

Major Research Paper

Enhancing State Stability in New Democracies

Through Political Parties

Date

July 23rd, 2013

By

Adam De Sousa

Supervisor: Dr. Christoph Zuercher

Graduate School of Public and International Affairs
University of Ottawa

Abstract

The main goal of this paper is to highlight the need for strong political parties in new democracies. It will do so by examining why three major pillars of democracy cannot provide state stability in the short-term, how social cleavages and economic grievances contribute to state failure, and how several characteristics of political parties themselves enhance the chances for sustained democratic success and state stability in new democracies. It then finished up with concluding remarks

1. Introduction

The ability to choose is something that makes the human race unique. When human choice is taken out of the equation then what is there? This question is fundamental to the perils of autocracy. Countries that lack the freedom of choosing their government are subjected to the whims of autocratic decision-making. History shows us that more often than not autocrats make decisions that favour themselves and strengthen their hold on the benefits of state power, while limiting the freedoms and rights of their citizens. In cases where a state transitions from autocracy to democracy, the freedom of choice becomes something new. The best way of expressing the choices that citizens can take in electing their government for the first time is one that should be both respected and shaped to enhance the ability of those citizens to continue to participate in democracy long into the future.

There is little disagreement in the scholarly community about the essential role of political parties in conflict management, as Reilly and Nordlund state, "Political parties are central not only to representative democracy, but to the very fabric of democratic development in transitional democracies" (Reilly & Nordlund, 2008). There is also little disagreement about the fragile nature of countries undergoing democratic transitions after civil wars as there is substantial evidence to suggest that new democracies are more prone to regress into conflict than are those states that are autocratic or established democracies (Mansfield & Snyder, 1995).

If enhanced democratization in post-war settings is required for extended state stability, and thus political and civil liberties which in turn lead to extended human rights the question then becomes, how can a new democracy in a post-war state emerge from the ashes to become an established political system? What is required, as this paper argues as its fundamental point, is the institutionalization of political parties. Political parties can take a plethora of forms; for example a political party in Sweden is wildly different from a political party in the United States of America, but they share the same ultimate goal: To govern their country to the best of their ability. In order for a political party to establish itself in the national order of its country's democracy it must hold true characteristics of political parties.

This paper holds as its hypothesis that political parties have the greatest chances of enhancing state stability in new democracies in the short-term. There are several rudimentary attributes that a political party must have if it is to enhance to state stability: an overarching and cohesive party ideology; It must not be based around religious, regional, or ethnic lines for the reasons outlined earlier in the examination of the role of ethnicity in fragile states; and finally it must be fully institutionalized. The first chapter of this research paper describes the methodology behind the research guiding this paper. The research paper will analyze three major factors of democracy in chapter 3 (the rule of law, elections, and institutions) and why they matter less to short-term stability than political parties. It will then diverge to studying two major factors of conflict in chapter 4 (social cleavages, specifically ethnic polarization; and economic grievances). The reasoning behind

this is to provide a fuller picture of what contributes to state stability and fragility in a new democracy and how political parties are more adept institutions in the short-term at strengthening a state in democratic transition. Chapter 5 highlights the necessity of integrating former rebel groups into the political fold after a civil war has ended and then addresses the rudimentary attributes highlighted above.

3. Factors of Democracy

The arrival of democracy in a state fresh out of conflict should not be viewed with overzealousness. In fact, in many cases both historic and contemporary the coming of democracy often spells instability. Shortly after a civil war is when a country is at its most fragile state. More specifically, Collier adeptly highlights that a country is at its most fragile state in the five-year period immediately following a civil war (Collier, 2007). Often is the case that following a civil war a country will enter a transitional period of governance. This paper is focused on states undergoing a democratic transition shortly after a period of civil conflict. While its main aim is to highlight the fact that political parties have the highest potential to contribute to state stability in the short-term there are a host of necessary prerequisites a country must fulfill in order to become an established democracy on the global stage. These conditions for democracy are: a) rule of law; b) elections; and c) institutions. This chapter will be dedicated to studying these prerequisites for

democracy in detail and why, ultimately, they matter less in the short-term for a state that has just relieved itself of a civil war.

3.1 Rule of Law

One of the most basic tenants of a functioning society is the rule of law. Without it there is little in the way of ensuring that members of a society adhere to basic ethics and morals. The relationship that the rule of law shares with various forms of governance is well documented. In some states it has reached a post-industrial level. This simply means that legal issues being addressed in courthouses have advanced from economic and political rights to advanced social rights and liberties¹. In other states the rule of law has been so underdeveloped that there may not even be a courthouse in which to conduct such affairs. For example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo there is, for all intents and purposes, no functioning government. Without a functioning government there is no rule of law, no judiciary to ensure that the rights of the DRC's citizens are being upheld in an equal and just manner. In other cases a state may be so well built up, so well endowed so as to host as grandiose an affair as the Summer Olympic Games, but yet maintain a failure to enhance its legal system (i.e. China). In many autocracies this lack of legal infrastructure is often calculated, for if an autocrat rules with an iron fist what in society may prevent he or she from doing so but the legal system itself?

¹ An example of this is the recent legal battle for marriage equality in the United States of America, and most of the Western World.

In many other cases, the rule of law is sewn right into the fabric of a state. No more is this evident than in the constitutions of the many democracies in the world today.

The relationship between democracies and the rule of law is deep and significant. In all established democracies the judiciary serves as a vital piece of the larger puzzle that adds up to the betterment of society. The constitution of a democratic state serves as the blueprint for how that state should conduct its democracy. Every constitution is different from another, but there are commonalities. The main commonality is the separation of the judiciary, the law, from the executive and legislative branches of government. It is a check on the power of the government; a way of ensuring that power does not become a victim to the vacuum of a ruling party or leader. In many transitional democracies the establishment of the rule of law is one of the most difficult elements to institute. It often takes years, if not decades or even centuries, for a fully formed set of laws to become firmly enmeshed within a society.

The rule of law establishes a set of principles for any society willing to adhere to their own set of morals and ethics. In most established democracies the rule of law is a pillar for which fundamental freedoms, such as civil and political rights, lean on to ensure their sustained regard in that society. Furthermore, the rule of law is an essential component to economic freedoms and is one of the main reasons why capitalist markets and democracies seem to go hand in hand. In any functioning

capitalist society there are significant legal protections guaranteed to citizens such as private property, which is a major form of investment for a lot of people in these countries. Without legal guarantees that they are protected from seizures of economic assets people are less likely to invest in various markets, which in turn leads to slower economic growth. The same also goes for private corporate investments. In states where the rule of law is weak a corporation is less likely to invest heavily there for fear that their investments may not be protected and/or may be vulnerable to political instability if the citizens of that weak state begin to grow discontented with their society and have few legitimate non-violent avenues to take up recourse, thus inciting political uprising.

The institution of the rule of law in a transitional democracy is an incredibly difficult and time-consuming task. Add to this that many states opting for democratic transition are usually in the lowest GDP brackets in the world and it becomes easy to understand why so many of them cannot meet global, or even local, expectations. While there is no substitute for a strong rule of law it seems impossible to assume that in a new democracy it will just crop up. In the absence of it civil strife has a significantly greater chance of flaring up again. Conflict at all levels of human interaction is a natural phenomenon. However, when there are no legal institutions to guide peaceful resolutions of such conflicts it is then that we see them boil over into violence. This leads to several questions, but mainly how else may transitional democracies be able to prevent conflict from becoming violent

again and how can a society trust that their newly found electoral ambitions do not go wasting away in a system of corruption without checks or balances?

Due to the fact that it takes so long to establish the rule of law we must look to other factors of democracy that have a significant short-term potential for strengthening state stability.

3.2 Elections

If the rule of law is an essential component of democracy another is the election. One of the immediate reactions of a society that is in a democratic transition is to host a federal election. If a state has only just ended a civil war or has just emerged from a political uprising, i.e. Egypt during the Arab Spring, there will usually be eight months between the end of the conflict and elections². To simply state that a country will be hosting an election for the first time in their history does not, however, mean that said country has become democratic; not in the true sense of the word anyhow. Of course, elections are a staple of a democratic state. Constitutions of democratic states allow for them and protect them (on paper, if not in practice). While it may seem obvious that elections are required in a democracy it

² This length may vary case to case, but eight months appears to be the average rate of time.

is nevertheless important to delve deeper into why they are important and why an election within itself does not contribute to short-term state stability.

In states that have recently undergone a democratic transition there are heightened prospects for regressing back into conflict. In many cases holding elections shortly after the resolution of conflict does little to aid the prospects for enhanced state stability. As Goldstone notes, when the state lacks legitimacy it enhances the risk for state collapse (Goldstone, 2008). Legitimacy here is defined as how the state is perceived by elites, the population and whether or not they are viewed as just and competent by these two groups (Goldstone, 2008).

As the recent Arab Spring highlights elections may actually reduce state stability. If political party systems are not properly established prior to a new democracy's first election it leaves voters with little options in deciding whom to vote into power. Due to the fact that many civil wars are often born out of the instrumentalization of social cleavages (covered in detail in the ensuing chapter) it is crucial that in the post-conflict democratic setting parties do not pander to their ethnic or religious base. Using Egypt as a contemporary example again we can see how this is a problem. The Muslim Brotherhood, led by Mohamed Morsi came to power in the first elections in over 20 years. He and his party were so-called victors of the revolution. When elections were held they were the only truly organized political party that existed after the government that had just been overthrown in

the revolution. There was less than a year between the end of civil conflict and elections, which left the potential for other viable parties little to no time to organize themselves for a run at leading the country. Therefore, a near de facto government was installed; fast forward to less than two years later and what we see is a country undergoing yet another political uprising. The Morsi government has done little to attempt to change the fabric of Egyptian society in the way the people fought for throughout the revolution primarily because of the fact that they realize how few other political parties are viable in the state, and so quickly lost legitimacy in the eyes of the Egyptian population. If political parties had the time and space to get organized prior to elections perhaps there would have been a different outcome. It is not far fetched to suggest that Egyptian voters would not have the supreme levels of discontent with their government if the first election they had the freedom to participate in were truly contested.

3.3 Institutions

Without the rule of law and fairly contested elections (done so through multi-party political systems in electoral democracies) the state loses legitimacy, which enhances its chances of state failure. There is another factor of democracy that is required for a sustained period of state stability: sound democratic institutions.

Institutions enable a state to carry out policies. Various government departments, when established and legitimate, enhance state *effectiveness*. What is referred to by effective here is the ability of the state to carry out state functions, or in other words the ability of the state to do what it says it will do (Goldstone, 2008). Furthermore, institutions are vital in order for a state to effectively resolve conflicts through non-violent means while at the same time promoting welfare for its citizens. An inability to do so leads to a lack of effectiveness, which heightens its lack of legitimacy in the eyes of the citizenry. Never is this more prevalent than in a democracy where the party in power has been elected. This is where the imperativeness of a strong political party system comes into play. Because democracy rests on the principle that if the government is not effective it loses power via popular election the necessary requirement underpinning this is the multiparty political system. As noted earlier by using Egypt as an example, if there is no substantial multi-party system in place then the option of a citizenry when it comes to eliminating the ineffective government through non-violent means is significantly reduced. Coupled with the fact that government ineffectiveness in a democracy leads to little in the way of other peaceful conflict resolution apparatuses the chances for state stability remain low.

4. FACTORS OF CONFLICT

In order to determine how the development of strong political parties contributes to state stability we must first examine what makes a state unstable. Countless scholars and political practitioners have devoted numerous studies to figuring out the answer to the problem of fragile states (Collier, 2007): what, exactly, causes a state to degrade into violence? There are several hypotheses, which taken together add up to two major factors: societal cleavages and economic grievances. It should be said that there is no correct answer to the question because, to put it simply, intrastate warfare is an extremely complex problem without any one thing driving it. However an analysis of these two factors undoubtedly aids the prospects for understanding how states may escape the “conflict trap” through political parties (which will be covered in depth in the ensuing chapter).

4.1 Societal Cleavages

It should be noted that by writing on the topic of societal cleavages what is specifically meant is ethnic and conflict. Ethnicity is often the central dividing factor between populations within a state. There are numerous cases that exhibit this fact such as Nigeria, Sudan, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and many other under-developed states. As Horowitz states, many societies in Asia and Africa, where we find the highest numbers of intrastate warfare and fragile states (Singer & Small, 2008; Fund for Peace, 2013), tend to be structured around ethnic and/or religious lines. Many of the states in these regions have do not suffer from the same cleavages that tend to

plague Western democracies, whose general dividing lines tend to be mainly economic (i.e. blue-collar or white collar) or post-industrial (i.e. issues such as homosexuality and pro-choice/pro-life). A deeper study of the role that ethnicity plays as a factor of conflict will be provided by highlighting the two main approaches that examine the relationship between it and political parties, focusing specifically on the African context.

It must first be said that ethnic differences within themselves do not inherently cause conflict within society. There are many cases in which multiple ethnic groups have lived in harmony throughout history and in contemporary society. One needs look no further than in developed democracies such as Canada. Where it becomes an issue is in societies that have only recently opened their doors to democracy³. There are two main theoretical conceptions of the role that ethnicity plays conflict and politics in democracies. The first is the instrumentalist understanding and the second is the constructivist point-of-view.

Ethnicity is not a static reality of fragile states that are primordial in nature. It may incite tension and violence, but the reasons for it doing so stem from the fact that it is a social construct. The instrumentalist understanding of ethnicity views it as such, and thus at least appreciates the temporal distinctions of ethnicity in conflict.

³ Of course the same can be said about autocracies, but because this paper focuses specifically on democratic transitions in fragile states autocracy was left out of the equation.

The basic essence of the instrumentalist approach to understanding ethnicity is relatively simple to comprehend; ethnicity is a tool, a social construct, which is often used and manipulated for political and economic ends. When a politician and his/her patrons want to win an election they pander to their base by drawing upon ethnic cohesion while at the same time preying upon ethnic division within their society. As Berman succinctly puts it, “instrumentalism alerts us to the contingent, situational and circumstantial’ use of ethnicity ‘in the pursuit of material advantage” (Berman [quoting Young, 1994] 1998).

In an analysis of the inter-relationship between ethnicity and democracy in Kenya, Atieno-Odhiambo highlights that...

“The role of political elites as ethnic spokesmen or ‘ethnic missionaries ‘, as David Abenerthy used to refer to them, is crucial in raising the alarms and in flaunting the ‘strategic efficacy’ of ethnicity when making claims on the resources and power of the modern state”. (Atieno-Odhiambo, 2002).

Here it is possible to see how ethnicity may be used by elites as a tool to establish a support base for mobilization by preying upon the socio-economically marginalized, while veiling such grievance as ethnic strife and subornation. Dishearteningly enough is the fact that this seems all too common when one reads the ample literature and case studies of the subject of ethnic politics. For

supplementary backing on this statement, Hintjens readily contends “Ideologies that promote ethnic identities as primordial tend to gain prominence when underlying structural schisms latent within a society become apparent in a way that threatens the position of the political power bloc.” (Hintjens, 1999).

The instrumentalist conception of ethnicity as it relates to politics in fragile states is that, while seemingly held-up by empirical claims (at least on the surface), it is lacking in some significant aspects. Chiefly, it assumes that ethnicity plays out the same way regardless of context. This leads to broad-brush claims that what is really the problem with politics in weak states is the hawkish attitude that political elites harbour regarding ethnicity. Surely the political nature of Ghana cannot be understood by examining the problems of Indonesia. Nor can one draw conclusions about the Rwandan genocide by studying the relationship between ethnicity and politics in the Kenyan context.

What this says about the instrumentalist understanding of ethnicity in Africa is that it is too often used as a blanket-like lens under which the ethnic makeup and setting is viewed. Furthermore, and as posed earlier, the instrumentalist approach fails to consider the very true reality that many people of different ethnicities live harmoniously in different countries where there would appear to be numerous opportunities for elites to take advantage of ethnic differences. Where a diverse and harmonious state does exist, what are we to make of it? Is there another societal

divide that has lent itself to elite ownership (religion maybe; class)? Instrumentalism does not serve itself as a sufficient understanding in this regard. No one can deny that ethnicity plays a role in regressing various states to fragility, with each state's relationship to it varying by nature. If this is the reality what can be said about the saliency of ethnicity in these cases?

To date there is probably no other understanding of ethnicity in better suited to discerning what, exactly, it means and why it has remained salient, other than through the lens of constructivism. The main position of the constructivist understanding is that ethnicity is socially constructed, "a protean outcome of the continuous and conflict ridden interaction of political, economic and cultural forces that are both external and internal to developing ethnic communities" (Berman, 1998). What really matters from this viewpoint is how pre-colonial and socio-cultural boundaries (specifically in Africa) have existed within a reality of multiple overlapping identities and how these have changed over time.

To solidify this point there may be no better example here than to point to Rwanda. The Hutu/Tutsi distinction was codified by the Belgian colonial administration that ruled over the land in the decades preceding the genocide. Identity cards were issued, thus further aiding the crystallization of the codified differences between the two groups (Mamdani, 2001) (Hintjens, 1999). What matters when studying ethnicity in Rwanda is that one can clearly see the changing

nature and social construction of ethnicity occur over a timeline. Where once divisions did not exist in a stark or noticeable way, to the point where Tutsis and Hutus lived harmoniously in the same communities, they certainly did in 1994.

Ethnicity, when viewed through the previously listed understanding, is seen as a catalyst for conflict. Through a constructivist understanding it is not. Ethnicity is not a natural driver of conflict between groupings of people, because it is temporally and contextually sensitive. However, once it crystallizes via institutionalization and codification, political and economic manipulation, or even from geographical integration then do people start identifying in those terms. It does bare a resemblance to nationalism in this regard. Otto Von Bismarck, the great German unifier sought to construct a national identity out of the various states (i.e. Prussia, Bavaria, etc) that would strengthen his imperialist ambitions. In doing so through law he codified a new identity and language for which citizens within his territory would eventually come to identify with. It is, in a way, a form of societal engineering through law, aimed at achieving a goal, whether that is ease of governing or regional hegemony. The similarities to the development of ethnicity in conflict-riddled states are glaring.

One other example that serves a purpose in illustrating the constructivist understanding of ethnicity in Africa is the decision by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights regarding the Kenyan government's violation of the

rights of the Endorois people. The Commission forced the recognition of the Endorois as an indigenous community, thus firmly establishing the ethnicity via codification in Kenyan and regional law, despite the fact that the Endorois had only just been established as a community not 30 years earlier (Lynch, 2011). This paper will not delve into the depths of the Commission's reasoning or the problems stemming from it, for it is beyond the scope of this paper (however, Lynch does provide ample evidence that this has the potential to result in significant negative repercussions for the Endorois and the Kenyan state). What this example does do is further cement, with empirical evidence, that ethnicity is a social construct that is in constant flux.

It is important to keep in mind that the characteristics that shaped a civil war in one state are often different from those that shaped civil war in another state. To this effect, it must be said that the characteristics, which may be fundamental to a well-functioning party system so as to enhance state stability, may differ from state to state. However, if we take societal cleavages as the primary reason for civil wars (i.e. ethnic divisions as understood through constructivism) then the fundamental principles that enhance political party strength and state stability should, in all actuality, be maintained throughout most post-conflict societies. This is because the societal cleavage, regardless of what it is specifically, lends itself to similar characteristics that lead to, or exacerbate civil conflict. For example, if State A engaged in civil war primarily because of religious tension then political parties in that state should include characteristics of non-religious makeup. If State B engaged

in a civil war primarily because of the instrumentalization of ethnicity then political parties in that state should include characteristics of non-ethnic makeup.

The relationship between social cleavages and political parties has been documented in the preceding paragraphs. However, further detail will be given in the ensuing chapter as to how building a strong political party system with principles that do not exacerbate such cleavages assist the prospects for state stability in new democracies and states undergoing democratic transitions.

4.2 Economic Grievances

Ethnicity and religion are frequently utilized as tools to justify civil wars. When one segment of a population feels mistreated based on their ethnic or religious origin it has the ability to incite violence. As demonstrated earlier however, it is not as black and white of a picture as some scholars would have it. While social cleavages are oft-cited reasons for state fragility there is another, perhaps more complex, issue that drives state instability: economic grievances.

Economic mismanagement in underdeveloped states is frequently cited as a main reason for state instability, leading to conflict. If the state is deriving significant wealth from economic activity, say from natural resources, and fails to disperse

those funds in a manner that is equitable to its population it is likely to incite social unrest. While economic mismanagement undoubtedly leads to legitimate grievances within society it does not within itself equate to the reasoning behind some civil wars. As Collier and Hoeffler contend, conflicts are far more likely to be driven by economic *opportunities* as opposed to out-and-out grievances (Collier & Hoeffler, 2000). The argument here is that economic opportunities provide motivation for rent-seeking actors to form guerilla movements in an attempt to overthrow the government and/or vie for control of a particular region within a state that happens to be well endowed with natural resources.

What does this have to do with political parties though? Guerilla movements instrumentalize legitimate economic and/or political grievances to their advantage. There must be deep-seated resentment from the citizenry of a fragile state in order to institute sweeping changes to government. In many cases where there is no democracy or where democracy has failed to spread its wings the discontent within society will often lead to a civil conflict, as there are no other means for which society can air their issues with their government. Due to the fact that the government mismanaging the funds has failed to provide adequate services to its population in the form of the rule of law, sound democratic institutions, and free and fair elections there simply does not exist the ability to manage intense conflicts and grievances through non-violent means. As studied earlier, when the rule of law is absent what is a population to do if they should feel the need to seek recourse against their government? It is here that the strengthening of political parties comes into play. In weak democracies there tend to be few viable options for election after

the ruling party itself. Add to this the fact that in many fragile states election fraud and irregularities occur we can see that there are few options for citizens to exercise their right to choose the government that they want. This is one reason why it is so fundamentally important in new democracies (democracies born out of conflict) to establish working political parties in an electoral system, as it allows for an institutionalized and peaceful medium to address economic grievance through the basic freedom of political choice. Further detail will be added to this argument in the ensuing chapter, but for now the point stands to strengthen the contention that political parties can and should be vehicles for state stability.

5 Political Parties as State Stabilizers

In all democracies one of the central pillars upon which the political foundations rests is accountability. As studied earlier in this work a lack of political legitimacy and effectiveness in a democracy does not pose solutions to the conflict trap posited by Collier. It is well known that autocracies lack accountability to their citizens, for how can a single party that does not rely upon its citizenry for the right to govern be accountable to anyone but itself? Often times this leads to significant unrest as autocratic governments fail to respond to widespread social ills (for example poverty or more detailed problems such as a lack of basic sanitation in large cities). Due to the fact that there are no institutions in place to allow for peaceful recourse these grievances stemming from a lack of accountability in

government spills over into conflict. Once the conflict has ended and the victors of the conflict determine that democracy is the preferred method of governance the issue of accountability must be rectified. The rule of law, elections and democratic institutions are pivotal to sustaining a government's regard for accountability. However, as already noted in detail, these three pillars of democracy do not occur overnight; in the case of the rule of law and institutions it may take decades for them to become firmly entrenched in a new democracy. Therefore what we are left with is the best short-term road to accountability – the politicians themselves.

Political parties form the basis of democracy. They are, at their very core, the bases of political participation in open societies. They serve as a conduit for citizen representation in government, represent divergent interests in a society, act as a mediator between the citizenry and the government, and play a large role in setting respective policy agendas at all levels of government in a democracy. In situations where political parties are strong, so too is democracy. One need look no farther than the developed states of the West to determine that what makes them stable is their democratic structures. Fundamental to these democratic structures are the political parties that form the basis for government in these states. Where the political party system is fundamentally strong, (i.e. Sweden, Canada, Norway, etc.) we see little in the way of societal cleavages. However, even in the West it is observable that where political party systems lack depth there are heightened tensions and increased social fragmentation in that society. In the United States of America for example there are only two viable political parties, the Democrats and the Republicans. As time has carried on we have seen the United States become a

more polarized society. Politics has become black and white, with little grey in between. The lack of a vibrant party system in the United States has left citizens in that country with little choice for voting in alternatives to the two major parties that have governed the country for centuries. Despite this, the United States has maintained its status as a strong and stable democracy, because of the fact that its two parties are so fundamentally solid. Without a fundamental party system, and the political parties to support that, there can be little in the way of democracy. In emergent democracies, where a society has undergone major political upheaval or transition the ability of political parties to form and develop principles that prop up, not debilitate, that new democracy is a crucial determinate as to whether that state stabilizes in the aftermath of said transition or remains stuck in a state of fragility, ultimately regressing back into the civil conflict that it has just surfaced from

Political parties can take many forms. This paper highlights several characteristics of political parties that contribute to democratic success and several characteristics that typically classify political party weakness. The intention here is to display how the positive characteristics heighten state stability in the short-term in ways that other factors of democracy cannot, as well as emphasizing how the attributes of political party weakness significantly aid state fragility. The positive features have been extrapolated primarily from the works of Reilly and Nordlund, who's edited text entitled *Political Parties in Conflict-Prone Societies: Regulation, Engineering, and Development* has advanced the understandings of the role that political parties in democratic development in numerous ways.

Having already shed light on how the rule of law, elections, and weak institutions in new democracies do not provide short-term relief from state regression into conflict it now becomes important to understand the particular facets of what makes political parties stronger in enabling them to shape the democratic process and contribute to state stability and resilience in a transitional and/or new democracy. The integration of former rebel groups into the democratic system is a crucial requirement in ensuring that new and transitional democracies do not revert back to conflict. All of these characteristics assist in the resiliency of the state as will be accentuated below. Furthermore, political parties must have several rudimentary attributes: (1) an overarching and cohesive party ideology; (2) must not be based around religious, regional, or ethnic lines for the reasons outlined earlier in the examination of the role of ethnicity in fragile states; and (3) they must be fully institutionalized.

5.1 Overarching and Cohesive Ideology

In order for political parties to enhance the stability of the state they must have an overarching and cohesive party ideology. Many political parties in new democracies appear fragmented, inconsistent, or disorganized in terms of their mission statements and party platforms (Spears, 2013; Biezen, 2000). Because of the fact that new democracies born out of conflict tend to be fragmented and territorialized the need for cohesive party ideologies is fundamental to the progression of political

parties and their stability. One way for new parties to move towards this is by consolidating the party structure towards the centre, formed mostly around a the party executive, which in turn enhances the predictability and stability of a party's organizational foundation, which as Biezen adds, "is a particularly valuable asset in a climate of frequent party ruptures" (Biezen, 2000).

5.2 Eliminating an Ethnic Component of Party Ideology

Going back to the topic of the instrumentalization of ethnicity, political parties in post-conflict democracies ought not to establish themselves as identifying to any one ethnic or religious group, especially in scenarios where ethnicity was at the fore of the conflict that was just resolved. One way to prevent political parties from doing so is to have it written into the constitution that political parties shall not contain a stated ethnic component. Furthermore, as rebel groups are absorbed into the multiparty system it should be decided at the peace negotiation table beforehand that neither ethnicity nor religion may be utilised as a way of attracting voters or members. This may seem obvious but the reality is that this problem occurs too frequently and in too many post-conflict states.

5.3 Institutionalizing New Political Parties

The institutionalization of political parties may again seem obvious to observers, but the reality is that many parties lack an institutionalized structure. As Biezen describes, many new parties in new democracies keep only informal ties between members and their sometimes-sparse political bases. One way of addressing this issue is to require the state to fund political parties (do not exacerbate ethnic and/or religious cleavages) combined with international donor assistance to a point where parties within a new democracy have been able to develop to the point that allows them to reach semi-self sustainability. This has the added benefit of strengthening ties between the government and the parties, thus enhancing the prospects for short-term state stability in post-conflict democracies as parties and government must establish a working relationship with each other and compete on at least a relatively equal financial footing (Reilly & Nordlund, 2008).

Failing to institutionalize political parties has the possibility of eliminating many of them as they fail to adequately develop into viable options for voters. Without ensuring institutional safeguards against this voters may have few options left to choose from in popular elections, leading to a regression of the “de facto” style of government that may have plagued them in the past, which as has been pointed out, reduces state stability.

5.4 Integrating Rebel Groups

If we are to assume that the foundation to short-term democratic success is indeed strengthening political parties in new democracies the questions that then need asking is how are strong political parties constructed? What lies in their fabric that enables them to strengthen the state, build resilience and prevent the state from falling victim to the conflict-trap? In order to understand how strong party institutions may be created we must first look at what may prevent this realization.

In many post-conflict situations where democracy is installed a number of influential parties are grown out of the former warring factions. On the one hand you have the government (if they were not disposed in the conflict) and on the other you have rebel factions. Former armed movements are perhaps the most well organized groups in a war-torn country after the existing government. Regardless of whether or not they were victorious in the conflict it makes sense to include them in the formation of political party construction for two main reasons: (1) a failure to integrate them is likely to lead to a recurrence of violence (Berman, 1998; Mampilly, 2011); (2) they sometimes hold more legitimacy in particular regions of a country than the government⁴ (Mampilly, 2011).

The failure of integrating former armed forces into the new political environment can lead to significant political and social instability. Put another way,

⁴ A good example of this the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, who are deemed legitimate by the Tamil minority group in the country whereas the non-Tamil (internationally recognized) government is not.

it may increase state fragility. Rebel movements are inherently political: they go to war with the government for political control of a territory. Sometimes that territory may consist of a specific region within the state and in other cases it may be the state in its entirety. In fact, the relatively recent successes in new democracies such as El Salvador, Mozambique and Rwanda can be partly attributed to the inclusion of former rebel groups in political life post-conflict. The FMLN in El Salvador and RENAMO in Mozambique have both managed to become legitimate political parties in a post-conflict democratic setting (Curtis & De Zeeuw, 2010).

A second reason for accepting former rebel movements into the democratic system by establishing them as political parties is because it provides former rebel leaders with incentives to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate into society. In many cases, by allowing former rebel movements to enter party politics grants them the very wishes they were looking for when they first took up arms. Rebel movements, particularly in Latin America, form precisely because they “seek direct participation in their country’s political, social and economic decision-making processes” (Allison, 2006). Fundamental to the establishment of former rebel groups into political parties is the need to reach a political settlement to conflict. Without first reaching a substantial peace agreement that addresses issues of social, economic and political reforms it would be difficult to conceive of a situation in which a conflict could be truly resolved. These are often the issues addressed in most peace accords; however one that may be overlooked is the facilitation of rebel movements into political parties. In El Salvador the Chapultepec Peace Accords negotiated this very issue to

great success. By enabling the FMLN to transform itself into a political party the country was able to move away from state fragility and cautiously towards stability.

A third reason for transforming rebel movements into political parties is because of their widespread bases of support in many post-conflict settings. New democracies that emerge out of civil conflicts are socially fragmented, thus making it difficult for new parties to emerge with a stable foundation (it is hard to build a base, find party members, gather signatures and the like in these such a setting). Rebel movements already have political members, an established constituency and have the ability to mobilize vast swathes of a population for an election (Allison, 2006). Also, by integrating them into a new democratic system rebel movements may be able to coalesce with other factions that had been warring against the previous government in the civil war, as they would be united under a common cause.

It is difficult to determine what would constitute success in terms of political parties, i.e. are they only successful if they win the election? Are they successful if they obtain a certain percentage of the popular vote? The FMLN was able to secure roughly 20% of the popular vote in the first real democratic elections in El Salvador in 1994 (Allison, 2006). What this shows is that there tends to indeed be significant popular support for rebel movements in new democracies once they have laid down their arms. Furthermore, it establishes that rebel movements can organize quicker

and establish a legitimate political base in time for an election after a relatively quick turnaround from violence.

Despite all of this, there remains no guarantee that rebel movements will transition successfully into established political parties that will enhance prospects for state stability. Efforts to democratize rebel groups in under-institutionalized Africa states have had mixed results (Spears, 2013). Spears' examination of power-sharing agreements in under-institutionalized African states highlights the shortcomings of multi-party politics and how they may not truly enhance state stability in new democracies. For one, there are likely to be many members of a post-conflict society that view rebel groups as largely illegitimate. As Spears states in regard to the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) becoming a political party after the Arusha Accords, "... some Hutu found inclusive provisions within the agreement unacceptable and portrayed the agreement as a sell-out. Moderates who had initially supported the agreement felt vulnerable and many migrated to the hardline position..." (Spears, 2013) What occurred after the Arusha Accords was one of the most heinous acts of violence ever seen in human history and it would be highly unwise to attribute the Rwandan Genocide's occurrence to the establishment of the RPF as a political party. However, it was undoubtedly one factor that, combined with many others (i.e. the instrumentalization of ethnicity by political elites) contributed to the violence that occurred. Despite this there are numerous successful cases, highlighted by the FMLN in El Salvador that may serve as blueprints going forward for transitioning rebel movements into legitimate political parties.

6 Conclusions

To conclude, this paper has highlighted several facets of democracy that contribute to state stability: the rule of law, elections, and democratic institutions. It was noted in Chapter 3 that these three pillars do not enhance state stability on their own as they require legitimacy and effective both of which are often lacking at the early stages of a new democracy if that democracy lacks a credible political party system in place to contest elections and offer voters choices. Chapter 4 focused on factors of conflict that reduce a state's stability and erode resilience. Social cleavages such as ethnic and religious tension as well as economic inequities contribute to state fragility through polarization and social fragmentation and economic grievances, which are capitalized by predatory elites as tools for personal economic and/or political gain. Chapter 5 then highlighted the original hypothesis, which was that political parties have the greatest chance of contributing to state stability in new democracies. This is so if they have an overarching and cohesive party ideology that does not cut across ethnic lines, while at the same time receiving institutional support from the state. The examples of Egypt (the negative of a new democracy) and El Salvador (the positive of a new democracy) were utilized throughout the paper to accentuate these findings. There is still much work to be done on this subject and the issue of enhancing state stability in new democracies is one that will stand for a long time yet, but perhaps the blueprints to doing so lie in political parties.

Bibliography

- Allison, M. E. (2006). The Transition from Armed Opposition to Electoral Opposition in Central America. *Latin American Politics and Society*, 48 (4), 137-162.
- Atieno-Odhiambo, E. S. (2002). Hegemonic Enterprises and Instrumentalities of Survival: Ethnicity and Survival in Kenya. *African Studies*, 61 (2), 223-249.
- Berman, B. J. (1998). Ethnicity, Patronage and the African State: The Politics of Uncivil Nationalism. *African Affairs*, 97, 305-341.
- Biezen, I. v. (2000). On the Internal Balance of Party Power: Party Organization in New Democracies. *Party Politics*, 6 (4), 395-417.
- Carey, J., & Reynolds, A. (2007). Parties and Accountable Government in New Democracies. *Party Politics*, 13 (2), 255-274.
- Collier, P. (2007). *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Collier, P., & Hoeffler, A. (2000). *Greed and Grievances*. London: World Bank.
- Curtis, D., & De Zeeuw, J. (2010). Rebel Movements and Political Party Development in Post-Conflict Societies – A Short Literature Review. *Program on States and Security*, 1-6.
- Goldstone, J. A. (2008). Pathways to State Failure. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 25, 285-296.
- Hintjens, M. H. (1999). Explaining the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 37 (2), 241-286.

Lynch, G. (2011). Becoming Indigenous in the Pursuit of Justice: The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Endorois. *African Affairs*, 111, 24-45.

Mamdani, M. (2001). *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Mampilly, Z. C. (2011). *Rebel Rulers: Insurgent Governance and Civilian Life During War*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Mansfield, E. D., & Snyder, J. (1995). Democratization and War. *Foreign Affairs*, 74 (3), 79-97.

Reilly, B., & Nordlund, P. (2008). *Political Parties in Conflict-Prone Societies: Regulation, Engineering and Democratic Development*. New York City: United Nations University Press.

Spears, I. S. (2013). Africa's Informal Power-Sharing and the Prospects for Peace. *Civil Wars*, 15 (1), 35-57.