External Democracy Promotion in Post-Conflict Zones: Evidence from Case Studies

Namibia

Christof Hartmann

Freie Universität Berlin

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External Democracy Promotion in Post-Conflict Zones: Evidence from Case Studies

An Introduction To The Project

Christoph Zuercher

U of Ottawa and Freie Universität Berlin

The Research Question

Can countries emerge from civil wars as democracies? And if they can - to what extent and by what means can external actors support such a transition? While much research effort has been devoted to the question of how warring societies break the conflict trap and return to peace, much less effort has so far been spent on investigating under what circumstances warring societies not only end violence, but succeed in creating a stable and democratic polity. Political theorists, from Machiavelli to Huntington, are in general very skeptical with regard to the possibility of democratic regimes arising out of civil war. Instead, many see an intermediate stage of autocratic rule as unavoidable in order to overcome societal divisions and rebuild the fundamental political institutions of the polity. The empirical evidence seems indeed to suggest that countries rarely emerge from war as democracies. When we look at the overall population of countries that experienced a civil war after WWII (regardless of whether there was a peacebuilding mission or not), we find little reason for optimism. Only 10% of the countries that experienced civil wars reached a polity score of +7 or higher (approximately like Kenya, Moldova or Mali) two years after war ended. 53% all war-affected countries show a polity score of -5 or lower two years after the end of civil war, that is, a regime type similar to Gambia or Iran. 37% have a polity score of -7 or lower, similar to Belarus or Uzbekistan (all data is from Sambanis, Nicholas, with Michael Doyle, 2000: International Peacebuilding: A Theoretical and Quantitative Analysis, in: American Political Science Review 94: 4, 779 - 801). The picture looks similarly gloomy five years after the end of civil war: 52% have a polity score of -5 or lower; 39.4% have a score of -7 or lower; and only 10.6% have a score of +7 or higher. Yet, there are historical examples of countries that did emerge from war as democracies: Germany and Japan in the aftermath of World War II, and Mozambique, Namibia or Macedonia in the post cold war period, to name only a few. What made these cases of post-war democratization successful, and what, if any, role was played by external actors? This is, in a nutshell, the puzzle that this research project investigates.
The study of post-war democratization is a relatively new field, and there is surprisingly little empirical scholarly work devoted to the factors that allow a post-war country to become both stable and democratic. This can partly be explained by the fact that the two bodies of literatures, which are relevant for such an endeavor, are concerned with only one half of the problem. The democratic transition literature is predominantly interested in the democratic outcome of a political transition in countries which were authoritarian, but at peace. The literature on peace building is interested in transitions from civil war to peace. Whether this peace is accompanied by a measure of democracy or not is typically not of interest to this body of literature. This division of labor may explain why there is only a very small literature that is explicitly interested in outcomes which are both peaceful and democratic. But is this division warranted, or is it perhaps a consequence of academic inertia? The answer to this question depends on whether we think that post-war countries are in essence a sub-class of transition cases, or whether we think that post-conflict countries are cases sui generis.

The researchers involved in this project think that post-conflict cases are fundamentally different from transition cases, and they assume that these differences may have an impact on the factors which affect peace and democracy. If this is true, then it is necessary to account for the possibility that the factors which affect a transition to democracy are not necessarily the same, or do not necessarily have the same impact, in a post-conflict setting. We must also account for the possibility that the factors which affect peace and democracy respectively do not necessarily simply add up, but that they may cancel each other out. One implication of this is then that we have to disaggregate the concept of “success” into sub-concepts. One way of doing this is to individually look at “absence of war”, “democratic quality of the regime” and “state capacities”. While these three concepts may merge in the case of fully established democracies, we argue that for countries emerging from war we need to disaggregate them in order to be able to empirically explore which sequences and combinations are most conducive to the normatively desirable outcome: stable democracies at peace.

The Research Design

Given these challenges, we opted for a case study oriented research design. Case studies allow for process-tracing, which is indispensable for discovering causal mechanisms. Case studies allow researchers to treat cases a whole, which facilitates the identification of multiple causation and which may lead to the identification of typological sub-classes. Case studies can be arranged into different sets of structured comparisons; and finally, small-n research designs are not dependent on the few available global data sets, because the small number of cases allows researchers to collect the specific original data which they think may be relevant for the explanation of the observed phenomenon.

We collaborated with an international team of country experts, who prepared ten structured cases studies between October 2008 and December 2009. Our sample covers cases on Macedonia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, East Timor and Haiti. We deliberately chose cases from the post cold-war period only,
because our main interest is the contribution of external actors to post-war democratization, and democracy promotion and massive peace building missions became fashionable and feasible after the end of the cold war in the late 1980s.

The Universe of Cases

The universe of cases consists, theoretically, of all civil wars that came to an end after 1989. We count 52 cases (Data from Doyle/Sambanis 2000). Our main interests is the question of whether and how countries that were affected by large-scale violence can emerge as stable and democratic polities, and we are particularly interested in the impact of external support to this outcome. Other outcomes are possible and indeed more probable. Post-conflict countries can relapse into war; post-conflict countries can emerge as stable, yet undemocratic polities; and post-conflict countries could emerge as democratic, yet unstable polities. For comparative purposes, we wanted to include all of these outcomes in our sample. Furthermore, we also want to have variation on the main independent variable, that is, the amount of external support for democracy. Hence, we have four different outcomes, and two different values on our main independent variable. This can be depicted in a table with 2 x 4 cells. In order to group the cases into the cells, we have to define measures for stability, democracy and external support. Because this is not for analytical-descriptive purpose, but for sampling, we do this in a fairly rough and ready way. We classify countries that are still at peace five years after the war ended as stable. We classify countries as democratic when they reach a polity IV score of 10 or higher five years after the war ended. We proxy the amount of external support by the type of UN mission. Countries in which a complex peace building mission, or a peace enforcement mission, took place are coded as having received high external support. For all coding we rely on a data set compiled by Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis (Sambanis 2000).

The next table groups all cases in the eight cells. Case in bold were included in our sample:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stable and democratic</th>
<th>Stable and undemocratic</th>
<th>Unstable and democratic</th>
<th>Unstable and undemocratic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High external support</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cambodia</strong></td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td><strong>Rwanda</strong></td>
<td>Timor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td><strong>Yugoslavia-Croatia</strong></td>
<td>Haiti 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>Macedonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low or no external support</strong></td>
<td><strong>Bangladesh-Hill</strong></td>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>India-Kashmir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethiopia-ideol</td>
<td>Congo-Shabba I&amp;II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Georgia-Abkhazia</td>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Georgia-Ossetia</td>
<td>Ethiopia-Ogaden</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>Indonesia-East Tim.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>India-Sikh</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to generate fine-grained data, we developed a structured research template that consists of 101 questions, divided into four sections. Country experts answered these questions, thereby generating rigidly structured case studies with a tremendous amount of data, which we used for comparative analysis. Only then did the authors shorten the studies turning them into condensed analytical narratives. The original versions of the reports are accessible at the project’s webpage.

The first section is devoted to a description of the outcome. We disaggregate the concepts “security”, “democracy” and “state capacities” into sub-concepts: With regard to democracy, we inquire about various dimensions of democracy. These dimensions are rule of law, participation, competition, and accountability. We also ask how the majority of the population perceives democracy. Is there any cultural bias in favor or against democracy? For example, is it seen as a Western export that suits outsiders more than the local population? By security, we refer to whether the state is able to provide physical security to its population by ensuring the absence of war and providing protection from other forms of organized violence (e.g. criminal violence). By state capacity, we refer to the capacity of the state administration to autonomously make decisions and effectively implement them. In general terms, this implies that stronger states with more capacities can rely on well-developed bureaucratic apparatuses which are staffed by cohesive cohorts of civil servants and steered by flexible elites who have an incentive to hold in check rent-seekers and redeploy available resources in pursuit of strategic policy objectives. Finally, this section asks whether the regime is seen as legitimate, and we differentiate between procedural input

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1 The Template is available here: http://www.polsoz.fu-berlin.de/polwiss/forschung/international/frieden/ib/projekte/democracypromotion/index.html
2 http://www.polsoz.fu-berlin.de/polwiss/forschung/international/frieden/ib/projekte/democracypromotion/index.html
legitimacy (the regime is legitimate because its procedures ensure that society can voice its preferences and feed them into the decision-making process) and output legitimacy (the regime is legitimate because it provides public goods).

The second section asks about long-term structural factors (such as long-term economic development, the structure of the economy, or previous experiences with democracy), about war-related factors (such as duration and type of war, numbers of fractions, level of war-related destruction, and quality of any peace agreement) which may have had an impact on the countries’ capacities for a democratic peace.

The third section inquires about neighborhood effects on democracy such as linkages and integration; it then asks about the scope and characteristics of the external intervention focusing on both military and non-military aspects. We are interested in state-reconstructing and democracy-promoting measures, and in the question of how intrusive these measures were. We also ask whether and how diplomacy, normative pressure and/or persuasion contributed to the democratization process. Another set of questions explores the interaction between the local elites and the interveners, their respective preferences and constraints. These questions allow us to reconstruct the strategic interaction and bargaining which we assume contributed to the outcome.

The fourth and final section covers development aid. Development aid is a specific form of external intervention; we investigate it separately in order to be able to detect its distinct effects. This section is intended to map the resource flows in the conflict country and to assess how they contributed to democratization and stabilization. This section inquires about the most important donors and about the prevailing modalities of delivery. We also asked country experts to collect disaggregated data on the sectoral distribution of aid where available. Experts provided annual figures for: elections and political processes; rule of law, accountability, anti-corruption, human rights and minority rights; institutional infrastructure (parliamentary and public administration, decentralization, administrative capacity); civil society, media, civic education, empowerment; civil-military relations, DDR, security sector reform. Please note that these are our generic categories which may differ from those used by donors or by the OECD-DAC, and that this data should be treated as illustrative rather than complete for most case studies due to a lack of availability of such information. Finally, we asked our experts to indentify instances of applied aid conditionality and to assess the impacts.

The Case Studies

The case studies are available from our website. We think that they provide a valuable source of fine-grained data which help us to better understand the processes which lead to a much desired, yet rare outcome: A successful transition from war to peace and democracy.
Evaluating International Influences on Democratic Development: The Case of Namibia

Christof Hartmann (Version 30.9.2008)

Executive Summary

In contrast to the other case studies analysed in this project Namibia can be considered a liberal democracy. A protracted violent conflict led in this case to the establishment and consolidation of a new political regime. Ever since 1990 Namibia has remained peaceful, and even if the democratic process still has a number of shortcomings, and many citizens lack democratic attitudes, democracy is the ‘only game in town’.

This record becomes even more puzzling if we recognize that democracy was a more or less fortuitous by-product of independence. Universal suffrage was the rallying cry in the racially dominated system of South African Apartheid rule in Namibia because it equalled sovereignty and independence. It was thus the participatory (and instrumental) aspect of democracy (and not the competitive dimension) which allowed the rebel movement and the majority population to accept a liberal constitution and a set of democratic institutions. The competitive element of democracy has been maintained because the ruling party and President Nujoma could afford to respect it in a context of weak civil society, a racially and ethnically broad-based ruling party, and a natural dominance of Northern ethnic groups in the party system. SWAPO needed only to control the Northern votes, and there was no procedural way to challenge their dominance. Only the future will tell whether the loss of this safe voter base would trigger a deterioration of the democratic quality of the regime.

Violent conflict in Namibia was mostly a conventional war between the military forces of South Africa and a single and disciplined armed liberation movement. Most of the fighting occurred outside the Namibian territory, and both the physical infrastructure and the administrative state machinery were thus not seriously damaged at the time of the peace agreement. The armed liberation movement simply took over the state, and as the previous administrators were ‘foreign’ they simply left and did not become a major obstacle for the peace or democratic process. This was a particularly fortunate coincidence of favourable conditions, and we might add the fact that the economic interests of the White minority were allowed to be entrenched in the Constitution.
External intervention was still crucial in creating a level playing ground for the first free and fair elections (organised by the outgoing South African administration). UNTAG success was helped by a clear Chap VI mandate, a decisive leadership, a thinly populated country, and a South African administration which was no longer controlled by hard-liners. International negotiations over Resolution 435 started fifteen years before their implementation, and much of the rules (Constitution, electoral system) were fixed during these years. While local actors could have agreed on re-opening the box, international actors were certainly decisive in keeping the parties to their promises. External actors continued thus to play a major and supporting role in the background. Neighbouring countries had no interest in interfering in the process because all supported the liberation of the last colony on African soil.

ODA had only a limited role in securing a democratic outcome. Namibia was not a war-ravaged country, and there were few civilian victims. It had a history of political, economic and social marginalisation and a very unequal distribution of income. The international community was ready to help the government in the delivery of social services and the establishment of infrastructure in the ‘disadvantaged’ regions of the country. This might have been the most important support to the consolidation of a democratic system. There were no conditionalities attached to this aid. In the first five years following the independence there was hardly any direct support to democratic institutions or actors, and when some problems (with rule of law) emerged at the end of the 1990s it became quite difficult for external actors to use ODA to influence the course of events.

1. Assessing the Outcome

1.1. The State of Namibian Democracy

Namibia is considered a liberal democracy ever since independence in 1989. The history of democratic transformation is basically a history of decolonization. The liberation war led to an international settlement which included the holding of free and fair elections to a Constituent Assembly under UN supervision. The large victory of the liberation movement in these elections and the elaboration of a remarkably liberal Constitution which protected the economic rights of the previously ruling White minority guaranteed a broad consensus for the new democratic dispensation and assured a rapid consolidation of the new democratic institutions. Namibia has not experienced any change of power neither at the national nor at the local level (at least with regard to the strategically important municipalities). The regime has thus been marked by a high degree of stability.
with the ‘founding father’ Sam Nujoma as the country’s President between Independence and 2005.

i. Generally, the Namibian government has exercised its executive powers lawfully. The Namibian courts are independent, and judges and officials act in accordance with the constitution and legal norms. Until the mid-1990s there was certainly no erosion of judicial control and supervision. Most of the judges and court officials received their training and appointment during the colonial period and were able to maintain their employment after independence. The new government was apparently little tempted to politicise appointment of new judges, and the white judges’ behaviour and decisions were generally guided by the Constitution and the rule of law (Weiland 1992).

Legal protection of citizens has been strong in theory since independence and civil liberties enjoy special protection under the constitution, although the institutions responsible for protection, i.e. the courts and the police have not always been effective in fighting growing insecurity or in handling the enormous backlog of judicial cases (due to shortage of judges). These problems stem, however, rather from an overall lack of capacity (especially at the local level), and not from an unequal enforcement of rules with regard to specific groups in the population (with the notable exception of the brutal interrogations in connection with the so-called secession attempt in the Caprivi strip in 1999).

ii. Universal suffrage was the rallying cry in the racially dominated system of South African Apartheid rule in Namibia. The government has assured the conditions for an effective suffrage of the Namibian population and the turn-out in elections has generally been high (1989: 97.3%; 1994: 76.0%; 1999: 62.8%; 2004: 84.8%). Intra-party democracy is weak within all parties, including SWAPO, where Sam Nujoma hand-picked the party leadership and the top 30 posts on the party-lists for parliamentary elections. It is only very recently, i.e. following his departure from the presidency (2004) and the later departure from party leadership that more open debate is allowed within SWAPO. There is little political participation of citizens: national parliamentarians are elected from national party-lists, and even for municipal elections, list-systems are applied. Decisions about candidature for local offices, such as mayor, are largely taken in the party headquarters in Windhoek. There is little formal political consultation and participation at the local level, with traditional authorities having some influence in the municipalities in Northern Namibia (own interviews, 2003/2004).

Although the SWAPO government was in control of the state media (and President Nujoma had also taken over the responsibility for the ministry of information at times), freedom of speech was not restricted. It was only in the final phase of Nujoma’s presidency (i.e. after 1999) that the main private newspaper ‘The Namibian’ came under heavy attack by the government and was actually
deprived of state-financed advertisement. The lively debate in the press has, however, been confined to their readership in the large urban centres. Civil Society has become a stronger part of Namibian democracy, but only due to international support since the 1990s. In the early years of independence there was still a lot of conflict between SWAPO-aligned organisations and those representing constituencies from the pre-independence period (for example, in the trade unions, student bodies and women associations). There is a diverse landscape of non-governmental organisations, but they do not represent a distinct public realm (Bauer 1999).

iii. Elections have been free and fair since independence. The Constituent Assembly Elections in 1989 were supervised by UNTAG, but Regional and Local Elections were held in 1992 and Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in 1994. These elections were organised by the Directorate of Elections, a body attached to the Office of Prime Minister. The lack of an independent or autonomous electoral commission did not spark major debate, and for these early post-independence elections there were actually few complaints regarding electoral malpractices. Political parties were free to operate; only in the SWAPO strongholds in the North, opposition parties complained about the lack of impartiality of police and public administration, especially in the run-up to the 1999 elections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>1989</th>
<th>1994</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registered voters</td>
<td>701,438</td>
<td>654,189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Votes cast</td>
<td>682,787</td>
<td>497,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invalid votes</td>
<td>11,957</td>
<td>7,863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid votes</td>
<td>670,830</td>
<td>489,645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South West Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO)</strong></td>
<td>384,567</td>
<td>361,809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Democratic Turnhallen Alliance (DTA)</strong></td>
<td>191,532</td>
<td>101,748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>United Democratic Front of Namibia (UDF)</strong></td>
<td>37,874</td>
<td>13,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caprivi African National Union (CANU)</td>
<td>23,728</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Patriotic Front of Namibia (NPF)</td>
<td>10,693</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Convention of Namibia (FCN)</td>
<td>10,452</td>
<td>1,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia National Front (NNF)</td>
<td>5,344</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWAPO-Democrats</td>
<td>3,161</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Democratic Action (CDA)</td>
<td>2,495</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Following independence there was a clear concentration within the party-system, with the number of parties standing for election and gaining seats in parliament decreasing from 1989 to 1994 and again to 1999. In the wake of the initial overwhelming victory of SWAPO and their structural dominance in the political competition, opposition parties had a difficult life in mobilising their membership and attracting funds. In the light of this structural dominance SWAPO had simply not to resort to intimidation of political opponents or a restriction of political competition (Emminghaus 2003).

iv. Mechanisms of accountability are weak, as in most other emerging democracies. The government has not only a large majority in parliament and has been re-elected by two-thirds majorities in 1994, 1999, and 2004; it has also ‘delivered’, although one should add that social development has not been evenly distributed among the various African population groups in the country. It is important not to forget that SWAPO has a history of armed liberation movement, and the party leadership is still controlled by people who led the struggle from exile. While they don’t question either the principle of elected leadership or the idea of a democratic legitimacy, many of them still feel primarily legitimated through their role in the liberation of Namibia, and they feel that voters are trusting them because of their membership in the movement and not because of any specific policy output (Melber 2003). Since the times of South African administration there are self-governed municipalities with mayors elected by council. In some of these towns and cities (all of them small by international standards) there is a stronger public accountability of political leaders compared to the national level (Hartmann 2008).

v. The Namibian Constitution attaches great weight to the division of powers and competencies between the different branches of government. The dominance of SWAPO in the political process (further accentuated after the mid-1990s) and particularly in both chambers of parliament severely constricts the relevance of parliamentary oversight of governmental action, although parlia-
ment is a place of open debate and criticism including from SWAPO backbenchers (van Cranenburgh 2005). Accusations of abuse of authority or corruption emerged in the second half of the 1990s and have been investigated, but not resulted in serious consequences for the perpetrators. It is only in recent years, i.e. since the early 2000s that the question of political corruption and the prosecution of office abuse have gained in importance and President Pohamba established an Anti-Corruption Commission.

vi. According to the criteria discussed, Namibia has to be considered a liberal democracy. The core dimensions of democracy, i.e. full participation and meaningful competition, are guaranteed, but there are some shortcomings with regard to accountability, both at the national and the sub-national level. It is very clear that the by and large uncontested dominance of the former liberation movement SWAPO in the political process has been highly advantageous for the consolidation of democratic institutions because there was only limited competition for the important public offices. It has to be admitted, however, that this ‘natural’ domination did not lead to authoritarian excesses, and that the political leadership has (sometimes grudgingly) kept to the spirit of the Constitution. The political system has also survived the departure of ‘founding father’ Nujoma, but the real consolidation test will only come when the electoral dominance of SWAPO is at risk, a scenario, which in neighbouring Zimbabwe, triggered the political crisis and authoritarian regression.

Namibia has been rated ‘free’ by Freedom House for the entire period since 1990 and obtained a positive record of +6 from Polity IV. Domestic observers have, particularly since the late 1990s, become more sceptical with regard to remaining deficits in the democratic process, especially the lack of a vibrant political opposition and of a democratic political culture (both within parts of SWAPO leadership and the population at large). The decision of Nujoma in 2004 not to run again (for a fourth time) for Presidency has certainly bolstered Namibia’s democratic institutions and marks a slow departure from a rather centralist and sometimes authoritarian style of policy-making.

vii./viii. According to the parameters and sequence-models used by the transition literature starting from Rustow’s classical text (1970), the case of Namibia is difficult to classify. Bauer (1999) argues that the belated introduction of some elected institutions under South African administration in the 1980s coincides with the phase of political liberalisation as this was done primarily in response to domestic political mobilisation. According to this logic the UNTAG election should be considered as founding election and as democratic transition with the period since independence as period of democratic consolidation. Such an interpretation is, however, problematic, as this was first not the overthrow of an authoritarian government by a democratic opposition, but the victory of a do-
mestic and external rebel movement fighting for decolonisation, and second the main dynamic came from the international actors who forced two rather authoritarian actors to find a compromise along democratic lines.

While it makes sense to see the period since independence as a phase of consolidation of the new democratic institutions, this should be rather seen as a case of ‘negative consolidation’ (Schedler 1999), i.e. the successful attempt to maintain a liberal democratic order against erosion or downright regression. ‘Positive consolidation’ according to a model such as Merkel’s (1999) remains over-ambitious in the Namibian context. Democracy has become ‘the only game in town’ and there are no opponents to democracy in the country. Nearly all relevant elite actors support the democratisation process (and the lack of alternation in office is thus not a major deficit, notwithstanding Przeworski’s insistence on this point¹). Merkel’s two other dimensions of positive consolidation, i.e. democratic structures of interest aggregation and a democratic political culture, pose a number of problems, as highlighted. Namibia remains a ‘democracy without democrats’ with a substantial number of Namibians supportive of possible non-democratic alternatives and a low level of popular demand for democratic participation and accountability (Keulder/Wiese 2005). This scepticism is not rooted in cultural obstacles, but in the centralist and socialist legacy of the liberation movement which has ostracized and marginalised opposition.

ix. Post-conflict Namibia became a new state and had little resemblance with the South African administered entity pre-1989 although there was no change in the territorial outline.² It had a new constitution, and new regions and municipalities (Namibia under South African administration had been divided into the so-called commercial areas at the exclusive benefit of White people, and the so-called communal areas mainly in the Northern part of the country with ‘traditional leaders’ and ‘native administrations’). Namibia also got a new government and a new ruling elite. Having said this, at the middle and lower echelons of ministries, the judicial system, and the administration of parastatals and municipalities many officials kept their posts. With regard to the technical expertise

¹ Przeworski et al (2000) included the ‘Botswana rule’ in their coding of political regimes in order to explain why according to them effective alternation is an additional but necessary element of a democracy. The scenario they give for Botswana is similar to the context of Namibia: “No constraints on the opposition, little visible repression, no apparent fraud.” (Przeworski et al 23). “If all these conditions are satisfied and if the incumbents subsequently held but never lost elections, we consider such regimes authoritarian.”

² Namibia’s main harbour of Walvis Bay which had since 1977 been a territorial enclave and part of South Africa’s Cape Province was initially not returned to Namibia. Only after the formal end of Apartheid rule in South Africa in 1994 Walvis Bay eventually became part of the Republic of Namibia.
required there was often simply no other option, and the political loyalty of these groups was rarely an issue.

1.2 The Security Situation

With the cease-fire on 1 April 1989 the armed conflict came to an end. Fighting erupted the 1st of April between the South African military and police forces and SWAPO fighters who moved towards the demobilisation camps across the Angolan border (see below 2.4.XV). After mid-April there were no further clashes. As is pointed out in Section 2 the Namibian War was actually a ‘conventional’ war between the military forces of South Africa and a single armed liberation movement that had maintained coherence and unity throughout more than twenty years in exile. After the signing of the New York Agreement in December 1988 both parties were perfectly able to discipline their troops and to avoid the break-away of armed splinter groups (radical whites or dissatisfied Africans).\(^3\) The presence of UNTAG observers also assured the safety of returning refugees and the demobilised liberation fighters. Within a couple of months Namibia became a country with little violence (except for two politically motivated assassinations of SWAPO supporters in summer 1989) and has remained so since then. Many (white) Namibians perceive a growing wave of crime, but at least by African standards Namibia remains a very safe place and the government has guaranteed the physical security of its inhabitants.

The national army became involved in fighting only when President Nujoma decided to send them to DR Congo in the late 1990s to defend President Laurent-Desiré Kabila’s regime against the Ugandan-Rwandan backed rebellion. Within the national territory the Namibian state has an unrestricted monopoly on the use of force. The massive intervention against a secessionist group in the Northeastern Caprivi Strip (a strip of land that follows the Okavango River and carves out Namibian territory deep into Zimbabwe and Botswana) in 1999 made the headlines because there was no precedent and the use of force was considered disproportionate given the threat to the territorial integrity. This rebellion was led by Mishake Muyongo, an opposition politician of the DTA (but actually vice-chairman of SWAPO at some point during the 1960s) and according to many observers it was rather the personal conflict between Muyongo and President Nujoma that triggered the violent reaction than any real attempt at secession. The populations of the Caprivi Strip have indeed a history of margin-

\(^3\) SWAPO was not a direct part to the negotiations in Brazzaville and New York between Angola, Cuba and South Africa, but both SWAPO and South Africa subsequently made clear that they would recognize the agreement and accept a cease-fire according to the terms agreed in the negotiations.
alisation and feel the domination of Ovambo groups in the politics and admini-
stration of the new Namibia as a continuation of this marginalisation. The
heavy-handed reaction (following an attack on a police station and the state-run
radio station in the Caprivi provincial capital Katima Mulilo) of the army led to an
abrupt de facto dissolution of the secessionist group, their members ended in
prison (98 were initially held; 10 out of 12 accused were convicted of high trea-
son in 2007).

1.3 The Namibian State

i. The Namibian state has rapidly developed a quite considerable degree of
stateness, both in the sense of the ‘scope’ of the state and its ‘capacity’ to exe-
cute its appointed tasks (I refer here to the distinction made by Bratton and
Chang 2006). As mentioned above the Namibian state ‘inherited’ a well func-
tioning bureaucracy in charge of governing the ‘commercial’ areas and ‘White’
municipalities. There remain enormous differences in the bureaucratic capaci-
ties of the national government and the decentralised authorities (regional and
local government), and the capacities of the municipalities in the former ‘com-
munal’ areas are still weak both in terms of quantity and quality. The central
government state apparatus has certainly a considerable autonomy vis-à-vis so-
cietal actors, i.e. is not simply a tool in the hand of a ruling elite or class.
While it is difficult to analyse the steering and management capacity of the Na-
mibian state back in the first half of the 1990s (for a relatively sober assessment
du Pisani 1991), the current administration certainly has a long-term planning
project (‘Vision 2030’); while in many specific policy areas such as land reform
or WTO accession decisions are still taken largely according to short-term po-
itical gains.

ii./iii. The Namibian state is well equipped to make a difference in the life of its
populations. Although the country still has one of the highest GINI coefficients in
the world the government started directly after independence to make efforts to
influence and change the social disparities through legal regulation, proactive
efforts to attract investment and developmental incentives and measures. The
government has also strongly supported economic empowerment for the coun-
try’s black population not only in the public but also in the private sector. The
government has generally, and against all expectations, followed a policy of
macroeconomic stability since independence and more recently in 2003 also
established a Competition Commission to safeguard and promote competition
in the Namibian market. The growing income from diamond exports and the
uranium boom have strengthened regime capacities.
Problems have also existed with regard to foreign companies (from South Af-
rica, Malaysia) which did not respect labour and environmental standards. Na-
Namibia developed a welfare regime that goes much beyond the ‘African’ standard. Each citizen over the age of 60 receives a basic pension of 360 Namibian dollars per month (approx. 30 € in 2008). The state has also developed, although primarily since the second half of the 1990s, a well functioning health system (with the second highest expenditure in Africa with 4.7% of GDP).

iv. Informal structures are of little relevance for the provision of services and public goods. Traditional authorities had an ambiguous role in the Apartheid administration, but have been rehabilitated and ‘domesticated’ by the SWAPO regime (see Keulder 1998, Duesing 2003). Traditional authorities remain important stakeholders in the local arena where they sometimes clash with elected office-holders (especially about land allocation in urban areas). The management of the diamond and uranium sector does not lead to any establishment of shadow states or the outright ‘privatisation’ of the state (Bayart et al 1999, Reno 1999).

v. Afrobarometer started systematically assessing the views of the Namibian population in 1999. There are no data for the period before. The results from the three surveys done throughout the last decade confirm the positive evaluation of state capacity by citizens. 86% of respondents felt in 2002 and 2003 that the government would be likely to be able to enforce the law if someone had committed a serious crime. Still 70% felt that government would be able to enforce the law if water and electricity were obtained illegally (since Apartheid times there is a culture of non-payment of these services). (Keulder/Wiese 2005: 12). In the same set of surveys around 80% of respondents rated positively the performance of the state in the fields of reducing crime (62%), improving basic health services (83%), in addressing educational needs (83%), in combating HIV/Aids (62%) and in managing the economy (73%). The most negative assessment concerned ensuring food security (41%) and job creation (46%) (all data from Keulder/Wiese 2005).

vi. While the demand for democracy is generally low, Namibians hold the state in much higher esteem than the democratic regime, not because democracy is not fulfilling, but because the demand for democracy is generally weak (Keulder/Wiese 2005). Apparently Namibians do not expect the state to be responsive or to voice their preferences and participate actively in decision-making beyond what the current regime is offering. The relatively high legitimacy of the regime is thus based on a comparison with both the input legitimacy (none) and the output legitimacy of the colonial regime, and this comparison turns out to be very favourable for the post-1989 Namibian state and regime.

vii. After a long history as colony, as League-of-Nations and UN administered territory and South African colony again, Namibia finally got to independence on
21 March 1990. Since that date, the country is de jure fully independent from outside interference. ODA assistance has played a considerable role in the first decade, but as will be pointed out in Section IV, there were no particular strings attached to this aid. ODA dependence has also been reduced over the years and it stands now at around 3-4% of GNI (which is an average value for Sub-Saharan African countries).

1.4 Conclusion

There was no trade-off between state-building and democracy in the case of Namibia. The violent conflict (as will become more clear in the next section) was not a result of state decay, but about independence (and thus to an extent about the denial of democratic sovereignty). When it came to an end, the state had not to be re-constructed; the main challenge consisted in state transformation and the peaceful transfer of power. That this would happen according to democratic rules, had been decided back in 1982, and it was very much the condition of international negotiators and the South African side (as bizarre as this might sound in the light of the denial of political rights within South Africa at that time) before agreeing on the implementation of Resolution 435 and the organisation of elections.

2. The Violent Conflict in Namibia (1966-1989)

2.1 The Structural Context

i./ii. Most parts of the territory of today’s Republic of Namibia became a Protectorate of Imperial Germany in 1884. At that time the foundations were laid for a settler-dominated society and racial segregation. Following the German defeat in World War I the colony South West Africa was declared a C-Mandate of the League of Nations (with far reaching authorities transferred to the mandatory power). The trusteeship was eventually executed by South Africa on behalf of the British Crown. South African de facto administration of Namibia started thus back in 1919/20. The replacement of the League of Nations by the United Nations in 1945/46 and the concurrent radicalisation of White rule in South Africa (victory of the National Party in the 1948 elections) led to increasing disputes between the UN and South Africa with regard to the status of the territory and South Africa’s legal and administrative role.

South Africa had attempted to incorporate South West Africa into the South African Union by holding a referendum in late 1945, a step rejected by the UN General Assembly. South Africa subsequently refused to sign a formal trusteeship agreement with the United Nations and maintained that the mandate had lapsed with the dissolution of the League of Nations. In 1950 the International
Court of Justice held an advisory opinion that the mandate for South West Africa remained in force; the UN General Assembly decided thus in 1953 to supervise the administration of the territory even without the cooperation of South Africa. When most African states became independent in the first half of the 1960s and the Non-Aligned Movement took control of the General Assembly of the United Nations the unresolved question of the decolonisation of South West Africa moved to the agenda of regional and international politics. On 27 October 1966 the UN General Assembly formally revoked South Africa’s mandate with Resolution 2145 (XXI) and subsequently qualified its continued presence there as illegal occupation. With Res. 2372 (XXII) South West Africa was renamed ‘Namibia’ in 1968 by the UN General Assembly.

Within Namibia the liberation movement South West African Peoples’ Organisation (SWAPO) had formed in April 1960 which soon achieved recognition by the international community and the United Nations as the sole legitimate representative of the Namibian people (1973). Against the will of many Western states SWAPO also obtained formal observer status to the United Nations bodies. SWAPO launched its armed struggle within Namibia on the beginning of 1966 and the first clashes with South African military forces occurred on 26 August 1966. It is important to underline that SWAPO leadership rarely perceived liberation by violent means as a realistic prospective, but that this commitment was the necessary prize to pay for international recognition and for diplomatic and material support by the Soviet Union and PR China (Brown 1995: 20).

South Africa unsurprisingly denied the UN General Assembly’s competence to deal with the issue of South West Africa. South Africa had indeed already started to institutionalise a system of racial segregation in Namibia and considered it a fifth province which was governed by a South African ‘Administrator General’. In an attempt to create some legitimacy for its continued rule in Namibia, South Africa started to build up an internal government with indigenous administrative structures and a security apparatus in Namibia since the mid-1970s. On the basis of a first conference in the ‘Turnhalle’ in Windhoek an umbrella organization of ‘ethnic’ parties was formed (Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, DTA) and elections were held to ethnically based ‘Representative Authorities’ similar to the South African ‘Bantustans’ in December 1978. The DTA won 41 out of 50 seats and formed a Council of Ministers since 1979 (with continued veto-powers for the South African administrator general). Since 1980 a South West African Territorial Force (SWATF) was created to fight alongside the South African Defence Forces against SWAPO. Following the resignation of the DTA Council in 1983, the Administrator General took over direct control again.

The extent to which South Africa indeed liberalised its colonial rule over Namibia since 1975 is a matter of debate. Gretchen Bauer argues that especially
during the so called Government of National Unity, the second of the two South African sponsored ‘interim’ governments (1985-1989) “political space opened up, allowing a new level of organized activity” (Bauer 1999: 430). While these bodies were denied any international recognition they certainly created an embryonic party system, and at independence these party leaders could count on a considerable government and administrative experience. The liberalization attempt left an ambiguous legacy. To an extent, it increased the political polarisation between the liberation movement and the ‘collaborators’, but it also disillusioned the DTA leaders with regard to the role of South Africa and thus induced the moderate parties to consider full independence (Harneit-Sievers 1990: 4).

iii./iv. Namibia is a thinly populated country with an agrarian settler economy and extraction of diamonds, uranium, and zinc, traditionally in the hands of South African and Western corporations. South African direct investment strongly increased after World War II, particularly in the mining and fishing sector. Trade and economy are largely dependent from South Africa from where approximately 85% of capital goods had to be imported. While the Namibian economy had a very unbalanced structure and a highly unequal distribution of income, these economic structures were, however, hardly responsible for the outbreak of hostilities in the mid-1960s or for the intensification of war in the 1970s. When Namibia became independent it became the country worldwide with the highest difference between GDP/Capita and HDI rating. Export earnings from mineral resources boosted the economy, but the legacy of Apartheid rule and social and economic marginalisation produced a very low development level for most social indicators.

v./vi. Namibia has a heterogeneous ethnic structure which is heavily marked by colonialism and South African racial segregation. Ethnic divisions have played a role in violent conflict, because Ovambo make up the largest ethnic group in the population (around 50%) and were the founders of SWAPO. The marginalisation perceived by Ovambo nationalism convinced the leaders of several smaller ethnic groups to consider involvement with the South African sponsored attempts of semi-autonomous government. Differences in the political loyalties of the various ethnic groups are also linked to their different role in the colonial economy with the Northern Ovambo groups (across the Red Line) much less ‘exploited’ and modernised than their southern counterparts (cf. Leys/ Saul 1995). To argue that ‘during the 1980s, the war of liberation from South Africa took on more of the quality of a civil war, with Namibian political groups and military forces fighting each other for control of the state’ (Howard 2002: 101) is largely missing the point. It is true that by the mid-1980s half of those fighting within SWAPOL and SWATF were indigenous Namibians (and few of them
Ovambo), but these forces never controlled strategy but always remained subordinated to the estimated 80,000 regular South African troops stationed in Namibia.

**vii./viii./ix.** The South African administered Namibian state was in principle an effective apparatus with a high state capacity. According to the logic of racial segregation, this high capacity was used exclusively for the benefit of the minority population. With the creation of 10 communal areas, the provision of law and order, infrastructure and welfare was left to ‘indigenous’ administrations without competencies or the necessary resources. These ‘autonomous areas’ were thus deprived of the conditions for effective governance.

### 2.2 Conflict issues and actors

**i./ii.** The Namibian war was never a domestic conflict between a central government force and rebels. SWAPO sought ever since its formation in 1960 liberation from outside the country, and the headquarters of SWAPO was based in Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania), from where it moved to Lusaka (Zambia) and eventually to Angola. Throughout the 23 years of war, SWAPO never held bases within the Namibian territory, although its fighters regularly crossed into the Namibian territory and often stayed there for several days.

The violent conflict was between 1966 and 1975 a ‘hit and run’ guerrilla war fought by PLAN fighters (the People’s Liberation Army of Namibia was the military wing of SWAPO) against South African infrastructure and personnel within Namibia as well as against traditional leaders who collaborated with South Africa especially in the Ovambo region. The independence of Angola completely changed the nature of the conflict and political and military strategies. With the help of a friendly regime in Luanda, SWAPO could build up its bases along the Northern border to Namibia and intensify political propaganda and military incursions into its heartland in the Kavango and Ovambo regions. The victory of armed liberation movements in Angola and Mozambique (as well as Zimbabwe 1979) also strongly boosted the morale of fighters and led to a mass recruitment of several thousand young Namibians who joined the struggle in exile.

Since the late 1970s, the armed liberation war became increasingly intertwined with the civil war in Angola where SWAPO had moved its bases. As a reaction to the increased military presence of PLAN South Africa diversified its military presence in Namibia by firstly creating a Namibian military force, the South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF), mostly made up of ethnically recruited

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4 There is a relative broad consensus around the history and the dynamics of the War in Namibia. Section 2.2 and 2.3 are based primarily on the chapters in Weiland/ Braham (1994) and Leys/ Saul (1995).
battalions. Alongside this ‘Namibianization’ of the military forces opposing SWAPO South Africa also created a police counter-insurgency unit (Koevoet) also partly composed of bodyguard units of traditional leaders from Northern Namibia but officered by whites. At the purely Namibian conflict theatre this constellation (SWAPO/PLAN against SADF-SWATF-Koevoet) remained stable until the cease-fire in 1989.

With the ‘linkage’ introduced by the US following the arrival of the Reagan administration in 1981 more actors entered the scene. The US effectively allowed the South Africans to link the implementation of Res 435 (and thus the holding of UN supervised elections in Namibia) to the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. During the 1980s, and particularly so between 1985 and 1988 military conflict in Southern Angola turned into a conventional war with sophisticated military equipment on both sides, including tanks and Mirage bombers. In this war Cuban and regular Angolan troops fought (with Soviet military equipment and with some help of SWAPO fighters) against the South African army and the Angolan rebel movement UNITA (assisted by US military equipment and intelligence). This was clearly no longer a war over the future of Namibia, but a broader military conflict between the super-powers and their local allies which had to end in a military stalemate.

iii. The various violent conflicts in Southern Africa were thus closely intertwined, and this was evidently part of the South African ‘total onslaught’ strategy. It has been argued that the ‘linkage’ politics blocked an earlier resolution of the Namibian conflict and the implementation of Resolution 435. Details regarding the implementation of Res 435 (Constitutional principles, ‘Impartiality Package’, see below) had indeed been fixed in 1982, and it was the broader Angolan and East-West conflict that continued to ‘fuel the war’ to an extent (Gurirab 1994). Even without US linkage it is however hard to believe that South Africa would have allowed an implementation of Res 435 in the first half of the 1980s.

iv. The conflict was a traditional independence war, i.e. the core source of conflict was territorial/government. South Africa was so eager to keep influence over Namibia for a mix of geo-strategic considerations, economic interests in the Namibian resources, but mostly for the domestic consequences of full political rights in Namibia on the political conflict within South Africa proper. Politicised ethnicity may have played a role in explaining the participation of Namibians in the ‘homeland’ policy and the build-up of indigenous anti-SWAPO military forces. The core conflict remained however, throughout the 23 years, a conflict over full territorial control and sovereignty. Although SWAPO was created as an ethnic movement from Ovamboland in the 1950s (and continues to be dominated by Ovambo until now) it soon became a multi-ethnic organisation.
v. War in and over Namibia was first a conventional guerrilla war between South Africa and a very disciplined rebel movement, and later a violent conflict involving more, but still well-structured and professional military actors on both sides. Private economic interests were of no relevance, especially as the violence never reached the economically interesting regions of Namibia (except for attacks on the white farming area in the ‘death triangle’ (Otavi-Tsumeb-Grootfontein) between 1979 and the mid-1980s. Even the brutal activities of the counter-insurgency police Kovoet seem to have been under relatively strict control by the South African military hierarchy (and stopped when the Administrator was ordered to do so by UNTAG).

vi. As mentioned above, the intensification of the conflict since the mid-1970s led to an increasing recruitment on both sides. Although this led to the involvement of many relatively young fighters (on the SWAPO side) and of armed bodyguard units from traditional authorities (on the South African side), military forces were still trained according to professional standards. Ideology (and the experience of South African repression especially in Northern Namibia) clearly had a major role in attracting people to join the liberation movement.

2.3 War dynamics

i. The War ‘officially’ started on 26 August 1966 with an attack of the South African police on a provisional first base established in Namibia by PLAN fighters near Omgulumbashe in the Ovambo region. Two fighters were killed in the helicopter attack, nine were captured, together with 45 of their recruits from the surrounding area (Brown 1995: 18).

ii. Official South African figures set the combat-related deaths for the whole period between 1966 and 1999 at 715 security force members (including the SADF, the SWATF and the police forces) as against 11 291 PLAN fighters and Angolan soldiers (Steenkamp, as quoted in Brown 1995: 37). SWAPO has never published any own figures or estimates.

iii. South African sources estimate that civilians killed in the course of the Namibian war number 2 000. There is an additional number of people caused to disappear by both sides. The civilian population in the northern part of Namibia was generally little affected by the fighting, but strongly felt the repression of the police and counter-insurgency forces whenever there was an indication of support for SWAPO. Brown rightly states that ‘nonetheless, for a war lasting 23 years, which culminated in pitched conventional battles, casually (…) figures on this scale indicate that it was for long periods a low-intensity war’ (1995:37). SWAPO maintained some few refugee camps in Southern Angola, but there were never any refugee camps inside the Namibian territory. The Angolan war
caused enormous material damage, and in the early 1990s Angola set the number of war-displaced people at 900,000, but this is not directly related to the conflict over Namibia.

iv. The highest number of casualties occurred when South Africa started the ‘external operations’ between 1978 and 1983, i.e. the clearing of guerrilla bases inside Angola, using heavy weapons and air strikes. Each year one of these large-scale operations took place, with an annual casualty rate of around 1,500 PLAN fighters and up to 100 security forces. In the 11 years until 1977 the official casualties had been 363 insurgents and 88 security force members.

v. The violent conflict actually went through four distinct phases. During the guerrilla war from Zambia between 1966 and 1974 there were phases of minimal or no action (1969-1970), as SWAPO had first to build up its military organisation, and the only way to infiltrate the country was through the Caprivi strip. Since 1971 SWAPO also used land-mines. Military activities remained, however, localised and sporadic. The second phase (1974-1978) was marked by the offensive of SWAPO from Angola (from 1975 on) and the first successful attacks beyond the so-called ‘red line’, the veterinary protection fence dividing the Ovambo, Kavango and Caprivi regions along the northern border from the white farming areas (see map). PLAN army headquarters were moved from Zambia to Angola in 1976. SWAPO thus brought the war for the first time to the
white farming areas, and was able to assassinate the Chief Minister of Ovambo, Chief Philemon Elifas, in August 1975, and to shoot or abduct foreign construction workers.

The third phase (1978-1984) started with the massive South African ‘external operations’ and major air and bombing attacks in 1978 following an intensification of PLAN activities early that year (large-scale clashes, sabotage, assassination and land-mine explosions). In the late 1970s PLAN lost the strategic initiative when South Africa began to strike at will in Angola. In 1981 key areas of the South-West of Angola were effectively occupied forcing SWAPO to move permanently its headquarters. The conflict was escalated towards a conventional war and SWAPO’s ability to infiltrate into the Ovambo area of Namibia now began to diminish rapidly and was effectively limited to the rainy season (January to March). The final phase (1985-1988) was marked by a conventional war with a focus in Southern Angola leading to the stalemate of Cuito Cuanavele (a town in South East Angola that Cuban and Angolan troops managed to defend against the SADF and UNITA over months) and eventually the settlement of the conflict. When South Africa was persuaded it could not gain a military victory and it also became clear that Fidel Castro wanted to bring home the approx. 50 000 Cuban soldiers from Angola, the doors were open for a negotiated solution.

vi. The armed conflict was restricted to Angola and Northern Namibia (Kavango, Ovambo and Caprivi), with isolated attacks and killings across the ‘Red Line’ in the farming areas of the so called ‘Death Triangle’ (in 1982 one PLAN unit was active in the Tsumeb area for 2 months) and some sabotage acts in the cities of Central and Southern Namibia.

2.4 The Peace Process

i./ii./iii. In the context of the military stalemate reached in Cuito Cuanavele, and the massive Cuban and South African military presence in Angola (including direct clashes between their troops at Caleque on Angolan soil in June 1988), the US, Cuba, and also the Soviet Union urged the belligerents towards negotiations. The war fizzled out throughout 1988, with negotiations starting in July 1988. The Geneva Protocol of 5 August 1988 provided for a cease-fire in Angola starting from 10 August 1988. The tripartite Peace Agreement (Angola, Cuba and South Africa) was signed in New York in December 1988 but without direct involvement of UN agencies. It was supposed to have a binding character for SWAPO as it included the implementation of Resolution 435 and SADF withdrawal from Namibia. While a bilateral agreement between Cuba and Angola provided for a staggered withdrawal of Cuban troops northwards, South Africa fulfilled its obligation of withdrawing its SADF troops to the barracks; the still 22
000 SWATF troops were demobilised. With the exception of April 1989 (see below) there was no further fighting, nor breakdown of order following the signing of the peace agreement. According to the Geneva Protocol the remaining PLAN troops should be deployed north of the 16th parallel (that is inside Angola) and await demobilisation through UN there.

iv./v./vi. The peace negotiations were mostly an international achievement with US undersecretary Chester Crocker as main negotiator, strongly assisted by Cuba, (and later also the Soviet Union and the Contact Group). Negotiations took place first in Cairo (June), in New York (13 July, New York Principles), in Geneva (August, protocol concerning the timing of disengagement of military forces and security measures affecting SWAPO deployments), in Brazzaville and New York (four rounds between September and December, focusing mainly on a precise timetable) leading to the Brazzaville Protocol of 13 December 1988 and the Signing of the Agreement in New York on 22 December 1988. According to the participants in the process (Crocker 1994, Weiland/Braham 1994), neither the US nor the Soviet Union was applying pressure to coerce anyone of the three parties.

No cease-fire was signed between South Africa and SWAPO because South Africa simply refused to sign a document with SWAPO. The UN Secretary General thus sent identical letters to South Africa and SWAPO proposing a specific date and hour for the formal ceasefire. These letters were sent on 14 March, proposing that the ceasefire should begin at 0400 hours GMT on 1 April. The Secretary-General requested each of the parties to assure him in writing, no later than 22 March 1989, that it had accepted the terms of the ceasefire and had taken all necessary measures to cease all warlike acts and operations. These included tactical movements, cross-border movements and all acts of violence and intimidation in, or having effect in, Namibia. SWAPO and South Africa formally accepted the proposal on 18 and 21 March 1989 respectively (Ansprenger 1991, Weiland/ Braham 1994).

In retrospect, it is quite astonishing to see no direct involvement of SWAPO in the peace negotiations, but South Africa insisted on this point with the argument, UNITA had the same right to participate as SWAPO. In fact, since around 1979 Angola had played the leading role among the Frontline States in defending Namibia’s interest in the 435-diplomacy (Ansprenger 1991: 25). Nujoma wrote on 12 August 1988 to the UN Secretary-General that SWAPO would honour the cease-fire agreed in Geneva. The SWAPO Politbureau also made clear on 26 August 1988 that the cease-fire would also be valid inside Namibia with effect from 1 September 1988.

vii. The 1988 peace process was decisive for the South African willingness to end military occupation and allow Resolution 435 to be implemented. To that
extent it was of primary importance for security and democracy. Most of the implementation details of Resolution 435 had, however, already be negotiated at the beginning of the 1980s, and these ‘details’ were of no lesser importance than the military solution itself.

viii./ix./xi. As has already been pointed out, the peace negotiations were an international achievement, and rebel movements were marginalised in this process. While Sam Nujoma is certainly a charismatic leader, these skills had no actual role in the peace process and the opinions of the masses were not important for the peace dynamics. As the international actors and neighbouring states were part of the peace negotiations, they were strongly supportive of the process.

x./xiv. The concept of veto-players is difficult to apply in the Namibian context. Even the ‘collaborationist’ parties were quite optimistic concerning their chances in the UNTAG elections (especially given the South African financial support) and had no reason to block the implementation of Resolution 435. There were also no apparent losers in the peace-process, if we do not consider Apartheid South Africa as the main loser. South African companies maintained their economic assets in the new Namibian state. Power-sharing was indirectly guaranteed through the two-thirds majority requested for the approval of the Constitution in the Constituent assembly and the pure proportional electoral system which assured all minor parties a representation in the Constituent Assembly. This condition had been negotiated in 1982 by the Contact Group in order to get South Africa’s approval to an implementation of Resolution 435. It is important to understand that the peace agreement did not consist in a power-sharing between two (or more) domestic parties. The Namibian peace agreement was part of a broader package negotiated by international actors with sufficient leverage over Namibian actors to enforce it. South Africa accepted political supremacy by African political movements in a new Namibia, but international actors ‘ratified’ this solution only when SWAPO accepted the core constitutional principles of a liberal democracy and a market economy.

xii. The root causes of the conflict, i.e. the denial of independence, were successfully addressed in the peace agreement. Implementation of Resolution 435 provided for an orderly transition to independence.

xiii. The issues of demilitarization, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration were addressed in the negotiations about Resolution 435 taking place between 1978 and 1982 and then again in 1988. Res 435 and various reports by the UN Secretary General had detailed provisions including a timetable scheduling the actions required from the various parties. These issues were taken up again by the Tripartite Agreement and subsequent proposals made by the UN Secretary-General in his report from January 1989.
The day of the ceasefire, 1 April 1989, and during the following four weeks major clashes occurred throughout the northern part of Namibia. Up to 1600 PLAN forces apparently had not been deployed to camps in Angola (as provided for in the Geneva Protocol) but remained in (or re-infiltrated into) Namibia. SWAPO maintained that a document signed by then UN Secretary-General Waldheim in 1979 had allowed the movement to confine troops to bases within Namibia, but the document left the details to further consultations which never took place, as South Africa had vehemently protested and in subsequent negotiations SWAPO's entitlement to bases in Namibia had never been mentioned again. In fact, in the morning hours of 1st April there were no UNTAG troops in Northern Namibia which could have monitored the deployment of PLAN forces to camps. UNTAG chief Ahtisaari had apparently no other choice than remobilising SWATF and SADF troops which used the opportunity to kill many PLAN fighters. According to South African sources 316 PLAN forces died, there were also 37 victims on the South African side. There has been an enormous amount of speculation about the motives of both sides in this tragic final episode of the war. South Africa knew about the presence of PLAN fighters and let SWAPO walk straight into this trap. SWAPO leadership apparently saw a visible presence of liberation fighters on the territory as crucial advantage in the preparation of the elections (Weiland/Braham 1994, Melber 1990). It cannot be excluded that the (calculated) killing of the fighters was intended to create more solidarity with SWAPO (for this hypothesis Ansprenger 1991: 41).

The conflict itself, the war, and the peace process had little direct consequences on the economic structure of Namibia. To the surprise of many observers, President Nujoma and SWAPO left the basic structure of the economic system, and in particular the property rights, unchanged. The new Namibian state received a strong dose of ODA, but this did not lead to a dramatic level of aid dependency.

3. Military Intervention and Democracy Promotion

3.1 External Intervention

3.1.1. Parameters of the intervention

The UN Intervention called UNTAG (United Nations Transition Assistance Group) officially started on 1 April 1989. UNTAG had in principle be mandated by Resolution 435 (1978), but the implementation had been blocked by the South African administration. The mission had a Special Representative, Martti Ahtisaari from Finland, appointed in 1978, who used the 11-years delay to visit Namibia several times and to carefully choose a staff of collaborators.
ii. Resolution 435 had not specified the start date of the operation, but defined the pull-out date to be one year from the start date. UNTAG was a multidimensional operation based on Chapter VI of the UN Charter and thus implemented only upon consent of the warring parties and following the signing of the ceasefire in Geneva and by SWAPO and South Africa with regard to Namibia. Hostilities had stopped at that time in principle, although the events of the first week of April (see above 2.4.XV) nearly brought the whole UN mission to an abrupt end even before it had really started.

iii. The clear and limited political mandate of UNTAG is often considered as one of the main secrets behind the apparent success of this intervention (see Howard 2002, Dzinesa 2004, Chesterman 2004). The UN had set the parameters with Resolution 435 (1978); the central feature of UNTAG’s mandate, as reiterated in Resolution 632 (1989), was the supervision of free and fair elections for a Constituent Assembly in a transition to independence acceptable to the whole international community. The mandate clearly did not provide for a full UNTAG organisation of elections, but left this role to the South African administration, in this case, the Administrator-General. UNTAG also had a major role in creating the conditions for such free and fair elections, mainly through monitoring the demobilisation and, in the case of the South Africans, the withdrawal of troops, by assuring the return of Namibian refugees, and finally through the prevention of police intimidation.

iv./v. UNTAG was a genuine UN operation under Chapter VI of the UN Charter. In its final form it was the brain-child of the so-called Contact Group of five Western powers who had pushed for this compromise solution between 1976 and 1978. At that time the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia had abstained in the voting with the PR China not participating in the council meeting. The decision to implement Resolution 435 and thus to start UNTAG was taken in the international negotiations in the second half of 1988. There was no particular lead nation in UNTAG, nor any resistance against the intervention. Some debate came up with regard to the administrative modalities, in particular the budget cuts decided at the beginning of 1989 (from $ 700 Mio. to $ 416 Mio.) without removing any of the implementation tasks. Many African states and SWAPO itself feared that a limited deployment of military observers would allow South Africa to manipulate the whole process. The General Assembly voted the budget only on 1 March 1989 thus delaying the effective deployment of the huge majority of UN forces until the end of May.

vi. Although heavily criticised at the beginning by the Namibian actors on the ground (by SWAPO for not protecting its fighters in the April incidents), in retrospect UNTAG seems to have been sufficiently equipped to fulfil the mandate. Following some difficult months, it was, however, helped by cooperative actors
vii. Coordination between contributing countries was not a major issue in the UN operation. The main problem was co-ordination with the South African side (but this will be discussed below (3.1.4.)

viii. As pointed out above the intervention had a quite limited and non-military objective: to supervise free and fair elections to a Constituent assembly and thus to pave the way for an independent Namibia. Supervision of elections included the whole process from the elaboration of legal regulations and registration to the voting act. Other civilian tasks were to help the South West African Police (SWAPOL) enforce the law impartially thereby ensuring that citizens could express their views without fear of intimidation. This task was implemented through the deployment of civilian police units which were accompanying the regular police units in their duty. Finally (and to an extent going beyond its original mandate) UNTAG actively raised public consciousness through media campaigns and civic education programs. Military tasks consisted in disarming of SADF and SWAPO troops, in monitoring the SADF withdrawal, and in demobilising the Namibian regular units who fought against SWAPO.

Installing a democratic regime in Namibia was not an explicit objective of the UN Resolutions. Over the years the direct negotiations between the parties and particularly the diplomatic work of the Contact Group had led to a number of informal understandings on the Constitutional Principles (1982) and on a system of proportional representation for the elections envisaged in Resolution 435 (1985). These agreements were meant to help South Africa accept the implementation of Res 435, and were 'legalised' in various reports of the Secretary-General, but never enshrined in Security Council Resolutions. When the Constituent Assembly was convened their first decision was to solemnly accept the 1982 constitutional principles as a base for all further negotiations. Paris (2005) has argued that the core decisions concerning the democratisation of the country had thus been taken by external actors. One should be careful in stressing this point too much: Namibian actors had a certain discretion to ignore these clauses if they had wanted to do so; external actors were certainly happy with the rapid 'ratification' of a internationally sponsored constitution through the Constituent assembly (all decision taken by consensus), but their core problem back in 1982 had been to avoid a socialist constitutional order, that would have allowed the new State to nationalise the assets of South African but also Western companies. The democratisation of Namibia was neither the main objective in 1982 nor a main preoccupation of external actors in 1989. The political out-
come of the CA elections (denying the SWAPO a two-thirds-majority and revealing the narrow base of the DTA) led all political actors towards compromise which might explain the outcome of constitutional negotiations as much as the pressure from external actors.

ix. Res 435 clearly fixed a time-span of one year for the fulfilment of the mandate. UNTAG managed to achieve this and withdraw even nine days before the expiration of the mandate. Several hundred of UNTAG personnel stayed in the country as consultants to Namibian ministries, particular as trainers for the newly created Namibian Police (NAMPOL), but the mission was regularly terminated in the wake of the accession of Namibia to Independence on 21 March 1990. UNTAG was helped in this success by the fact that the elections had produced a highly ‘productive’ result, i.e. a convincing majority for SWAPO but short of the 2/3 which would have allowed the movement to manage the Constitution-making process at will.

3.1.2 Election Monitoring

Election monitoring was the main objective of UNTAG. Within UNTAG the Electoral Division was responsible for advising the Special Representative on all specialist and technical aspects of the election and for the supervision of the registration and electoral processes. It was also responsible for assisting the Special Representative in his and his deputy’s negotiations with the South African Administrator-General concerning the electoral legislation and the manner in which the South African authorities would implement it.

UNTAG looked after the whole electoral process (for more details cf. Howard 2002): This concerned 1) the drafting of relevant legal documents, and 2) the terms of electoral registration (where South Africa initially tried to restrict suffrage to people over 21). For this purpose UNTAG and the South African administration set up 36 permanent registration centres. There was 3) the necessary regulation of political parties with appropriate rules reducing the number of parties from the initial 45 to 10. UNTAG also started 4) civic education and information programs (more than 200 radio broadcasts [usually translated into the country’s many languages], 32 television programmes, and more than 590,000 separate information items produced). Before the 5) electoral campaign could begin, UNTAG had to guarantee that all discriminatory legislation had been repealed. Following the visit of UN GS Perez de Cuellar a more specific regulation of the electoral campaign was enacted via a Code of Conduct laying down the ground rules for political conduct in a country which had never before enjoyed free and fair elections and providing for a mechanism to handle campaign-related complaints of parties. UNTAG 6) finally oversee the voting exercise be-
tween 7 and 11 November 1989. Observation of the elections was organised by UNTAG which employed 1,758 observers from the UN system.

In the process both SWAPO and the main South African backed party DTA benefited from material and diplomatic support, and UNTAG’s capacity to really create a level playing ground for all parties was severely constrained. Under these circumstances UNTAG acted more as a ‘honest broker’ (Melber 2003) seeking compromises with both major parties at the cost of a pure defence of democratic principles.

3.1.3. Military aspects of the intervention

i. A total of 50 countries provided military personnel to UNTAG.

ii. The maximum strength of UNTAG’s military component was 4,493 all ranks. Initially an upper limit of 7,500 had been set, but when the implementation was discussed at the beginning of 1989, budgetary reasons led the Security Council (including Soviet Union and China) to reduce this number. Following violent protests from the Frontline States and SWAPO SG Perez de Cuellar chose a diplomatic solution: Four additional battalions were held in reserve and were going to be activated in case the military situation on the ground required it. The 4493 military component consisted of three elements: 300 military monitors and observers (drawn from 14 different countries), three enlarged infantry battalions provided by Finland, Kenya, and Malaysia, and a number of logistics units. The civilian police component was initially scheduled for a maximum of 500 personnel, but after conflicts with the remaining counter-insurgency forces within SWAPOL these elements were increased to 2000. UNTAG finally had an additional international and local staff of just under 2000. 180 additional staff from within the UN system was flown in for registration of voters. UNTAG thus reached a maximum of 8 000 personnel on the ground. For the elections up to 1200 additional election observers were mobilised through member states.

iii. UNTAG had a budget of $ 416.2 Mio. More than half of it was financed by the five permanent members of the Security Council, with another 155 Mio. contributed by other industrialised countries and the remaining 11 Mio. by less developed countries (details in the various reports of UN GA and SG).

iv./vi. UNTAG had no robust mandate. It was a pure observer mission. The ‘coercive capacities’ of the Special Representative were strong vis-à-vis the South African Administrator-General (with regard to the electoral process), but the military observers and civilian police could not intervene, only report cases of intimidation. With the exception of the early April events (when UNTAG had not deployed yet) this lack of robustness was not problematic.
vii. UNTAG had both a military and a police component (cf. Howard 2002). The military component had the task to restrict to base and to disarm SADF and SWAPO troops, to monitor the withdrawal of the South African forces out of Namibia, and to demobilise the Namibian regular and territorial units who fought against SWAPO (i.e. SWATF). At the beginning of April 1989 there were still around 32 500 non-SWAPO troops to disarm and demobilise, only half of which could be sent back to South Africa. Demilitarisation of SADF forces went according to schedule, by the end of November 1989 (i.e., after the elections) all troops had departed for South Africa. At that time SWAPO’s PLAN fighters, around 5,000, were also released as civilians from their camps in Angola and returned to Namibia. UNTAG overlooked the continued presence of SWAPO fighters in Namibia itself, but they did not disrupt the electoral process and South Africa didn’t want to formally recognise their existence. SWATF demobilisation was complete by September 1989. By the end of UNTAG’s mission, PLAN and SWAFT forces were integrated in equal numbers into the Namibian army. Disarmament of heavy arms was concluded within three months; these arms were transported to South Africa accompanied by UNTAG monitors. More problematic was the collection of small arms. Due to lack of resources only one large collection site was established in Windhoek and the task thus remained largely unresolved.

The mandate had also included the possibility of civilian policing. The primary task of these police observers was not executive policing nor to maintain law and order in Namibia (as is sometimes erroneously stated in the literature, cf. Dzinesa 2004: 650), but to accompany the regular police forces on foot and vehicle patrols, during political gatherings and in police stations in the discharge of their duties. These observers had a pivotal role in ‘helping’ the SWAPOL enforcing the law impartially, in ensuring that people could express their views without fear of harassment and in ensuring a free and fair electoral process. Police observers had also an important psychological role in maximising the visibility of the UN in Namibia. A problem in enforcing this mandate was the fact that the infamous counter-insurgency unit Koevoet initially had not been demobilised but survived rather intact (with approx. 3,000 men) as one division of the regular SWAPOL (although it was supposed to have been confined to base by December 1988). In the light of this intimidating machinery, UNTAG soon increased the number of CIVPOL observers from 500 to 2,000. CIVPOL presence apparently worked well as a threat, and the Special representative had to intervene only in a handful cases. The main problem remained Koevoet’s activities, and this problem had to be resolved at the level of the Security Council. Upon strong pressure from Security Council, on 30 October 1989, a few days before the elections, 1,600 ex-Koevoet members of the police were officially disbanded under UNTAG supervision. The remaining 1,500 strong ‘Merlyn Force’ was dis-
banded following the official certification of the CA elections on 21 November 1989 (Dzinesa 2004: 658).

3.1.4. Intrusiveness

i. UNTAG was an observer mission and as such had no direct legislative powers. Administrative authority remained with the South African Administrator-General who initially used all tricks to block the implementation of the mandate, particularly with regard to a free and fair electoral process. The UN Representative had, however, a strong supervision role, i.e. all documents and most decisions had actually to be cleared by him. This meant, for example, with regard to electoral process, lengthy consultations with foreign experts before any UN placet was given. Transfer of power was from South Africa to the newly elected State of Namibia, i.e. not from the UN to any local authority.

ii. The new Constitution has, on the contrary, been heavily shaped by external actors, as has already been pointed out above. SWAPO had to accept some constitutional guidelines in 1982 before South Africa was willing to implement Resolution 435. These substantive and procedural rules were considered as condition for any international support to the Constitution-Making process, and indeed for an international legitimization of the political transition to independence. The elaboration of the Constitution in the first months of 1989 was indeed a short exercise because most had already been discussed over the years and there was no real conflict among the various parties with regard to the main provisions of the Constitution (i.e. a democratic polity with a catalogue of political and civil rights). It remains open how much informal pressure has been enacted on SWAPO not to restart a debate on some of these issues, particularly so the regulation of land issues and the take-over of civil servants employed by the previous administration.

iii. UNTAG had no formal executive powers. It has nevertheless been argued that the strong supervisory role of Ahtisaari made him the de-facto administrator of Namibia during UNTAG, and this might at least partially be true for some policy areas (election, demobilisation, police reform) where the mandate gave him the competencies to override the decision by the South African Administrator-General and for the period since around July 1989, when the resistance of South Africa was apparently broken.

v. UNTAG did participate in policing, but had no executive role in it. Ahtisaari was nevertheless able to obtain the dismissal of police officers who had been observed to violate the rules of engagement. UNTAG had a much bigger role in creating and training the new Namibia police forces (NAMPOL).
vi. The mandate of UNTAG was a Chapter VI mandate which reduced its role to military observation and preparation of elections. The UN had never recognised the sovereignty of South Africa over Namibia. Whatever the precise formulation of the mandate indicated, the ‘intrusiveness’ into the sovereignty of a domestic authority was not really the issue. The acceptance of a South African role in administering Namibia throughout the transition period had been part of a political incentive structure not a legal argument for a South African sovereignty. UNTAG was actually the attempt to restore the sovereignty of the Namibian people and one could thus rather ask to what extent the mission did create a context in which the Namibian people could freely exercise this sovereignty. In these rather uncommon circumstances Ahtisaari at times managed to extend his influence beyond what his mandate actually allowed him.

3.2. Diplomacy, normative pressure and persuasion

The democratization process, as far as elections and the constitution-making was concerned, did not need particular persuasive additional efforts from external actors beyond what UNTAG was already doing.\(^5\) External actors were, however, decisive after the April 1989 killings in keeping both SWAPO and the South Africans on track. It was the ‘Brazzaville group’ (Cuba, Angola, South Africa, USA and Soviet Union) who exerted persuasion (and pressure) at the Mount Etjo Conference on 8-9 April 1989 and restored confidence in the capacity of UNTAG to manage the transition process.

3.3. Interaction between internal and external actors

i. UNTAG represented fairly well the preferences of the international community for creating an orderly transition to independence. This was an aim which UNTAG could realistically achieve. All further objectives which have been read into UNTAG’s experience, such as the promotion of democracy, were certainly more ambitious, and it would have been much more difficult to ensure widespread acceptance for such an objective within the Security Council. Within the broader UN system and permanent members of the SC there was little concern for Namibia.

ii. /iii. It is not easy to define properly who is meant by state elites. To a certain extent, the most likely candidate is the outgoing South African administration which, however, was certain to leave the country and whose preferences were

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\(^5\) Again, and as already stated, there are different views concerning the ‘voluntary’ character of SWAPO’s acceptance of the 1982 Constitutional Principles. SWAPO leaders (including Nujoma himself in his autobiography) have emphatically insisted on their ‘autonomy’ and conviction in deciding about the Constitution.
mainly concerned with safeguarding South African economic (Walvis Bay) and political interests (i.e. a strong representation of DTA in parliament). It is however far from clear which South African preferences really mattered, as the country started its own transformation of Apartheid towards the end of 1989, and Nelson Mandela was no longer in Robben Island, but in Windhoek, when Namibia actually became independent on 21 March 1990.

It is more interesting to analyse the preferences of the SWAPO leadership and of those Namibians that had fought alongside South Africa against SWAPO. SWAPO had a huge interest in a success of UNTAG and in ensuring free and fair elections because the movement was relatively confident that the elections were bringing them the ‘political kingdom’ they had strived for so long. The DTA had a similar interest in a fair and free electoral process and wanted an orderly transition to independence without a predominance of Northern ethnic groups. Generally, all African population groups shared an enthusiasm for the end of South African domination.

iv./vi. One of the huge advantages of UNTAG was a relative lack of hard constraints. UNTAG had the cooperation of the domestic actors and a clear mandate. The Namibian elites thus accepted and fully cooperated with the intervention program. Staff had prepared the intervention for years, but still faced a lot of constraints in the first two months (i.e. until end of May 1989) when the delayed budget vote of the UN General Assembly led to an equally delayed deployment of UN forces and material.

v. SWAPO was constrained by its still informal status. It was not formally involved in the activities of UNTAG (except for demobilisation) and theoretically just one political party among others. The so-called ‘Impartiality package’ agreed back in 1982 had obliged all UN agencies to stop financial support to SWAPO during the preparation of the elections. DTA was constrained by its role as ‘collaborator’ of the Apartheid regime.

vii. The actor which comes nearest to a spoiler were the Koevoet units within SWAPOL. They were, however, unable to block the process from going forward; their role was rather to influence the outcome of the elections that South Africa could no longer avoid by intimidating SWAPO-supporters. It is unclear how far they were remote-controlled by South African actors, but the strong response from UNTAG leadership and from UN Security Council effectively ended this threat.

viii./ix. Decolonisation and democratisation was actually supported by all domestic actors, except for some few hardliners from the ancient regime. Namibia was simply not a regime struggling for democratisation with incumbent elites defending their interests; it was a society eager for self-determination and politi-
cal rights. It might be that these actors meant different things when they spoke about democratic change, but this did not modify the huge consensus within the elites about the political reform program (cf. the Constitution adopted with consensus). Democratisation was thus not a question of compliance with external actors (and with a prize to pay for this ‘sell-out’), but a truly national aspiration linked to national independence. All actors had a multitude of external alliances, diplomatic, political and financial, so that the question of foreign support could not become an issue.

3.4. The Regional Context

i. When Namibia became democratic, there was one single neighbour with a democratic form of government, Botswana. By 1988/89 democracy was still a rare species in Sub-Saharan Africa. All other neighbours, South Africa, Zambia and Angola had different types of non-democratic regimes.

ii./v. Namibia was rather a model imitated by other countries (may be even South Africa) than following the example of neighbouring countries. The regime change in South Africa 1990-94 subsequently strengthened consolidation and regime stability of Namibia. At the risk of repeating, Namibia’s democratisation was a by-product of Resolution 435 and its implementation in 1989/90. The neighbouring states, whether autocratic or not, were supporting the Namibian independence. There was no reason to subvert a process that was leading SWAPO to power.

iii./iv. It is hardly necessary to underline again the regionalised and internationalised character of warfare since the mid-1960s. SWAPO was recognised as ‘sole and authentic’ representative of the Namibian people by the United Nations General Assembly in the early 1970s. It thus received diplomatic and political recognition, material support from Nordic countries and UN bodies, and weapons and financial support from East Bloc countries. SWAPO was also firmly supported by the Non-Aligned Movement and by the ‘Frontline States’ (FLS), a group of Southern and Eastern African states that had mobilised African and international opinion against White rule in the sub-region. South Africa was politically and diplomatically isolated but had still strong economic and commercial ties to the industrialised countries.

v. There was no democratic tradition in Namibia, but the intervention was not seen as a foreign imposition, but as a midwife bringing the long-desired independence. SWAPO had a centralist and authoritarian political culture and never felt any affinity with a ‘western’ concept of democracy. The main frame of reference was the ideology of ‘liberation’, not of democracy. Majority rule was so broadly accepted because of its instrumental value for reaching independence
and government. Democratic institutions were a compromise during the UNTAG period, and afterwards a ‘luxury’ that SWAPO could afford without loosening its domination.

**vi./vii.** The White part of Namibia was as fully integrated into the external world as the White Community in South Africa; this was quite different for the Africans, whether living inside Namibia or ‘in the bush’ across the border to Angola. Civil society linkage was weak and strictly regulated, except for the very active churches which also played a major role in supporting the transition to independence and democracy.

**viii.** Quite logically, Namibia became a member of regional and international organisations only after independence. The growing cooperation within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) was also supportive of democratic governance and state legitimacy in Namibia.

### 3.5 International events

The ending of violent conflict in Angola and Namibia and the implementation of Resolution 435 became a reality only in a changed international context which was marked by two important closely-linked developments: the Perestroika in the Soviet Union and the erosion of the Apartheid system in South Africa. Perestroika allowed the Soviet Union, Cuba and the USA to accept a peace agreement in Angola and Namibia, and the combined pressure from external sanctions and growing internal resistance had softened the Apartheid regime to a point where the ‘loss’ of Namibia became acceptable.

In comparison to the external intervention cases of the 1990s Namibia ‘benefited’ from a Cold War conflict with coherent and ideological conflict parties who were forced to give up some of their ideological baggage in the light of Perestroika. Only in this context was it possible to successfully pursue a Chap VI operation. ‘International timing’ thus mattered, but there is no doubt that Namibia’s way to independence might have become even smoother after 1994 when South Africa had an ANC-run government. The quality of Namibian democracy, finally, is less the outcome of a favourable international systemic context, but reflects some domestic structural features, i.e. a South African heritage of rule of law and competitive democracy, and the ‘natural’ dominance of the ruling party SWAPO.
4. Development Aid and Democracy Promotion

4.1 The Establishment of ODA after the war

i. Namibia did receive very little ODA under South African occupation, most of which was channelled through NGOs. SWAPO received humanitarian aid through UN bodies since the 1970s. During the twelve months of UNTAG there was still little assistance, as Namibia had not acceded to independence and did not qualify for membership in international organisations. Although some foreign countries started a diplomatic presence during 1989, no formal diplomatic relations could be established.

Following independence, Namibia could expect to receive a special treatment by the UN member states. In June 1990 a donor pledging conference was held in New York, for which the newly created Namibian Government presented a ‘General Policy Statement’. It said, among others that ‘Namibia will need to receive appropriate levels of development assistance for a considerable time from the international donor community’ (Republic of Namibia 1990, 10). This need was justified less by the per capita income which would have put it into the group of middle-income countries, but on the massive need to overcome the inherited socio-economic inequalities and consolidate the state structures of the independent country. An important step was Namibia’s official recognition as a ‘quasi-LDC’, through the UN General Assembly in December 1990. This status as Least Developed Country was extended in 1996 and recognised the fact that Namibia was in many ways less developed than its statistical level of GDP/capita made believe (also evident in the poor HDI standing). LDC status allowed Namibia to benefit from particular favourable ODA conditions.

The first National Development Plan of Namibia was only approved in 1995. In the interval between 1990 and 1995 there was thus no really consistent or comprehensive development strategy formulated from the Namibian side (Melber 1998: 4). Donors had started financing NEPRU, the Namibian Economic and Policy Research Institute, as main think tank for supporting the strategic planning of the Namibian government since 1990.

There are few reliable data on ODA for these first years following independence. For an overview of the most important bilateral and multilateral donors we rely here on the data given by OECD/DAC, which may differ both from data collected by the UN system and by data from Namibian sources.

Total ODA Net Disbursements to Namibia

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6 There are no ODA figures for the time prior to 1989.
The table does reveal a number of important trends: ODA rose rapidly in the first two years following independence and stabilised then after a small decline (mainly caused by a sharp decline in EU funding) at a given level. Notwithstanding Namibia’s birth as a ‘UN product’, bilateral ODA became soon the main financing mechanism for Namibia, and UN financial support minimal in comparison with other donors. Until 1994 Namibia had not negotiated any structural adjustment or poverty reduction programme and both IMF and World Bank are notoriously absent from the list of ODA donors. The most important bilateral donors were the four Nordic countries Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Denmark and Germany. The German government made huge commitments soon after independence, but the bureaucratic nature of German ODA system hindered a rapid implementation, so that Germany became the biggest bilateral donor only since 1993. Another trend which is not evident from the table is the fact, that until 1993 all of this aid came in form of grants, and since then up to 95% of it (Germany’s aid had only a 75% grant-element). Namibia thus benefited from her LDC status.

The following table gives an approximate overview of modalities of delivery. Data are here from the Bank of Namibia.
General budget support was an important element of ODA especially until 1991 (but Germany was for example at that time legally hindered from providing direct budget aid). Noteworthy is the huge percentage of aid channelled through NGOs which exceeded the total support to the National budget in 1992. The explanation lies most likely in the fact that 1992 was a drought year.

iv. / v. Since 1990 external assistance exceeded 10% of government expenditure, but according to most observers ‘the country had not yet reached a stage where aid dependency should create serious distortions on government policy or administration’ (Oden et al 1994, 3). With an average 4% of aid disbursements per GDP Namibia was more aid-dependent than most of her direct neighbours, but still not considered aid-dependent and below the Sub-Saharan African average of aid-dependency. Aid was certainly critical for creating social stability in Namibia, but it is not very audacious to assume that the democratic institutions would have survived even with much less ODA than what was actually delivered.

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<td>ODA in % Govt Expenditure</td>
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<td>16.3</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>12.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>ODA/capita (US$)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>83</td>
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<tr>
<td>ODA in % GDP</td>
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<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
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Source: UNDP 1999

### 4.2 The Aid Portfolio

Namibia gained its independence at a time when democracy aid did not feature in the ODA portfolios of donor states. At the end of the 1980s and right into the early 1990s ODA was still dominated by technical infrastructure, rural development and social services. The World Bank launched the key concept of governance in 1992 and the ‘political turn’ of ODA manifested itself only since the mid-1990s (and at the management level of aid agencies in most cases even later). We should thus not expect bilateral donors to spend massive resources into the promotion of democracy or the media during that time. A closer look at the sectoral breakdown of ODA disbursements in the first half of the 1990s makes very clear that there was no political aid at all.\(^7\)

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\(^7\) Things have changed since the late 1990s with a stronger emphasis on governance in bilateral and multilateral ODA projects and programmes, although, to take an example, UNDP allocated in the period 1997-2000 only 3.5% of its budget to ‘support to good governance’. 
### Telecommunications | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0
### Transportation | 15 | 14 | 1 | 24
### Agriculture | 7 | 13 | 19 | 37 | 18
### Extractive Industries | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2
### Manufacturing
### Trade banking Tourism | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0
### Multisector Aid | 61 | 10 | 8 | 9 | 6
### Programme Aid | 3 |
### Debt Reorganisation
### Food Aid | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0
### Emergency Aid | 73 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 1
### Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100

Source: OECD/DAC: Geographical Distribution of Financial Flows to Aid Recipients, all figures are in %.

The closer investigation of aid portfolios of major donors in the first half of the 1990s proved to be a near impossible task. In the aid industry fifteen years are an eternity, and no one has remained in country offices with an institutional memory; documents are sometimes deleted after ten years or moved to official archives where they are hardly accessible or not all. Most Nordic countries have completely closed down their country offices or are in the process of doing so. It seems thus impossible to produce a reliable empirical assessment. This is, after all, less tragic than imagined, because all interview partners made it very clear that the donors did not look after democracy and governance during these years in any coherent way. It is also safe to argue (even without any empirical evidence) that the huge EU aid certainly did not finance any project in this sector, because EU development aid simply did not care about democracy and governance until the late 1990s (and country offices in many African states were even after that date still puzzled by the requirement of spending 5% of National Indicative Programmes to ‘civil society’).

**Germany:** The only democracy and governance related project within the German state-to-state development co-operation was a small support to the judicial sector (especially aid to the law reform commission, support to an archive of legal texts, and training of judges) with an amount of 3.65 Mio. DM (out of an overall amount of 445 Mio. DM for the period 1990-1995, cf. Gebauer 1995). German ODA also directly financed projects of the churches and the political foundations. Especially the major political foundations were active in the field of support to trade unions, to the media, to civil society, research bodies, women associations and decentralisation, what mattered here was less the little money, (approx. 0.5 Mio. DM for activities per foundation per year) but the political networking and persuasion work (Kühne 1995, Vinnai 2005).

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8 The British Foreign Office asked me to pay £ 600 to start an investigation about official ODA data for the period concerned. I am still awaiting a promised more detailed information on the US and UNDP budget.
Sweden and Norway: The Nordic countries had agreed among themselves and with the SWAPO leadership that their ODA should be concentrated on the following sectors: Denmark would primarily give aid to agriculture, Finland to forestry and water supplies, Sweden to transport and finance while Norway was requested to support to the development of oil and fisheries industries. A number of smaller activities in the fields of human rights and democracy and gender were supported on an ad-hoc basis. (cf. Oden 1994) Sweden concentrated in the first years on three sectors, i.e. education, transport and public administration. The public administration component included support to the bank of Namibia, the Central Statistics Office, a Personnel and Consultancy Fund (which allowed direct employment of foreign personnel to key positions in the civil service, for example a Swede as Governor of the Bank of Namibia, and in-service training) and since the mid-1990s support to the Auditor General’s Office, all institutions that were lacking in Namibia at the time of independence. SWAPO’s exiled elite totally lacked the practical administrative experience, in particular in areas such as foreign, security, and monetary policies. Both Sweden and Norway also financed NEPRU activities and the Legal Assistance Centre.

4.3 Democratic conditionality in the aid sector

According to all interviewees during the first half of the 1990s there was no democratic conditionality in the aid sector. On the contrary, there was a kind of ‘benign neglect’ towards the deficiencies in the political practices of the young democracy (Melber 2008). "External support to the post-colonial transformation of Namibian society is widely perceived as a matter of development assistance confined to socio-economic issues" (Melber 2003).

Rainer Barthelt, then Head of division for Southern Africa in the German Ministry for Development Co-operation, published in 1995 an article about German-Namibian development cooperation which clearly stated, that Namibia did not only fulfil the five political criteria (so called Spranger-criteria: respect for human rights, political participation, rule of law, liberal economic order, development-orientation of government) which had been introduced in 1991, but that the Namibian government had set these objectives as benchmarks of their own policies (Barthelt 1995:36).

Political conflicts between bilateral donors and the Namibian government became clearer only at the end of the 1990s, particularly due to Namibia’s involvement in regional military conflicts. Finland’s Ambassador to Namibia did not return from his holiday in mid-2000 on request of the Namibian government

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9 Written communication to the author by Henning Melber, 22.3.2008.
and Finish ODA ended in 2007. Norway closed its embassy in 1998, Sweden’s Ambassador left in mid-2001 and the embassy will be closed at the end of 2008. The fact that the Nordic countries who have been the strongest supporters of SWAPO over decades (South Africa vetoed Sweden’s military participation in UNTAG) have no longer diplomatic representation in Namibia is no evidence of ‘political conditionality’, but could be interpreted as a more subtle sign of alienation.

4.4 Conclusion

The generous financial support of the international community to Namibia has certainly contributed to strengthening the legitimacy of the democratic regime and the newly independent State (and its long-time President Nujoma). Melber (2003) argues that the UN and donors have not used the opportunity to further entrench democracy and a more democratic political culture by a stronger orientation of aid portfolios towards the strengthening of democratic institutions, civil society, human rights and civic education. While it would be erroneous to see ODA as bolstering authoritarian tendencies within the Namibian state, the case study points to a more general dilemma: Regimes that fulfil the basic criteria of a liberal democracy (such as Namibia) are difficult to further democratise through ODA. ODA is simply much better in institution-building than in actually modifying political behaviour (or attitudes).10

Topics to Pursue

Namibia certainly represents an exceptional case with its history of decolonization (probably partly comparable with East Timor) and its ‘early timing’, i.e. different type of conflict, different international trend, different types of ODA (no democracy aid). Different contexts make it quite difficult in other conflicts to adopt Chapter VI mandates or to have UN missions with fifteen years of preparation time.

Democracy is not self-enforcing in Namibia, but it lacks many of the more hybrid elements that are typical of internationally-promoted democracies after conflict. But even Namibia opted for a set of democratic institutions that reflected as much the wishes of the international community as the compromises between domestic actors. A very interesting question that emerges from this project is

10 Of course, institutions are supposed to guide behaviour; but in places such as Namibia actual political behaviour is mostly guided by a set of complex overlapping formal and informal institutions where external actors have difficulties in setting the right incentives.
not so much why international democracy promotion does not lead to fully-
したものから経験と記録の記録が近所の国々にこの特定の歴史：その特定の国々に対する国際的な歴史は、民主主義の過程に対して何らかの影響を及ぼしているか？

The ODA-democracy nexus is quite difficult to assess (and particularly so for Namibia). Short of direct international administration donors have difficulties in controlling the enforcement of democratic institutions. ODA, and especially so intergovernmental bilateral or even multilateral aid, is strongly formalised and tied to contracts and to bureaucratic, political and economic interests in donor countries. All of this severely constrains its use as an instrument of leverage. From own observation (including in Namibia) my guess is that the informal influence of embassies or donor agencies (especially individuals) and transnational networks (such as the Socialist International) is often more important for the establishment of democracy than the net amount of ODA.

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