, even one where the incumbent party dominates the results. This becomes even more important in cases where there is increasing voter apathy, as in the case of South Africa (see Table 5.2 in Chapter 5) with decreasing electoral participation. In terms of this code, it included strategies that opposition parties tried to win new voters; whom they targeted; and how they attempted to get their supporters to vote. In terms of the responses, a variety of different methods and strategies were discussed by participants. These include, but were not limited to, the use of public rallies; direct contact; focusing on voter issues; doing research and targeting specific groups; the importance of the electoral message and providing a viable alternative; and media exposure.

In both cases, opposition parties targeted the largest audience possible. Even though certain demographic groups were focused on more (younger, urban voters in Botswana, and black voters in South Africa), the feedback throughout the interviews was that *all* voters were targeted during the election campaigns:

- “Across the board. Absolutely across the board. I would say it’s very representative of the demographic, small, but growing” (SS [ACDP], 2019);
- “No, it’s by no means a shotgun approach, it’s very, very highly focused, but it’s not a particular demographic, it’s all sorts of different demographics” (JSelfe [DA], 2018);
- “No, we target almost everyone. We cast our net so wide that it is able to catch even the older people who’ll do that. But we do know that the group that we maybe have to emphasise in is the young people, because they are also many...” (TL [BCP], 2017);
- “Our support base runs across all demographics” (KG [BNF/UDC], 2017).

This again indicates that in both cases, opposition parties show elements of electoral parties, specifically catch-all parties (see Chapter 2), who are focused on growing their share of the vote and being as attractive as possible to voters.

In both cases, direct contact and public campaigns/rallies were emphasised as strategies to mobilise the electorate and promote the parties’ programme:

- “Well, we do house-to-house campaign, or door-to-door, and then we hold political rallies. And those are largely the two major strategies that we use. But of course we also use other forums, even non-political forums, to convey our message” (MM [BNF/UDC], 2017);

- “We are moving away from being, well, we’re trying to move away from being a party that communicates on the air, in other words your paid media and flighted advertising, and we’re trying to be more a party that’s boots on the ground” (JSteen [DA], 2018).

In addition to that, different forms of media are also targeted – either social or mainstream media. It is interesting, however, that opposition parties emphasised direct contact more than using the media.

In the South African case, some of the DA participants indicated that the party does intensive research: “Well, we do a lot of research. A lot of research” (HZ, 2018). JSteen [DA] (2018) stated: “And it’s identifying, it also starts with identifying which of those voters are vulnerable to your message and are able to be swayed by argument and focusing like a laser beam on them.”

Another important element is establishing the party as an alternative to the ruling party and presenting a programme that could address the issues the ruling party has failed to address:

- “And we have also shown as an alternative that we have ideas that can save this country. So we believe that even those who in the past had doubts on us, they are now beginning to take us seriously as the opposition” (MM [BNF/UDC], 2017);
- “If you’re having people who are voting for an alternative, they have thought about it and they don’t want you to be captured by the dominant party. They want you to represent a different set of interests and a different set of values. So you’ve got to keep doing that. . . Then it also helps very, very much to start winning specific spheres of government. If you are only always in opposition, you can never show what you can do” (HZ, 2018).

In the Botswanan case, some of the participants noted that there wasn’t a specific strategy when it came to election campaigns: “We don’t have a strategy. Our strategy is structured around only rallies, politics of personality...” (NS [BNF/UDC], 2018). This is influenced by the constituency-based electoral system where individuals attempt to win votes.

In both cases, opposition parties used similar strategies such as direct contact with voters and positioning the opposition as a viable alternative to the ruling party. However, it must be noted

that the difference in electoral systems has an impact on the strategies of the parties. The next section is focused on the functions toward enhancing democratic governance.

### 6.3.3 *Functions toward enhancing Democratic Governance (Accountability)*

The last code group/theme is related to the functions opposition parties fulfil in relation to keeping the incumbent party accountable and providing alternatives to the electorate. This function is of particular importance to this study since the focus is on *opposition* parties. The term 'parties of pressure' is also linked to this function. The interview schedule and responses of participants led to the creation of three codes related to opposition party relevance. These include: the accountability role, central policy objectives, and collaboration with other organisations. The next section will focus on the analysis and comparison of these different codes and how they relate to the accountability function.

The relevance codes for the functions toward enhancing democratic governance (accountability) were split quite evenly (see Figure 6.10). Out of a total of 64 quotes, 22 were related to the accountability role; 22 to the collaboration with other organisations; and 20 to central policy objectives. General trends in terms of this code group indicate that in South Africa the accountability role and central policy objectives enjoyed similar levels of attention. In Botswana it was slightly different, with more emphasis on accountability, slightly more on central policy objectives, and less on collaboration in comparison with their South African counterparts. It is clear, however, that opposition parties in Botswana and South Africa consider their role in keeping the ruling party accountable as central to their functioning. The differences between the two cases can be traced back to the different contexts.

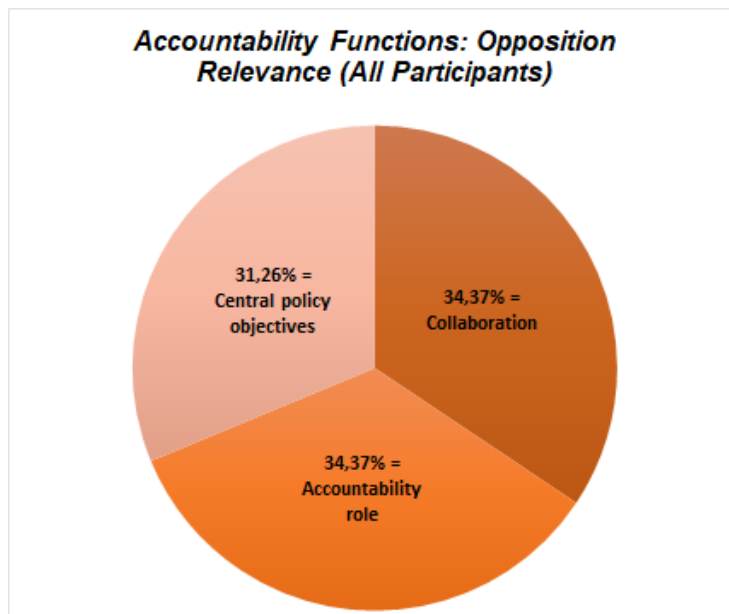


Figure 0.6. Accountability functions: Opposition relevance (all participants).

Compiled by the author, derived by using Atlas.ti.

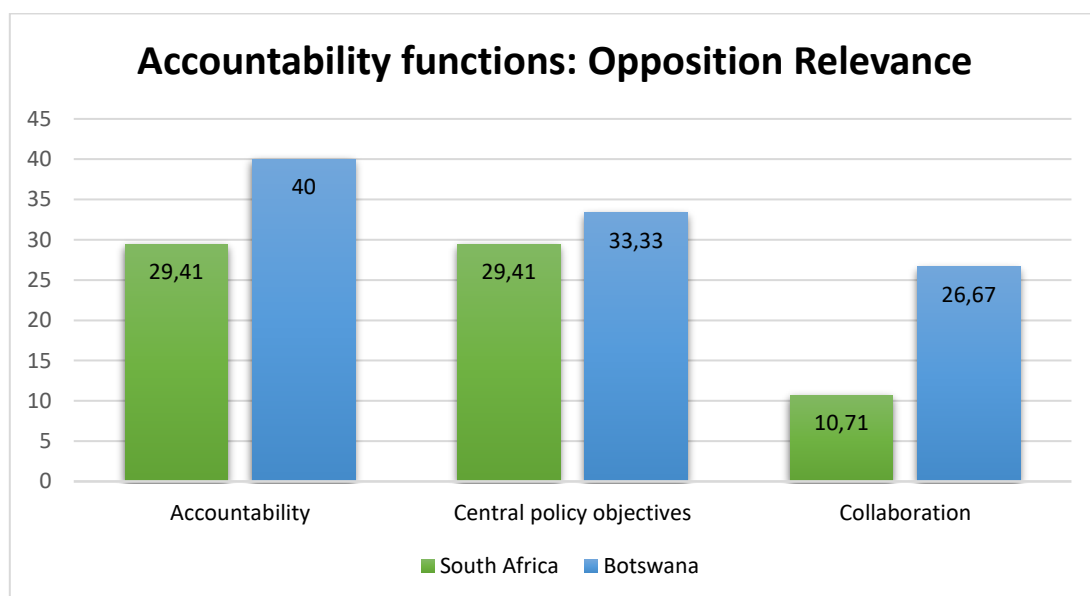


Figure 0.7. Accountability functions: relevance. Compiled by the author, derived using

Atlas.ti.

### Accountability role

This code is linked to arguably the most important function opposition parties play in a democracy, especially in dominant-party systems. Opposition parties fulfil this role in two ways: a) by participating in elections and providing the electorate the opportunity to keep government accountable (vertical), and b) by keeping watch over government actions and providing opposing views (horizontal). In both cases, the most preferred tactic to keep the

ruling party accountable is through Parliament. This takes various forms – from asking questions, making statements on government policies, and engaging in portfolio committees. In addition to this, they can use the media to make the public aware of concerns. Furthermore, opposition parties have also opted to fulfil this function through other institutions such as the courts. However, despite the various avenues that opposition parties follow, there are still challenges for them in fulfilling this function.

Parliament is the main mechanism that opposition parties use to keep the ruling party accountable. In both cases, opposition parties use similar strategies when engaging with the ruling party in the respective legislatures:

- “The first thing is that we would use the parliamentary accountability mechanisms, which involve debates, both in the House and in Committee. Questions, motions, member statements, that sort of things” (JSelfe [DA], 2018);
- “We use portfolio committees. We use ad hoc committees. We call people to give evidence in parliamentary committees. We propose legislation that challenges the current legislation” (HZ, 2018);
- “We also use the parliamentary platform. Members of parliament, through the parliamentary support group, they are able to raise issues in parliament that also would reach our people and also hold the government accountable” (TL [BCP], 2017);
- “Basically, the only attempt we do is at parliament level, where the ministers have to answer questions for members of parliament. And then at parliament there are what you call parliamentary committees on different sectors which are able to order any minister or any junior to that specific minister to answer to anything that pertains to that particular ministry” (KG [BNF/UDC], 2017).

A second important strategy that is used in both cases is approaching the courts. However, the independence, effectiveness and status of the judiciary are not the same in the two cases. According to the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (2021), Botswana scored 84.8 (out of 100) for judicial independence in 2019, while South Africa scored 97.2. Botswana, however, had improved from their lowest score of 55.1 in 2017 to 84.8. In terms of judicial checks on the executive, South Africa (78.4) also scored higher than Botswana (70.4) in 2019 (Ibrahim Index of African Governance: Botswana, 2021; Ibrahim Index of African

Governance: South Africa, 2021). In terms of this indicator, however, Botswana has deteriorated while South Africa has improved.

Opposition parties have used the courts as a way of keeping the ruling party accountable in cases where parliament has not been able or willing to do so. In many cases, this has been an effective way to ensure accountability. However, this is not ideal because the judiciary is then expected to fulfil the function that the legislature is failing to perform. This places judiciaries in a difficult position and open to political attacks.

In South Africa, the judiciary has become the last resort and avenue when opposition parties feel the government has overstepped the mark or when the law has been violated:

- “Secondly, we take cases to court where we believe the law has been violated and we fight them for as long as it takes. Sometimes, I think it’s ten years now we’ve got the one case on the go, the one of reinstating the charges against Jacob Zuma” (HZ, 2018);
- “And that gives you a very good illustration of where we had presented our arguments in the committees, hadn’t succeeded, and then we went to the court route. And I must say the DA is very good in that regard. So is the EFF to a certain degree” (SS [ACDP], 2019);
- “...because if you look at the Simelane case, which we took all the way to the ConCourt and said that the appointment of Menzi Simelane was irrational and, therefore, unconstitutional, it created a precedent there that decisions by the executive needed to be rational” (JSelfe [DA], 2018).

However, smaller parties do not have the resources to continually approach the courts. “We obviously are constrained by finances to go the route. I can see absolutely clear cases that can be won. I just don’t have the funds” (SS [ACDP], 2019).

Opposition parties in Botswana have also gone to the courts. However, some participants felt sceptical about the independence and ability of the courts to fulfil this oversight function:

- “We have tried the courts. As we speak right now, we have a case in court as the BCP, Botswana Congress Party versus the Government of Botswana, on the use of electronic voting machines” (TL [BCP], 2017);



- “When there are issues that we think need the judiciary attention, we take them to the courts” ( NS [BNF/UDC], 2017);
- “We have taken the government to court, but the matter is just sitting here. The workers have taken the government to court. So, they are [inaudible 0:31:4] right now, maybe shopping for which judge to appoint now in that matter, who’ll serve their interest, is what I’m saying. Yes” (KG [BNF/UDC], .2017);
- “Because we have got what they call the Judicial Service Commission, which recommends a person to the President. The President might decide to agree or reject. This is where it makes everybody start worrying about the independence of the judiciary, especially the court of appeal” ( NS [BNF/UDC], 2017).

Another strategy that opposition parties use is to make the public and media aware of any abuses of power (TL [BCP], 2017). An interesting comment was that election victories remain the most effective way to keep the ruling party accountable: “All of those things are mechanisms that we do to have interpolations, all of those things are thing we do to keep the national government accountable. But there’s no better mechanism than to win elections” (HZ, 2019). The next section will focus on the central policy objectives that opposition parties put forward to provide alternatives to the electorate.

### *Central policy objectives*

This code is related to the alternative platform that opposition parties offer the electorate. This is specifically related to the policy objectives and overall vision that opposition parties put to the electorate. This is also linked to the parties’ ideological worldview, values and policy objectives.

In South Africa, the DA’s focus is on traditional issues that are important to liberals – constitutionalism and the rule of law, growing the market economy, and expanding people’s opportunities:

- “The central policy objectives of our party are to create an economy that will produce jobs, to create a society in which people are secure and safe. To create a society in which corruption is rooted out and effectively prosecuted. To create a society in which people have ladders out of poverty, typically education, but also importantly things like maternal health and child nutrition” (JSelfe [DA], 2018);

- “Well, certainly defending the rules of the game are absolutely critically important. Because constitutionalism and the rule of law is one of the pillars of a successful county” (HZ [DA], 2018);
- “So our policy focuses on making South Africa an attractive investment destination and then also ensuring that we fix the education systems that even when we get our economy growing we’ve got our own developed skills that can help feed that growth” (JSTEEN [DA], 2018).

The ACDP also manifests certain liberal tendencies, but its emphasis on Christian values means that it focuses on social justice and frames issues in terms of Christian morality.

So we would present stewardship of resources. Just think, Eskom, if they were being properly run, stewardship and servant leadership. So from a biblical world view that, not again to say that everyone must become a Christian, stand for freedom of religion, but to say that these are the values that are tried and tested (SS [ACDP], 2019).

In the Botswanan case, there are more leftist and social-democratic focus areas for the different opposition parties. For example, the Botswana National Front – one of the key coalition partners – has its roots in socialism. The Umbrella for Democratic Change’s objectives can be described as social democratic because of the emphasis on social justice and the creation of equal opportunities.

You see, we are a social democratic party. And all our policies in relation to the issue of education, in relation to the issue of housing, in relation to the issue of health, in relation to the issue of land, all our policies are premised on the principles of social justice and human rights (TL [BCP], 2017).

All the participants also emphasised creating employment opportunities and the fair distribution of resources:

- “And then we also talk about free and compulsory education. And then we are also saying there has to be massive infrastructure involvement so as to create employment for our people. We are also saying that we also look at ensuring that there is fair and balanced distribution of our resources” (MM [BNF/UDC], 2017);

- “We believe that diamonds must not be taken here in their roughest form, there must be value adding here to create employment. We cannot go and create employment for people elsewhere who do not mine diamonds, but have got diamond factories, because they leave here in their rawest form” (KG [BNF/UDC], 2017).

It can be argued that opposition parties struggle the most in providing the electorate with viable, attractive alternatives. In both cases, voters have been reluctant to place their faith in opposition parties and their policy objectives. The reasons for that – as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 – are rooted in more than just the rejection of the opposition’s vision and policies. There seems to be a general distrust of political parties, in particular opposition parties. This distrust does make it difficult for opposition parties to ‘sell’ their programmes. Thus, the charge against opposition parties that they do not provide policy alternatives needs to be contested. The next section will focus on how these opposition parties collaborate with other organisations.

#### *Collaboration with other organisations*

Opposition parties collaborate with other organisations to expand their support and influence. There seems to be a trend that when victory over the ruling party is a realistic expectation, opposition parties would then tend to engage with each other in coalitions. Furthermore, opposition parties also engage with other civil society organisations when there is a common cause. However, not all interactions between different parties and organisations are constructive and positive.

In the South African case, the participants generally viewed collaboration as positive, but mostly when there was a common cause:

- “But we were able to coalesce around commonalties and commonalties such as fighting corruption, clean administrations and delivery to the poor, stuff we could agree on. So I think that you even see in parliament there’s been generally good cooperation, particularly during the Zuma years, on issues where there was consensus and agreement” (JSTEEN [DA], 2018);
- “Well, it depends on the issue. For example, when we were fighting very hard against the secrecy bill we worked with a lot of NGOs out there and different organisations and different political parties” (HZ [DA], 2018);

- “That is so effective, being part of that group, rallying the troops, where you’ve got a common purpose and I think that is probably the best example of opposition working together with the majority party in the Eskom parliamentary inquiry where we were united across political lines” (SS [ACDP], 2019).

However, in some cases these collaborations/partnerships are very tenuous, specifically in relation to coalitions between different political parties. The reality is that opposition parties in South Africa have very divergent ideological views and policy objectives:

- “So when you’re a dominant opposition party within the opposition space, our relationships with other parties is very scratchy. So sometimes you’re able to work with them, sometimes not (JSelfe [DA], 2018);
- “Here’s a letter from the DA, here it is, to co-operate. So we are committed to that, whilst we might have divergent views, the DA being very liberal, we would be more conservative, but we are prepared to work together for the common good. On our terms. On our terms, that’s very important” (SS [ACDP], 2019).

In Botswana, cooperation between opposition parties is far more advanced than in the South African case. Once again, this could be traced back to a) the history of opposition coalitions in Botswana, and b) the first-past-the-post electoral system. The focus of their collaboration was to pool resources in order to unseat the ruling party:

- “But we believe that all like-minded political and civic organisations, those that subscribe to the need for equality and equity in terms of opportunities and services for our people, we believe that we should cooperate to unseat the ruling party” (TL [BCP], 2017);
- “So, the President of the Botswana National Front in 2010 when he was elected at his first election in the congress, he was told that, your objective is to go and unite all the opposition parties. So, that is what he fought for the last seven years, since 2010 to date. So, hence the formation of the umbrella, which after starting the BCP fell aside and then it remained with three parties that is the BND, the BNF and the BPP” (KG [BNF/UDC], 2017).

The forming of the Umbrella for Democratic Change was not only based on cooperation between different opposition parties, but also enjoyed input from civil society, in particular trade unions.

In short, the Umbrella for Democratic Change, the UDC, is a brainchild of trade unions. . . But the one significant and critical issue that I wanted to point out is one relating to the fact that the Umbrella for Democratic Change was formed by the trade union” ( NS [BNF/UDC], 2017).

In both cases, opposition parties – for the most part – have seen the value in collaborating with each other and other civil society organisations to keep the government accountable. However, these efforts have been made difficult due to the challenges that opposition parties face.

There are clear ways in which opposition parties in the two cases try to remain relevant. They mostly focus on mobilising the electorate, collaborating with other organisations, and keeping the ruling parties accountable. The next section will discuss the challenges that opposition parties face in fulfilling these functions.

## **6.4 Opposition Party Challenges**

Opposition parties in dominant-party systems face various constraints and challenges. These challenges are linked to the democracy-supporting functions. In total, 7 codes were created across the three categories. The following section will discuss each category of challenges and its assigned codes.

### *6.4.1 Legitimising Functions: Challenges*

The challenges opposition parties faced in terms of legitimisation were linked to political ignorance and the delegitimisation of opposition. Political ignorance was linked to a lack of awareness/consciousness of democratic values and a perceived unwillingness from the public to engage critically with politics. The delegitimisation of opposition was focused on the ruling parties’ attempts to portray opposition parties as illegitimate and unable to fulfil the role of a ruling party. In total, there were 14 quotes with 6 related to political ignorance and 8 to the delegitimisation of opposition. This is reflected in Figure 6.13.

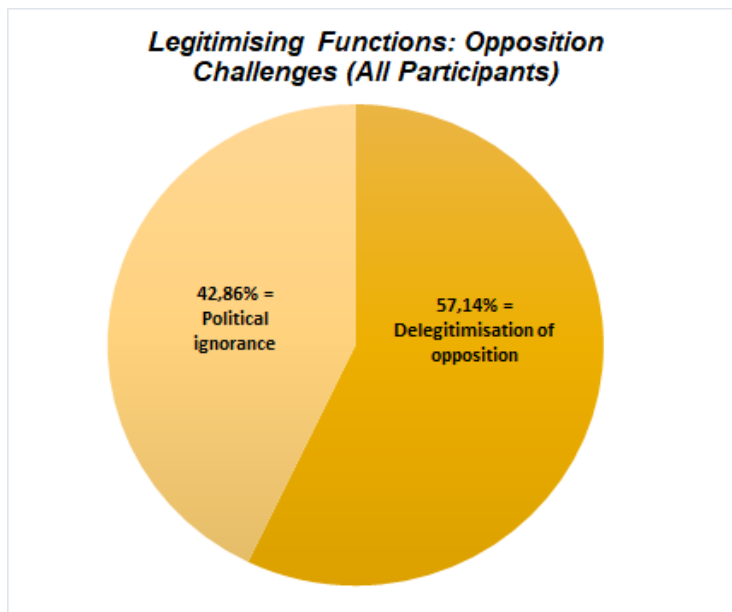
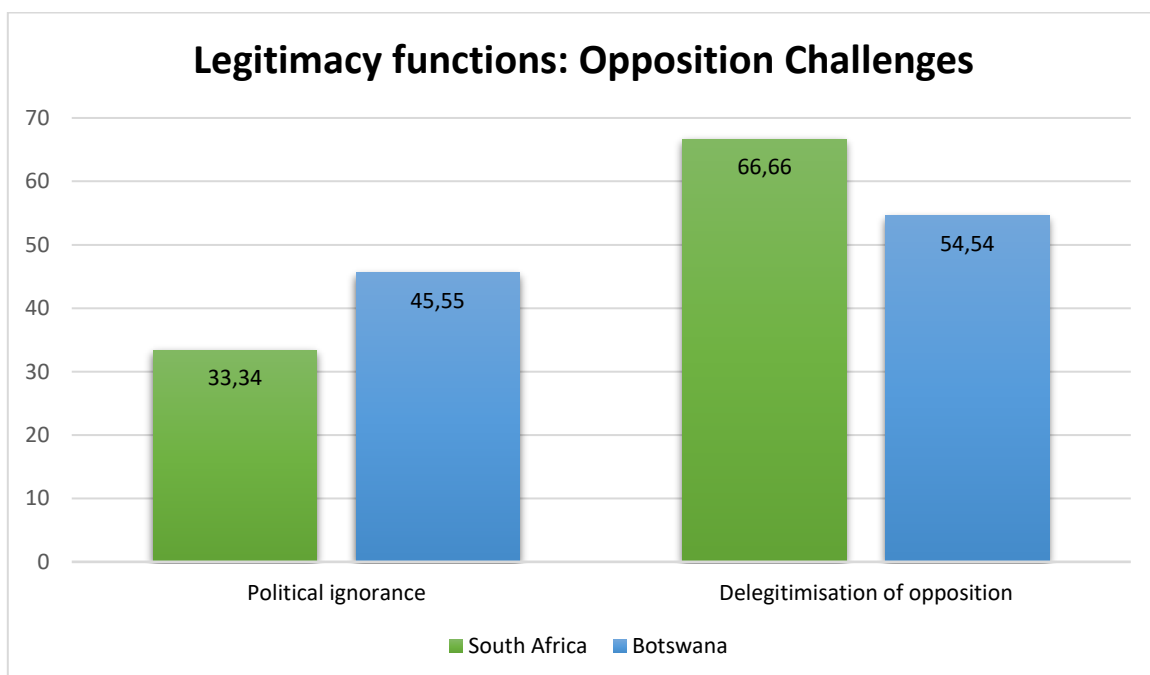


Figure 0.8. Legitimising functions: opposition challenges (all participants).  
 Compiled by the author, derived by using Atlas.ti.

Once again, there are significant differences between the two cases. Political ignorance among the electorate was an important challenge in Botswana. Many participants referred to the lack of political consciousness among the Botswanan electorate. In South Africa, only one respondent argued that the public was not well informed. Delegitimisation of opposition parties was also seen as a far greater challenge in Botswana than in South Africa. In fact, 11 of the 14 quotes for this code theme came from Botswanan participants.



*Figure 0.9. Legitimising functions: challenges. Compiled by the author, derived using Atlas.ti.*

### *Political ignorance*

As discussed in the section above, political education is seen as a strategy for opposition parties to fulfil their legitimising functions. However, political ignorance was described as a major challenge by some participants.

In the South African case, most participants indicated that the public are generally well informed about politics, the Constitution and their rights. However, JSelfe [DA] (2018) disagrees with the views of the other participants: “Well, they’re not terribly well informed. And why should they be? They expect services and if they don’t get services, they tend to blame the wrong people” (JSelfe [DA], 2018). There seems to be tension between the exercise of rights versus civic responsibilities - they do not always correspond with each other. A clear example is service delivery protests, which in most cases turn violent and lead to destruction. Thus, even though there is a high level of awareness about constitutional rights and democracy, many people opt to participate and express their frustrations outside the constitutional framework. This has an impact on the political culture that is fostered.

In Botswana, participants indicated that the Batswana have low political awareness:

- “In fact, the way I see it, and this has always been in me, that Batswana have got low political consciousness – they don’t know when to complain, how to complain, they rather keep quiet – that we are an ignorant society. We don’t read, we don’t do .... So I think the political consciousness is very, very low, very” ( NS [BNF/UDC], 2017);
- “There is political unconsciousness in this country, wherein people feel that whatever the government says, is more a favour than a right. Right, that is why, in terms of information the government here controls all the mediums that dispense information” (KG [BNF/UDC], 2017);
- “Well we may generalise, but I think generally people have got a basic appreciation of political parties, that they exist. And in my assessment, the majority of people may not necessarily be aware of what the different parties stand for, but they do support parties normally for very sentimental reasons” (TL [BCP], 2017).

In the responses above there seems to be two factors that influence why there is a low level of political awareness – a) the conservative, compliant Tswana culture that is sceptical of change and/or disruption, and b) the inability of alternative narratives to gain traction because the ruling party dominates media coverage. The context in South Africa is different – South Africans are prone to resorting to the politics of protest to indicate their unhappiness and frustration. Furthermore, there is a different media context than in Botswana. The next section will focus on the delegitimisation of opposition parties.

### *Delegitimisation of the opposition*

As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, there was evidence that showed the public placed *less* trust in opposition parties than in the ruling parties. There are various factors that play a role in *why* there is less trust in opposition parties. In this case, participants focused on how the ruling parties attempt to delegitimise opposition parties.

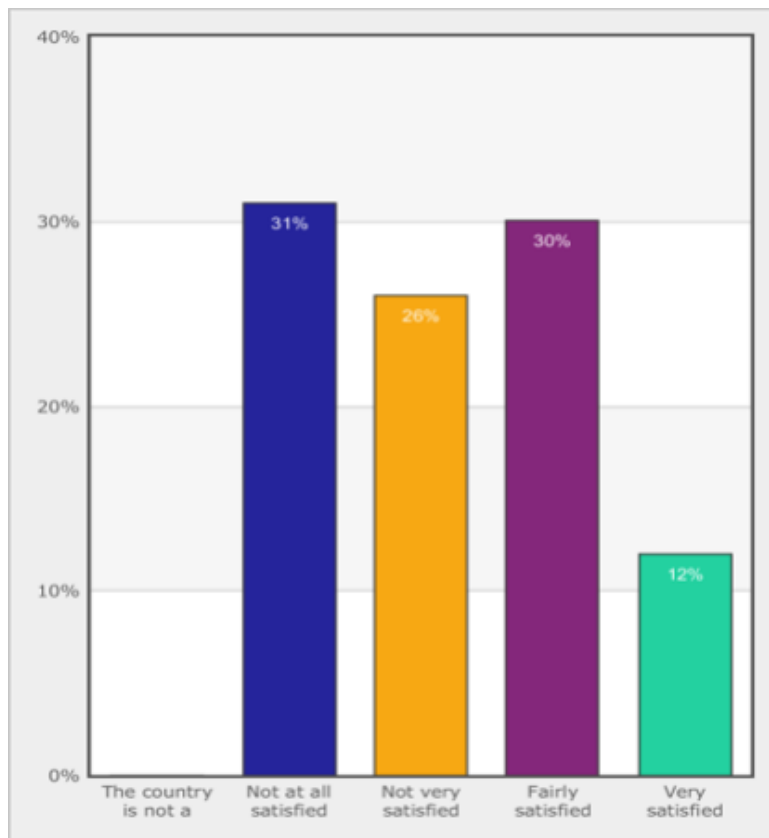
In Botswana's case, the emphasis was on the tolerant but conservative (compliant) nature of the culture, with an aversion to change. In addition to this, there is also the perception that the ruling party has been less tolerant of political opposition in recent years:

- “Well, I think the issue is that Botswanans they are a tolerant people, but what we are seeing is that people in this country are being made to believe that being in the opposition is the wrong thing to do, and that you are seen as a deviant. And that is the culture of the ruling party, it's trying to inculcate in the minds of our people” (MM [BNF/UDC], 2017);
- “Yes, to the extent that Batswana themselves are tolerant. This forces leadership to at least fake tolerance if they don't have it. Yes, so Batswana, naturally, what I've realised about them is, just from time immemorial, the society of Botswana, Botswana communities, have been founded around peace and order and tolerance, and because we very much respect traditional leadership, though slowly but gradually, it looks like it's fading away” ( NS [BNF/UDC], 2017);
- “So, there is no hostility towards opposition parties, but obviously with the current regime or the current leadership of the current regime, which is more militaristic, that receptive atmosphere we have enjoyed over the years has literally evaporated, because it even shows in his [Ian Khama's] crop of members of parliament there's no independence, there's no divergent views, everything works according to his way,” (KG [BNF/UDC], 2017).



In the South African case, JSelfe [DA] (2018) indicated that there have been concerted efforts to delegitimise opposition parties: “And I mean, I’ll tell you what happens here, is it’s a short skip and a jump from delegitimising opposition to abusing state resources against the opposition.” He adds: “So there is a big element, both within the ANC, who just regard us as being sort of relics of the apartheid era, and therefore completely illegitimate, through to people who just can’t get their head around the fact that opposition occupies not only a legitimate space, but a valuable space.”

In addition to this, South Africans are generally dissatisfied with *how* democracy is operating. A challenge to the establishment of a democratic political culture is the instrumental understanding of democracy in an African context. In South Africa, this dissatisfaction is largely related to the lack of improvement in people’s material conditions. According to Afrobarometer’s Round 7 survey (2016/2018), only 23% of South Africans expressed a demand for full democracy. Furthermore, only 54% of South Africans expressed support for democracy (in contrast to 80% of Botswanans). Less than 50% of South Africans expressed satisfaction with democracy. This has an impact on the acceptance of democratic values and institutions.



*Figure 0.10. Satisfaction with democracy in South Africa<sup>21</sup>.  
(Afrobarometer, 2018)*

The above-mentioned factors indicate that opposition parties in both cases still have a long way to go before winning the trust and support of the majority of people. This points to the need to grow a democratic culture and appreciation of the value of competition and options. The next section is focused on the challenges opposition face in relation to their electoral participation functions.

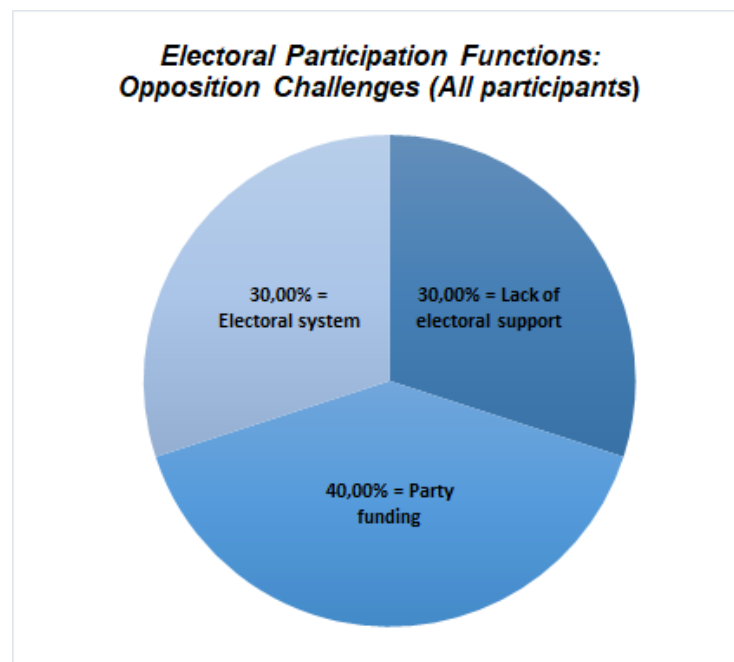
#### *6.4.2 Electoral Participation Functions: Challenges*

There are important challenges that play an important role in opposition parties' strategies and effectiveness. These include: the electoral system (6 quotes); party funding (6 quotes); lack of electoral support (8 quotes).

The electoral system code referred to the influence of the electoral system on opposition parties' prospects. Significantly, only Botswana participants discussed this. Party funding was

<sup>21</sup> The survey question was as follows: Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in [country]? The response categories were: 'the country is not a democracy', 'not at all satisfied', 'not very satisfied', 'fairly satisfied', 'very satisfied', 'refused', and 'I don't know.'

discussed in relation to public and private funding of parties and legislation that aims to regulate private funding. The lack of electoral support explored the potential reasons *why* opposition parties have not been more successful in terms of elections.



*Figure 0.11. Electoral participation functions: opposition challenges (all participants).*

*Compiled by the author, derived by using Atlas.ti.*

Once again, significant differences and similarities can be identified (see Figures 6.18 and 6.19). The most important difference is in terms of the electoral system – 40% of the Botswanan quotes were focused on this code, while in South Africa no respondent discussed the electoral system. Even though party funding was mentioned in 60% of the quotes in the South African case and only 20% in the Botswanan one, there were three quotes in both cases. In terms of the lack of electoral support, even though in both cases this reflected 40% of the total quotes, there were more quotes in the Botswanan case than in the South African one.

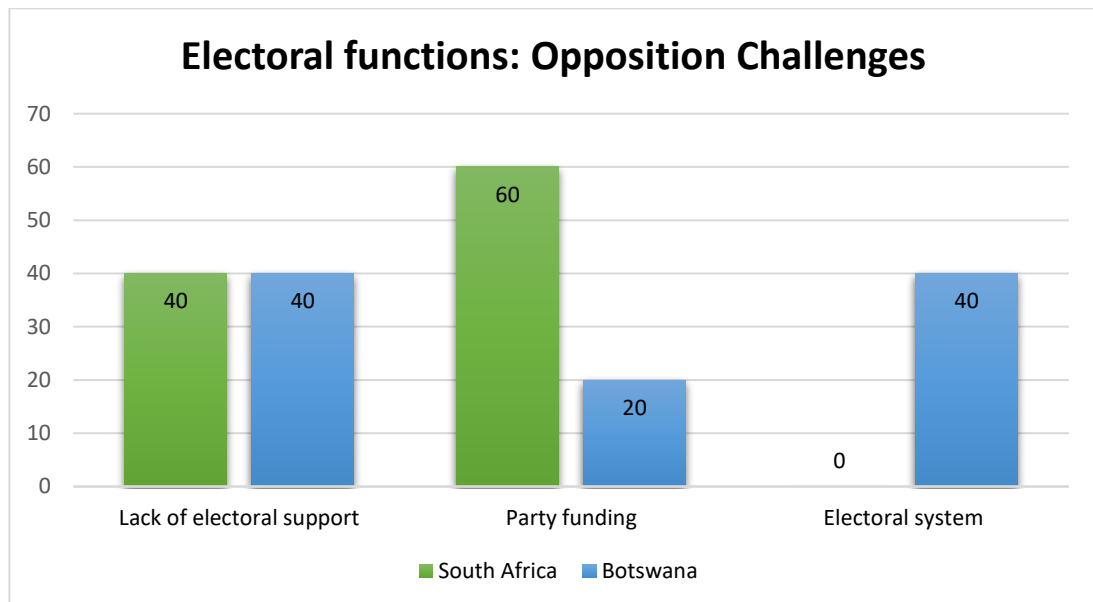


Figure 0.12. Electoral functions: challenges. Compiled by the author, derived using Atlas.ti.

### *Electoral system*

When comparing the two cases, one of the most significant differences is in terms of the electoral system. In the South African case, the electoral system (proportional list-system) was not mentioned or discussed by participants (as illustrated in Figure 6.12 above). In the Botswanan case, in contrast, the electoral system (first-past-the-post) came up in discussion in most interviews.

In Botswana, the electoral system is viewed as unfair because, while opposition parties are winning a large portion of the popular vote, this is not translated into seats in parliament and by extension political power:

- “Our electoral system is very unfair. We wish it could change for it would enable even those who have voted. I mean, you lose by one, you have lost because of first-past-the-post” (KG [BNF/UDC], 2017);
- “A different electoral system, particularly the proportional representation, would have yielded a totally different outcome from what we currently have in Botswana. Actually, with a proportional representation, the BDP would be out of power now” (TL [BCP], 2017).

However, even though the proportional list system might be seen as an attractive option for some participants, one respondent expressed doubts:

But I believe that first past the post has served Botswana well. If I get ANC or South Africa as an example, what is going on, I don't think I cherish it that much, where leadership who goes to Parliament, those who go to Parliament are chosen by the chosen few ( NS [BNF/UDC], 2017).

It is significant that the electoral system did not emerge as a topic in the South African interviews. This is because opposition parties translate their percentage of the vote into parliamentary seats. Thus, the electoral system is not seen as an obstacle to opposition parties. In Botswana, as shown in the quotations, this is not the case.

The electoral system is an important factor when comparing the strategies, challenges, effectiveness and electoral aims of opposition parties in Botswana and South Africa. It accounts for differences in how the opposition parties in each case approach elections and represent their voters' interests. The next section will focus on party funding.

### *Party funding*

An obstacle to opposition parties is related to funding; it is also linked to the uneven playing field code. In the Botswanan case, participants bemoaned the lack of state funding for parties and also indicated that the private sector was reluctant to support them. NS [BNF/UDC] (2017) commented on the question of funding: "A serious big problem. When you stand for election, it's a must that you need to get a loan. And imagine if you lose." In addition to noting that opposition parties are struggling due to the lack of public funding, MM [BNF/UDC] (2017) also made the following observation: "But also, not only the ruling party that dominates, also people who happen to be monied, who have money, dominates the politics within the opposition." Thus, opposition parties and politicians run the risk of being manipulated/influenced by donors who have their own agendas. Opposition parties are at a distinct disadvantage because of the lack of funding.

In the South African case, opposition parties are in a better position than their Botswanan counterparts as a result of state funding (see table 5.3 in Chapter 5). However, as discussed, opposition parties also require additional funding and rely on private donors. The new legislation<sup>22</sup> that makes it compulsory for political parties to disclose their private donors

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<sup>22</sup> The Political Party Funding Act will require political parties to disclose funding above the R100 000 threshold within 30 days of receiving the donation (Political Party Funding Act, 2018: 10).

came up as a topic of discussion. It elicited different reactions from the DA and ACDP representatives.

SS [ACDP] (2019) expressed his support for the legislation and stated: “So the Political Party Funding Act that’s signed into law is an attempt to try to make it more level. And we support that Act. But whether, to what degree it is going to be implemented is the big challenge.” Representatives from the DA were far less supportive and much more sceptical about the legislation. HZ [DA] (2018) stated the following: “And now that the ANC’s battling to raise money and we’re having much more success, the ANC is driving this transparency thing so that they can make sure that we don’t get funding from our traditional supporters.” JSTEEN [DA] (2018) echoed these sentiments and warned that it could have long-term detrimental effects on opposition parties: “...it’s going to be a lot harder for opposition parties to raise money, particularly if people are required to disclose that they’ve given money. And I think it’s actually going to make it very difficult for particularly the smaller opposition parties to get a foothold and sustain themselves going forward.”

The issue of party funding is also related to the uneven playing field-code which will be discussed later in this chapter. The next code is related to why opposition parties are not gaining more support from voters.

#### *Lack of electoral support*

The question of why opposition parties are unable to win greater support from voters elicited similar responses from participants in both cases. There is a perception that history and the narrative around the ruling parties have been used to curtail and dismiss opposition parties. In addition to that, the disparity in resources between opposition and ruling party also came up as a reason why opposition parties were not gaining more support. However, a variety of other factors were also mentioned in relation to this point.

In Botswana, the conservative political culture is seen as a contributing factor to the lack of electoral support: “So throughout, people were questioning, why change? Maybe if we are changing, we are inviting trouble” ( NS [BNF/UDC], 2017).

So, Batswana are not a radical lot. They are very conservative. So, anything that offers them stability, harmony, they tend to rely, despite the sufferings they may endure in the process, so BDP has kind of offered them that for using its mediums

to give them that comfort. They are safer with them than these ... The devil you know the better (KG [BNF/UDC], 2017).

Both TL [BCP] (2018) and MM [BNF/UDC] (2018) highlighted the uneven access to resources of the ruling party compared to the opposition parties. This was a particular concern in the Botswanan case and was frequently referred to as an obstacle to compete in elections.

In the South African case, the ANC's legacy, tactics to discredit the opposition, and loyalty to the party were mentioned as obstacles to greater support for opposition parties:

I think that voting patterns, particularly amongst older voters, remain very static in terms of the emotional ties to the ANC. I also think that the suppression model used by the ANC to suppress opposition voters by casting them as racist and wanting to take the country back to apartheid is a hard message for us to counter because it's rooted in emotion rather than fact (JSTEEN [DA], 2018).

For smaller parties, there is an even bigger challenge because of the perception that they split the vote: "I think that it is an issue that a lot of smaller parties have struggled with in the past, and that is that people don't ... They love what we stand for, but they say we've got to keep the ANC out of the Western Cape. We've got to vote for a strong opposition, the DA..." (SS [ACDP], 2019). This is a strategy that is actively used by larger opposition parties such as the DA.

In both cases, varied reasons were provided to explain the lack of electoral support. In addition to the reasons provided, it could also be argued that in Botswana and South Africa opposition parties encounter similar issues, as discussed in Chapter 2. This includes a lack of trust in opposition parties - trust in opposition parties is lower than in the ruling parties in both cases. This is not a unique phenomenon to these cases, but a general trend in the African context.

Another potential issue is the high level of fragmentation among opposition parties. This is evident in South Africa with the large number of opposition parties that vie for support. As discussed in Chapter 5, there are more than 300 registered parties in South Africa and 49 participated in the 2019 elections (Electoral Commission of South Africa, 2019). In

Botswana, fragmentation and factionalism have led to splits within parties, the creation of new parties, and the inability of opposition parties to align and provided a united front (Osei-Hwedie, 2001: 62). The next section discusses challenges opposition have in fulfilling their accountability functions.

#### 6.4.3 Accountability functions: Challenges

The challenges codes for the accountability function revealed that the uneven playing field was seen an overwhelming challenge. In fact, the uneven playing field is the most significant challenge identified in terms of all three categories. Out of a total of 42 quotes, 31 were linked to the uneven playing field in comparison to 11 for other intangible obstacles. There are, however, significant differences when comparing the other intangible obstacles and uneven playing field codes between the cases. It is of interest to see the disparity between the two cases in terms of the uneven playing field code. In Botswana, as clearly indicated in Figure 6.14, the uneven playing was emphasised a lot more; out of 31 quotes, 23 were from Botswanan participants. In contrast, 9 out of the 11 quotes about other intangible obstacles were from South African participants. This is a clear indication of how the different contexts have an influence on the functioning of opposition parties.

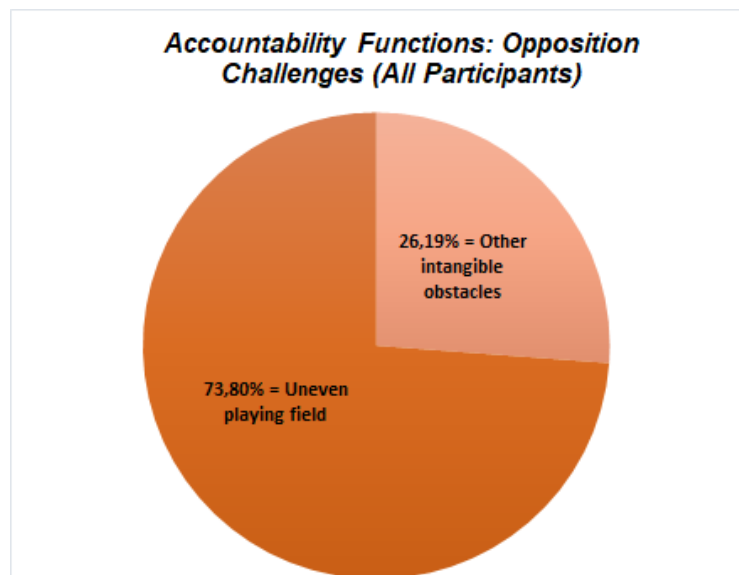


Figure 0.13. Accountability functions: opposition challenges (all participants).

Compiled by the author, derived by using Atlas.ti.



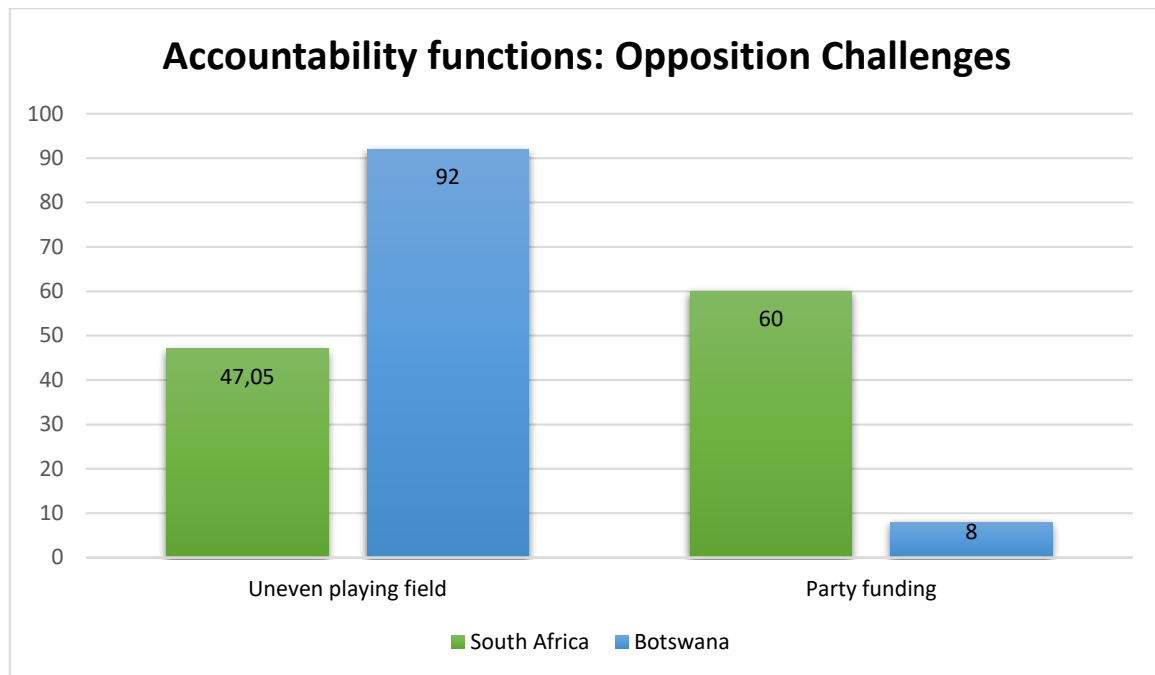


Figure 0.14. Accountability functions: challenges. Compiled by the author, derived by using *Atlas.ti*.

#### *Other intangible obstacles*

Opposition parties face a number of obstacles other than a lack of resources. These challenges make it difficult for them to fulfil their functions, in particular keeping the ruling party accountable. In the South African case, the issue of intangible obstacles was more prominent than in the Botswanan case.

Several challenges were discussed; in the DA's case, the three representatives all referred to the perceptions that the party has struggled to shake off:

- “Oh, I know exactly what. Our biggest problem is that people regard us as being the party that brought them apartheid and colonialism” (JSelfe [DA], 2018);
- “Well, the biggest danger we face is race and ethnic mobilisation, by far. Because although we've got a black leadership now in the DA, eight out of the nine provincial leaders are black, somehow we're still a white party” (HZ, 2018);
- “I think that the historic mission and challenge for the DA, which hasn't been done by any party in the world, is keeping your base of mainly minority voters intact whilst securing large swathes of new black voters. And we're already seeing some of the tension that develops when you try and do that” (JSTEEN [DA], 2018).

SS [ACDP] (2019) stated that smaller opposition parties have to deal with negative marketing by bigger opposition parties such as the DA: “Firstly, it’s negative marketing against your own party, very effectively by the DA, that will send an SMS the night before the elections, don’t vote for a smaller party, it’s a wasted vote. And that’s a lie” (SS [ACDP], 2019).

In the Botswanan case, opposition parties mostly deal with the challenge of mistrust. Botswanan voters are generally conservative and do not appreciate change. This was also discussed in the section on political culture and the lack of electoral support. NS [BNF/UDC] (2017) stated:

But of course, what is going on at the moment makes people, especially in the rural areas, to start having suspicions about the calibre of leaders in the opposition block, because they cherish their peace very much. Other than to think of whether their economic lives will change, they are more concerned about whether this will not bring political instability in Botswana.

The next section is focused on the disparity between the ruling and opposition parties in relation to resources. This uneven playing field is a major obstacle to opposition parties’ fulfilling their different functions.

#### *Uneven playing field – lack of resources*

The concept of an uneven playing field is related to the ruling party’s greater access to resources (funding, access to the media, access to state institutions) vis-à-vis opposition parties (Levitsky & Way, 2010: 182). The playing field is uneven when a) the ruling party abuses state institutions; b) the ruling party is favoured above opposition parties; and c) opposition parties’ ability to participate in elections is hampered.

This was a particular concern for participants in the Botswanan case – 92% of responses (23 out of 25 quotes) in this theme were related to the uneven playing field. In contrast, only 47.05% of responses (8 out of 17 quotes) for this theme in the South African case were related to this code. Thus, the issue of resources seems to be a much bigger concern for the Botswanan opposition than for their South African counterparts. Three main reasons stand out in this regard: a) the lack of public party funding in Botswana; b) the electoral system (first-past-the-post); and c) the lack of media coverage. In the FPTP system,

individuals vie for votes in particular constituencies and need to campaign intensively in those constituencies. In the Botswanan case, individuals are reliant on their own and others' finances to campaign and engage with their constituents. This puts them at a distinct disadvantage to the ruling party, which have access to many other resources – including those of the state - to campaign with:

- “For example, for me to go to my constituency, like I indicated 800 km away, I use my private car. They use official transport” ( NS [BNF/UDC], 2017);
- “You know it’s such a big problem, because if I stand for elections, for instance, I depend on my family resources to run an election. I have to dig deep into my own pocket” (TL [BCP], 2017).

In addition to this, as discussed earlier in the chapter, the lack of official party funding has made the situation more difficult for opposition: “So, funding is a challenge for us, and it does not seem like it will be addressed soon up until there is, what we call party funding by the government, which is not done here. And I think we are the only democracy here which there’s no political party funding” (KG [BNF/UDC], 2017). Furthermore, opposition parties also struggle to attract funding from the private sector: “But here they use incumbency to attract resources from the private sector. You see, our economy here is government-dominated, and to the extent that many of the companies that operate here find a life, an existence from government tenders” (TL [BCP], 2017).

The lack of media coverage is another major obstacle to opposition parties in Botswana. The ruling party enjoys the bulk of coverage which provides them with an advantage during election campaigns:

- “Like I was saying, BTV, the only television station, which is listened to by many, only covers ... the coverage, more than 90% is in favour of government. Even when you go for elections, you find that it’s only the ruling party that enjoys coverage and gets transmitted. So that has worked against us” (MM [BNF/UDC], 2017);
- “Right, that is why, in terms of information the government here controls all the mediums that dispense information. That is the TV, that is the print and the radio, and the manner in which they are used, they are only advanced in the interests of the ruling party here” (KG [BNF/UDC], 2017).

In the South African case, the issue of party funding – or lack thereof – was not discussed as much as in the Botswanan case. However, the reach of the ruling party in society and throughout the state gives them a distinct advantage in terms of resources:

- “To give you an example, what we spent on our whole election last, in the last general election, was the ANC’s budget for t-shirts. It gives you a scale of what we’re up against. This is a huge organisation with massive resources and it’s very hard to compete as an opposition party” (JSTEEN [DA], 2018);
- “So again, coming down to party-political resourcing, a business doesn’t mind it being known that they give money to the ANC, but they’re very sensitive to it being known that they gave to us” (JSelfe [DA], 2018);
- “Massively corrupt advantage. So they will, I’ve seen inland the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries holding a fisheries day right where there’s no sea anywhere in the vicinity, just because they want to mobilise voters. That’s nonsense” (HZ, 2018).

Smaller parties such as the ACDP have the added difficulty of competing for resources with other opposition parties such as the DA: “You’ve got to use free TV. You’ve got to volunteer on every possible debate, television show, get your stuff out there. But at the end of the day, just think of the cost of all the DA billboards, everywhere. Everywhere. It is millions. Hundreds of millions” (SS [ACDP], 2019).

The continued incumbency and dominance of the BDP in Botswana and ANC in South Africa will continue to be a major obstacle to opposition parties. However, despite the disparities, opposition parties continue to play a crucial role in holding the incumbents accountable when there has been an abuse of state resources for partisan ends.

#### **6.4. Conclusion**

Opposition parties in Botswana and South Africa use a variety of methods to remain relevant in dominant-party systems, but also face numerous challenges in this task. The discussion of the codes has revealed certain important general trends, but also important differences between the two cases. For example, opposition parties in both cases stressed the importance of mobilising the electorate. However, only participants in Botswana referred to and discussed the significance of the electoral system itself.

Firstly, in terms of legitimising functions, there was an emphasis on political education, which in turn has an impact on the acceptance of a democratic political culture. There was consensus that opposition parties are accepted by the public. However, it is interesting to note that even though participants generally indicated that opposition parties are accepted, data from Afrobarometer seem to contradict this. For instance, in Botswana participants placed twice as much trust in the ruling party than in opposition parties (see figures 4.1 and 4.2 in Chapter 4). In South Africa, opposition parties are distrusted. However, it is interesting to note that participants have also expressed high levels of distrust in the ruling ANC. There has been a marked increase in distrust of both opposition parties and the ruling party (see figures 5.1 and 5.2 in Chapter 5).

In addition, opposition parties also face challenges in fulfilling their legitimising functions. These challenges included political ignorance and the delegitimisation of the opposition. In Botswana's case, the information provided from participants correspond with the information in Chapter 4. Even though people support and are satisfied with democracy, traditional and conservative Tswana values make them uncritical of their political leaders. This is echoed in the responses of the Botswanan participants. In the South African case, opposition parties have found it difficult to contend with the ANC's liberation struggle legacy and its perception and labelling of opposition parties as political 'enemies'. This is also related to South Africans' instrumental support of democracy as discussed in Chapter 5. This corresponds with the feedback from participants who echo the challenges that opposition face in terms of their legitimising functions.

Secondly, in terms of electoral functions, the mobilisation of the electorate stood out as the most important strategy for opposition parties from both cases. This code had the most quotations by far. This is significant because it shows that opposition parties are focused on democratic participation and playing by the rules of the game. It also indicates that this is viewed as the most important strategy in remaining relevant in a dominant-party system. It is difficult to have influence if you are not winning seats in parliament. This becomes even more significant when considering the decline in voter participation, especially in the South African case (see table 5.2 in Chapter 5). In Botswana, voter turnout is also a concern with only 53.47% of the voting age population participating in the 2019 elections (see table 4.3 in Chapter 4). This is an indication of how crucial opposition parties' efforts are to mobilise the electorate. If more and more people opt out of electoral participation, it endangers the legitimacy of the democratic system.

In addition to that, other factors and challenges were discussed that have an influence on how well opposition parties fulfil these electoral functions. However, there were also significant challenges identified which included a lack of electoral support, party funding and, exclusively in the Botswanan case, the electoral system. The responses from the participants in Botswana about the electoral system and party funding are also clearly reflected in the findings from Chapter 4. There is consensus between the literature and participants that the FTPT electoral system and the lack of public funding have hampered opposition parties' functioning. In the South African case is different. The electoral system was not mentioned as a challenge in either the literature or responses from participants. Furthermore, despite the discrepancies in access to resources, opposition in South Africa have not pointed to the allocation of public funding as a major concern. However, what did emerge as a concern from most participants is the new legislation about party funding which requires parties to declare private donations over a certain threshold.

Thirdly, in terms of accountability functions, participants emphasised the importance of keeping the government accountable. A variety of strategies can be used to do this – from parliamentary mechanisms, to going to the media, to using the court system. As discussed in the contextual chapters (4 and 5), in both cases the judiciary is an important institution and provides opposition an avenue to keep the ruling party accountable. This is another key strategy and a core function of opposition parties and of particular significance in dominant-party systems. A major challenge – especially in Botswana – was the so-called uneven playing field or lack of resources. This also emerged in the literature in Chapter 4 and 5. There were also other intangible obstacles identified that went beyond the lack of resources. This differs between the two cases and has an impact in how successfully opposition parties can fulfil all democracy-enhancing functions. The final chapter will focus on drawing out the main findings from the research process. In addition, attention will be given to the contributions that the study makes to the existing body of knowledge.

## ***Chapter 7: Findings and Conclusion***

### **7.1 Introduction**

The purpose of the study was in comparing Botswana and South Africa to see how opposition parties attempt to remain relevant in dominant-party systems. Opposition parties play a central role in democratic dispensations, even more so in a democracy where one party has become dominant. The concept of relevance was linked to the democracy-supporting functions (legitimising, electoral, accountability) discussed in Chapter 2. The main research question was focused on how opposition parties fulfil these democracy-supporting functions. However, how opposition parties remain relevant is also influenced by the challenges they face in dominant-party contexts. The sub-question was focused on the challenges and difficulties that opposition parties experience in terms of fulfilling the three democracy-supporting functions. This chapter includes a reflection on the research process and discusses the main findings of the study, the contributions that it makes to the existing body of knowledge, and prospects for future research.

### **7.2 Reflection on the research process:**

The study had qualitative design and was a comparative case study, focusing on two cases (Botswana and South Africa). Primary data was collected via key informant interviews and secondary data was collected via a desktop literature review. For the key informant interviews, main opposition parties were initially identified, and members of those parties were approached for interviews. In the South African case, the EFF did not respond to requests to participate and an alternative party had to be selected for interviews. The ACDP was selected because it provided unique insights from a smaller opposition party perspective. Thus, the initial intention to focus on main opposition parties had to be adjusted slightly.

In the analysis of the data, Atlas.ti (computer-assisted qualitative data-analysis software) was used. The data was coded and divided into two main categories, 'opposition party relevance' and 'opposition party challenges'. Different codes were grouped in the categories and linked to different themes. Thematic content analysis (TCA) was employed by focusing on the pattern of themes that emerged from the data. Various similarities and differences were identified, as discussed below in the summary of the findings.

The most challenging part of the research process was conducting interviews because: a) sourcing relevant participants was a challenging process and b) not all participants who

were approached could or wanted to participate. In the Botswanan case, time constraints also played a role in the collection of primary data. I only had a five-day week in which interviews had to be conducted with enough participants. In the South African case, the EFF's lack of response to requests for participation meant that the choice of opposition parties had to be changed.

During the research process, a few important lessons stood out. Firstly, there must clear research objectives and a question(s) that can be answered. Regular reflection on the question and objectives are important to achieve the intended purpose of the research. Secondly, a clear theoretical framework provides the basis for the in-depth analysis of the data. The theoretical framework in this research was important in the construction of the interview schedule as well as identifying the relevant themes. Lastly, growing in confidence and the ability to contribute original insights were vital outcomes of the process. The next section will focus on the main findings from the research.

### 7.3 Summary of Main Findings

The main strategies and challenges in all the democracy-supporting functions are illustrated in Tables 7.1 and 7.2 respectively. The challenges identified correspond closely to Table 2.2 (Chapter 2), which illustrated the challenges African political parties face in relation to each democracy-supporting function. There are several important findings that emerged from the study. These include identifying significant differences and similarities between the cases.

**Table 7.1. Opposition relevance: Main Strategies.**

<b>Opposition Relevance (Botswana &amp; South Africa): Main Strategies</b>		
<b>Legitimising: Functions to maintain a democratic political culture</b>	<b>Electoral participation: Functions to promote democratic participation</b>	<b>Accountability: Functions to enhance democratic governance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobilisation of the electorate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountability role</li> <li>• Collaboration with other organisations</li> </ul>



**Table 7.2. Opposition challenges: Main Challenges.**

<b>Opposition Challenges (Botswana &amp; South Africa): Main Challenges</b>		
<b>Challenges to democratic political culture</b>	<b>Challenges to democratic participation</b>	<b>Challenges to democratic governance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delegitimisation of opposition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of electoral support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uneven playing field</li> </ul>

This section will discuss the main findings in terms of the main research question, which is linked to the relevance of opposition parties, and the sub-question, which is related to the challenges faced by opposition parties.

#### *7.2.1 Legitimising functions: relevance and challenges*

Opposition parties play an important role in legitimising democracy by a) educating the public about democratic processes and institutions, and b) providing an alternative to the ruling party. Opposition parties in both cases had clear ideas about the importance of political parties, specifically opposition parties. In most cases, participants felt that opposition parties needed to provide an alternative and keep the ruling party accountable. In addition to that, participants from both cases generally felt that the broader public accepted opposition parties and the roles they play.

Political education was seen as the most important strategy adopted in their legitimising functions. This was specifically the case in Botswana. Political education contributes to the public's understanding and acceptance of a democratic system. Even though most participants in South Africa did not emphasise the role the opposition parties play in political education, they felt South Africans were generally well informed about politics and participated in the political discourse. In contrast, their counterparts argued that Botswanans lacked political awareness - this is linked to the issue of political ignorance. That could explain why there was a greater emphasis on political education in Botswana than in South Africa.

In addition to the issue of political ignorance, the delegitimisation of opposition parties was also an important challenge. As discussed, opposition parties are trusted *less* than the ruling

parties. This is not a unique phenomenon, but something that prevails throughout Africa (Bratton & Logan, 2015: 6; Matlosa, 2006: 6). The lack of trust in and understanding of the importance of opposition parties is also exacerbated by ruling party attempts to delegitimise opposition parties. This is an important feature of dominant-party systems – the dominant ruling party tends to portray itself as the only legitimate, viable option to govern. In the case of Botswana, participants felt that the ruling BDP attempted to portray them in a negative light and displayed intolerance toward any form of opposition. In South Africa, one respondent claimed that opposition parties – in particular the DA – are described and perceived as illegitimate. Furthermore, the ANC, a former liberation movement, has displayed the tendency to portray opposition parties as ‘enemies’ and illegitimate.

### *7.2.2 Electoral functions: relevance and challenges*

In terms of electoral functions, opposition parties in both Botswana and South Africa are focused on providing viable alternatives to the electorate. The most prominent strategy that emerged was mobilising the electorate. Opposition parties are intent on putting pressure on the ruling party by winning more votes or even attempting to win power. This is significant because a) they recognise that to be more influential, they need more electoral support, and b) it indicates that the opposition parties in the two cases are committed to operating within the parameters of democratic competition. However, there are two factors that highlight important differences between the cases.

Firstly, the electoral systems have a very different impact on the outcomes of elections, and consequently the influence of opposition parties. This is probably the main reason why opposition parties in the two cases showed differences in relation to electoral performance, collaboration, and access to resources. The first-past-the-post system is a challenge in Botswana and has meant that the BDP is able to remain in power, despite a steady decline in the popular vote (see figure 4.1 in Chapter 4). In contrast, the proportional list system in South Africa has provided many opposition parties with the opportunity to at least win seats in parliament. This is illustrated by the presence of a party such as the ACDP, which has not won more than 2% of the vote since 1994.

The FPTP-system in Botswana has influenced the decision by prominent opposition parties to pool their resources and form coalitions. The latest coalition in the form of the UDC has made an impact by winning more seats than any other opposition parties since the first

democratic elections. The PR system in South Africa has contributed to the proliferation of political parties, where all want a chance of representation in parliament. This has also meant that opposition parties in South Africa are less likely to form coalitions unless there is an opportunity to win government power.

The FPTP system also means that elected officials are directly accountable to the voters in their constituencies. This has an impact on how opposition parties and candidates have engaged with voters and represented their interests. For example, candidates in Botswana would hold rallies in their constituencies to engage with potential voters. In South Africa, with its PR system, individual party members are not directly accountable to the voters but to their party. This means that there is a very different form of interaction that is more focused on the party as a collective than on individuals.

A second important difference is the degree of public participation in elections (conventional democratic participation). In South Africa, there has been a continual decline in voter turnout since 1994, with only 66% of registered voters participating in 2019. It is even more concerning that less than half (47.28%) of eligible voters participated in the most recent elections (see Table 5.2 in Chapter 5). In contrast, Botswana registered more than an 80% voter turnout, with over 50% of eligible voters participating in the 2019 elections.

In South Africa's case, this poor voter turnout is more than just apathy. This lack of participation can be linked to the general dissatisfaction that South Africans feel about democracy. Due to this dissatisfaction, many people have opted to use non-conventional means, such as protests, to express their grievances. Thus, instead of competing in the conventional ways such as voting, many are instead 'opting' out. It therefore becomes even more significant that opposition parties are focused on mobilising the electorate.

An important similarity between the two cases is linked to the impact of individual Presidents. Opposition parties in Botswana gained support and had a common objective under the Ian Khama-presidency. As discussed in Chapter 4, Khama displayed increasing undemocratic tendencies and opted to govern through Presidential decrees. This provided the opposition with a common target and played a role in the UDC's 2014 performance in the national elections. In the South African case, the Jacob Zuma presidency provided ample ammunition for opposition parties to target the weaknesses in the ruling ANC. In addition, opposition worked together to fight against state capture and corruption that were rampant

under the Zuma-years. There are also parallels between the two cases after the departure of both Ian Khama and Jacob Zuma. In both cases, opposition parties have found it more difficult to continue to focus on the failings of the new Presidents' predecessors. Furthermore, the emergence of Mokgweetsi Masisi (Botswana) and Cyril Ramaphosa (South Africa) have led to renewed support for the ruling parties, even if it was for a short period. In South Africa, however, it seems that the task is made more difficult due to the significant socioeconomic and governance challenges. It must be noted that the Botswana executive has a disproportionate amount of power – as set out in the Botswanan constitution – over the other two branches of government. The South African executive is far more restrained by constitutional provisions. The last section will focus on the main findings in terms of the accountability functions.

### *7.2.3 Accountability functions: relevance and challenges*

Opposition parties, in dominant party systems, place considerable emphasis on their accountability role and collaborating with other organisations. This is related to functions toward enhancing democratic governance. This is also where the term 'parties of pressure' becomes the most applicable. Opposition parties attempt to continually put pressure on the ruling parties through their role of ensuring accountability. Between elections this is the most important opposition strategy and purpose. This key democratic-supporting function may be what makes opposition parties so important in dominant party systems – more so than winning political office. Thus keeping open the democratic space for future changes in political office.

This is also illustrated in how important collaboration with other organisations is. This collaboration is more advanced in Botswana than in South Africa but is seen as a strategy to increase the influence and impact of the opposition. The ultimate goal is to weaken the electoral dominance of the ruling parties and limit their influence. This is further related to their role in keeping the ruling parties accountable. Opposition parties' collaboration with civil society is also crucial. For example, the UDC was created with the momentum of the 2011 public sector workers strike in Botswana. The coalition was forged with the help of the Botswana Federation of Public Sector Unions (BOFEPUSU) (Makgala, 2019: 139). In addition, the judiciary has been viewed as an alternative way to hold the ruling party accountable. In both cases, the judiciary is seen as a vital institution and contributes to democracy and constitutionalism.

Despite providing the electorate with alternatives, opposition parties are unable to make significant electoral inroads. This is mainly because of the distrust expressed in opposition parties in the two cases (see Figures 4.2 and 5.1). This distrust and the attempts by the ruling parties to delegitimise the opposition have made it difficult for opposition parties to attract voters to support their electoral programmes. In addition to that, opposition parties have struggled with other challenges. This is linked to a particular political culture where there is a lack of understanding and value of opposition on the African continent. It is, however, interesting to note that participants in both cases indicate that opposition parties *are* accepted by the public. This seems to contrast Afrobarometer statistics as well as some of the literature.

The uneven playing field in terms of resources available to the opposition and ruling parties was a major challenge in the Botswanan case. This was related to a) party funding; b) access to the media; and c) the impact of the FPTP system. The lack of public party funding was a major difference between the two cases and meant that the lack of resources was more pronounced in Botswana than in South Africa. This is related to the different contexts. In South Africa, however, there were more intangible obstacles facing opposition parties. This was linked to the negative perceptions about opposition parties, in particular the DA. For a smaller party such as the ACDP, they do not just have the ruling party to contend with, but also face challenges in relation to bigger opposition parties. This relates to disparity in resources and efforts by larger opposition parties to delegitimise smaller opposition parties. The next section will focus on the contributions that the study makes to the existing body of knowledge.

### **7.3 Summary of Contributions**

The study contributes to a greater understanding of dominant-party system democracies in Southern Africa. This is specifically related to how relevant opposition parties are and try to remain in these systems. This study provides insights into opposition parties' perceptions about their functions and the difficulties they experience in executing these functions.

An interesting contribution is identifying the different experiences of smaller opposition parties in comparison to larger, more dominant opposition parties. This was especially evident in the South African case. Initially, the study was focused on the main opposition parties in the two cases, but because the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) did not participate in the research, the ACDP was approached. The ACDP is a small party, but has

had parliamentary representation in South Africa since 1994. Smaller opposition parties tend to have slightly different approaches and also face more challenges that emerge out of competition with larger opposition parties.

What was clear from analysis of the interviews that opposition parties in both cases were focused on having at least some influence on governance. This could be in the form of a coalition or influencing the policy and law-making process. Another contribution of this study is the finding that opposition parties are intent on winning votes and providing the electorate with an alternative. This was the case for both the Botswanan and South African participants, specifically the DA. Opposition parties play a vital role in democratic development, especially in relation to democratic consolidation or the future of democracy in Southern Africa. They are important in creating a culture of understanding of the role and relevance of opposition on the African continent.

Lastly, the study contributes in to that it shows that opposition parties in dominant-party systems do not fit the conventional theories of political parties. They inhabit a unique, but significant gap and are important in these unconsolidated democracies. Thus, opposition parties in dominant-party systems are distinctive from opposition in other systems and warrants further investigation. The next section will focus on suggestions for future research.

#### **7.4 Suggestions for Future Research**

This research focused on only two cases from Southern Africa. It would be interesting to expand this study to other contexts where dominant-party systems are present. In addition, a comparative study between different dominant-party systems from different world regions would reveal illuminating similarities and differences. The focus of this study was on how the opposition parties attempted to remain relevant. However, clearly smaller, niche parties have a role to play. Thus, further research can be conducted that is focused on smaller, niche parties. In addition, studies can be conducted on *why* there is so much distrust in opposition parties in Africa. This can be linked back to the important role opposition parties play in creating a competitive democratic system. Furthermore, exploring the concept of political culture in an African context, specifically focusing on the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours of people toward democracy.

The focus of this study was on *how* opposition parties remain relevant in dominant-party systems and as stated in Chapter 1, it is focused on the attempts of opposition parties to

fulfil the identified democracy-supporting functions. Another prospect for future research could be to investigate whether opposition parties do fulfil these functions or not. There is also a possibility to expand on the unique role they play in democratic politics since they do not necessarily fulfil the conventional roles of political parties as in other contexts.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

The importance of opposition parties in a democracy cannot be understated, even more so in dominant-party system democracies. Opposition parties hold governments accountable; they provide legitimacy to the democratic system; and they offer the electorate an alternative (Lipset, 1959; Kiiza, 2005; Solomon, 2011). The key objectives of this research were: a) to see how opposition parties remain relevant; and b) to identify the challenges they experience.

The most important strategy used by opposition parties in both cases is to mobilise the electorate, because the more votes and parliamentary seats they win, the more influential they are. Thus, the claim that opposition parties do not provide alternatives to the ruling party needs to be contested. This came through strongly from the opposition parties in Botswana and South Africa. In addition to that strategy, keeping the ruling party accountable through different means – publicly, parliament and the courts. Cooperation with other organisations was also a key strategy.

However, cooperation between opposition parties is far more advanced in Botswana, where there is a formal coalition competing in elections. This is mostly an aspect of the ‘winner-takes-all’ nature of the FPTP electoral system and subsequent efforts to pool resources (Molefhe & Dzimbiri, 2006: 117). The latest coalition attempt in the form of the UDC was also strengthened in response to the 2014 election results where the BDP won less than 50% of the vote and the newly formed UDC won 30% of the vote and 17 seats (see figure 4.1). Members of the coalition were confident of an opposition victory in 2019, but that did not take place (see figure 4.1). In South Africa, cooperation between opposition parties is strategic and undertaken on an ad hoc basis. It is unlikely, because of the proportional list electoral system, that opposition parties will have great ambitions to join forces in the long-term. There is, however, a degree of cooperation with other civil society organisations to hold government accountable.

However, the contexts and challenges in each case have a major impact on how effective opposition parties are. Opposition parties in Botswana struggle more with access to resources than their South African counterparts do. This is largely because of the nature and requirements of the electoral system; the lack of public party funding and unwillingness of the private sector to engage with opposition parties; and a lack of media access and public media bias in favour of the ruling party. In an attempt to overcome this, the opposition parties in Botswana have opted to form coalitions. In South Africa, the lack of resources is not as pronounced, but there are other challenges.

Voter apathy and a disillusionment with democracy have created challenges around the legitimacy of democracy process, procedures, and institutions. Even though there is a perception that people are well informed about politics and their democratic rights, there is a culture where the exercise of rights can overshadow civic duty and responsibility. South Africans tend to express their dissatisfaction through non-conventional means, such as protests, with fewer participating through conventional means (voting). This makes it more difficult for opposition parties to mobilise voters. In Botswana, the culture is more compliant with many features of the Tswana culture, corresponding with tolerance and democratic values. However, it can be argued that because of their conservative nature, Botswanans are uncritical of authority and wary of change. This wariness can also be linked to the performance of the ruling BDP. Whereas in South Africa, the dissatisfaction with democracy can be a response to the failure of the ANC-led government to improve material conditions.

The origins, history and impact of the two ruling parties also had an impact on the differences between the two cases. In Botswana, the BDP's rise is closely linked to the pre-independence colonial administration, the support of local chiefs and other groups, and the influence of Seretse Khama (Molomo, 2000b: 66; Good & Taylor, 2008: 754). It has been the alleviation of poverty and the economic performance of the BDP government that has resulted in continued support and legitimacy (Osei-Hwedie, 2001: 66). The BDP has also used this as a campaign tool to suggest that there are no viable alternatives to its rule. This has been difficult for opposition parties to counter. However, in recent years, the BDP's electoral support has been declining (see figure 4.1), which has given the opposition a renewed sense of hope.

In South Africa, the ANC has relied – and still does – on its liberation struggle history and the symbolic value of that to garner and retain support. They have used this to portray the



party as the only legitimate one to govern South Africa. This legacy and historic support have made it difficult for opposition parties to gain traction and make inroads into the ANC's support base. However, poor economic growth, gross mismanagement of state resources, endemic corruption, and high levels of unemployment, poverty and crime have eroded the ANC's legitimacy and electoral support (see Table 5.2). However, as discussed earlier, the ANC's poor performance and citizens' dissatisfaction with that has not translated into the ANC's removal through the electoral route. Instead, there has been decreasing voter turnout and an increase of unconventional political participation in the form of violent protests, highlighting the importance of opposition. Opposition parties are important to mobilise citizens to use conventional participation avenues and to educate citizens regarding the value of democracy and the importance of opposition parties. It remains to be seen whether opposition parties in Botswana and South Africa can overcome the various challenges to unseat the ruling parties.

The opposition parties in Botswana and South Africa can be described as 'parties of pressure'. This concept was coined by Rajni Kothari (1964: 1162) who described parties of pressure as follows:

Their role is to constantly pressurize, criticize, censure and influence it by influencing opinion and interests inside the margin and, above all, exert a latent threat that if the ruling group strays away too far from the balance of effective public opinion away too far from the balance of effective public opinion, and if the factional system within it is not mobilized to restore the balance, it will be displaced from power by the opposition groups.

Opposition parties in the two cases are intent on providing viable alternatives and intent on winning more power. For now, they need to operate as parties of pressure and focus on a) contributing to the legitimacy of the democratic system; b) encouraging greater popular participation in democracy; and c) holding the government and ruling party accountable. Thus, while constrained by the unlikely alternation in power – a characteristic of dominant-party systems – these opposition parties still fulfil important democracy-supporting functions.

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## **Addendum A: Interview Schedule**

### **Interview Schedule:**

#### ***Functions toward a democratic political culture:***

1. In your view, what roles should political parties fulfill in a democracy? How does your party do this?
2. In your view, is the public well informed about democracy (rights, institutions, values)? Does your party attempt to educate people about democracy? If so, what do you do?
3. Is there a supportive culture for opposition in your country? If no, why not?

#### ***Functions toward political participation:***

1. In light of the dominant party system, what are the ways in which you represent your constituency's interests, in parliament specifically?
2. What are the main aims that your party have during elections? What percentage of the vote do you aim to win in the next national elections?
3. Could you elaborate on the strategies your party use to mobilize the electorate? How would you describe your current supporter base?
4. How do set out to win new supporters? Are there groups that you specifically identify and target?
5. Why do you think the party is not gaining more prominent support from voters? What do you think hinders voters from voting for your party?

#### ***Functions toward democratic governance:***

1. What does your party aim to achieve when you win government power?
2. Should opposition parties keep the ruling party accountable? Why? If so, what tactics/strategies does your party use to keep the ruling party accountable?



3. What is your view on collaborating with other organisations (in civil society) or other political parties to hold the ruling party accountable? Is this something you actively pursue?

4. What are some of the challenges/problems you face as an opposition party in Botswana/Namibia/South Africa?

Prompt: access to resources:

What problems do you face in terms of access to resources? What resources are available to the ruling party that you are unable to access?

## Addendum B: Consent Form



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jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

### STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

#### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

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#### ***Parties of Pressure: Opposition Parties in the Dominant party-systems of Botswana, Namibia and South Africa.***

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Annemie Parkin, PhD student, from the Department of Political Science at Stellenbosch University. The results will contribute to a dissertation. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a leader in an opposition party which is the focus of the study.

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The research study places focus on how opposition parties in dominant party systems (in Botswana and South Africa) remain relevant. The term 'remain relevant' in this context refers to the functions that opposition parties fulfil in support of democratic consolidation. This denotes the different functions of political parties in a democracy which includes the following: aggregating and channelling interests; representation of interests; mobilization of the public; sources of governance; maintaining government accountability (De Jager, 2010: 107 – 108).

The main goal of this study is to ascertain how opposition parties remain relevant in dominant party-systems and whether the roles they adopt are similar in the three case studies. The aim of this is to contribute to the theory building around the behaviour of opposition parties in dominant party-systems. A second goal is to compare the effectiveness of opposition parties by looking at the political support and resources available to them. A third and last goal is to make suggestions as to how opposition parties in dominant party-systems can improve their competitiveness, in particular when it comes to elections.

#### **2. PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

To participate in a semi-structured interview, in other words an interview with open-ended questions. The interview will last for approximately 60 minutes and, with your permission, I would like to record the interview. The interview will take place at a time and place that will be convenient to the participant.

### **3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

There should not be any risks or discomforts for the participant as the questions are not of a sensitive or personal nature.

### **4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

There is no direct benefit to you from taking part in this study. It is hoped that the research will provide greater insight into opposition parties in dominant party systems and how democracy can be further consolidated.

### **5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

### **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of keeping only two copies of the audiotaped interviews in a safe that only the researcher will have access to. Transcriptions of the interviews will also be kept on a password-locked computer that only the researcher will have access to.

As a participant in the study you have the right to review the recordings/tapes. The recordings will only be used for the research study and will be erased after the dissertation is completed (in approximately two years). In terms of the publication of the information, the participant's name will not be used, unless express permission is given to do so.

### **7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to

answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

## 8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Annemie Parkin (principal investigator) via telephone (082 486 9456) or email ([annemieb@mgi.ac.za](mailto:annemieb@mgi.ac.za)) or Dr. Nicola de Jager (Supervisor) via email ([ndejager@sun.ac.za](mailto:ndejager@sun.ac.za)).

## 9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [[mfouche@sun.ac.za](mailto:mfouche@sun.ac.za); 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

<b>SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE</b>
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The information above was described to the participant by Annemie Parkin in English and I am in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to me. The participant was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Subject/Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

<b>SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR</b>
----------------------------------

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ and/or [his/her] representative \_\_\_\_\_. [He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and no translator was used.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

