



**Realising effective and sustainable
democratic governance in Southern
Africa and beyond.**

Survey of Electoral Systems and Reform Imperatives in the SADC Region

**By
Khabele Matlosa***

**ISBN: 1-919814-51-5
© EISA, 2003**

“In translating the votes in a general election into seats in the legislature, the choice of electoral system can effectively determine who is elected and which party gains power. Even with exactly the same number of votes for parties, one system might lead to a coalition government and another to a single party assuming majority control” (Harris and Reilly, 1998:191-2).

Introduction

We are living in interesting times in Africa as a whole and Southern Africa in particular. Never before has the continent, nor the SADC sub-region, enjoyed so much aura of optimism in terms of its political future and destiny. Current academic and policy discourses in the continent and southern Africa clearly point to an all-pervasive wave of Afro-optimism in terms of the democratic transition that has swept the continent since the 1990s. However, lest we sort of eulogize the aura of Afro-optimism regarding democratic transformations in the continent, a note of caution is worth noting here. Thus, even the most vehement voices of Afro-pessimists who perceive everything that is happening in the continent as negative and depicting the continent as a basket case are increasingly becoming quieter and quieter. Although impressive strides have been made throughout the continent and in the SADC region in respect of democratic transitions, democratic governance has not rally consolidated and has indeed not been sufficiently institutionalized and as such serious reversals on the progress thus far made are, unfortunately, are possible. Given the above warnings, we certainly

then need to maintain a guarded optimism regarding democratic transitions in Africa as a whole and Southern Africa specifically.

What then we need to recognize from the onset is that certainly the SADC region has made commendable progress towards democratic governance since the collapse of the Cold War on a world-wide scale and the demise of apartheid in the region. Although these two external phenomena played a critical role in propelling the democratic wave, endogenous developments including pressure exerted by civil society organizations for democratic dispensation was useful too. Having recognized that some progress has been made towards nurturing democratic governance, we hasten to observe that there are still a number of hurdles that SADC countries still have to jump over in this journey towards democratic consolidation. These challenges are, in fact, what one scholar, Robin Luckham, prefers to term "Democracy Deficits". Undoubtedly, one of these deficits relates to electoral engineering and how this process is undertaken in such a manner to deepen democratic governance or conversely to entrench authoritarian politics behind the veneer of democratic rhetoric. Hence the significance, therefore, of electoral systems in the region; what are the existing electoral systems world-wide; what are their main features; what the dominant electoral systems in the SADC region; what are their advantages and disadvantages; what then are the imperatives for electoral systems reforms in SADC if only to ensure that accountability is enhanced; broad representation is ensured and, equally importantly, political stability is achieved and sustained. This is what this paper is all about. It aims to interrogate the global and regional perspectives of electoral system design and reform

imperatives and suggest, in a fairly modest way, what could be the best practices for electoral systems reforms a number of SADC countries. Thus the paper is much more suggestive rather than being definitively prescriptive in order not to close the debate and cast these sensitive issues in stone.

The second section that follows these introductory remarks presents an argument that buttresses the critical importance of electoral system for democratic governance globally and in the SADC region specifically. The debate aims to make a case for deliberate electoral systems design as part and parcel of constitutional engineering for deepening democratic culture and practice. The third section outlines, in a simplified, albeit not simplistic, fashion the workings of various electoral systems especially those in force in the SADC region with a view to drawing fine distinctions between and among various electoral models. The fourth section then builds upon the earlier sections by making an argument for electoral reform imperatives for the SADC region in order for the region to ensure accountability of elected representatives, broad representation in key organs of the state especially the parliament and political stability so crucial for both political and economic progress. The fifth and final section provides, in a rather thought-provoking, and fairly controversial, fashion, possible scenarios for electoral system reform process in the SADC region in the not-so-distant future. It should be emphasized that these scenarios are not presented as definitive prescription of what has to happen, but rather as suggestions of a possible route that the region should take in reforming the electoral systems of SADC member states. This is mainly aimed at advancing the current debate and indeed provoking more thought as the region embarks on

a politically sensitive path of constitutional engineering.

Significance of an Electoral System to Democratic Governance

“An electoral system also has a major influence the type of party system that develops: the number and relative size of political parties in parliament, and the internal cohesion and discipline of parties” (Harris and Reilly, 1998:191-192)

An electoral system principally refers to an institutional arrangement for the conduct of an election: be it a local government, national assembly or presidential election. Put differently, an electoral system encompasses procedures, laws, rules and regulations for the electorate to exercise their democratic right to choose their leaders and translate those ballots into actual representation in the national assembly. This institutional arrangement in turn determines the manner in which votes cast by the electorate in an election are turned effectively into seats in, for instance, the national assembly. According to Reynolds and Reilly “electoral systems translates the votes cast in a general election into seats won by parties and candidates. The key variables are the electoral formula used (i.e. whether the system is majoritarian or proportional, what mathematical formula is used to calculate the seat allocation) and the district magnitude (not how many voters live in a district, but how many members of parliament that district elects” (2002:7). The countries that use the FPTP electoral system include the United Kingdom, the United States of America, India, Canada, all former British colonies.

Andrew Reynolds reminds us that an electoral system is one critical institution

that shapes and influences the rules political competition for state power in that this single institution determines “what parties look like, who is represented in parliament, and ultimately who governs” (1999:89). Essentially, an electoral system performs many functions in a representative democracy. Harris and Reilly isolate three, major functions of an electoral system. First, it acts as a conduit through which the electorate is able to hold their representatives in the legislature accountable. Second, it makes it easy for the national assembly to be constituted either through proportionally determined vote count or through a simple plurality of votes. Third, different electoral systems bring out public opinion in the form of an electoral outcome by according a particular political party or a coalition of parties control of state power and as such “give incentives to those competing for power to couch their appeals to the electorate in distinct ways. In deeply divided societies , for example, particular electoral systems can reward candidates and parties who act in co-operative, accommodative manner to rival groups; or they can instead reward those who appeal only to their own ethnic group”(Harris and Reilly, 1998:192).

To be sure, there are many electoral systems throughout the entire world and there is little consensus as to which is best for democratic governance and political stability (Harris and Reilly, 1998; Reynolds and Reilly, 2002; Kadima, 2003; Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2003). What is interesting to note, though, is that despite the centrality of an electoral system to the choice of a government, countries hardly ever make deliberate decisions to select a model that best suits their particular conditions and contexts. Thus, “often the choice is essentially accidental, the result of an unusual

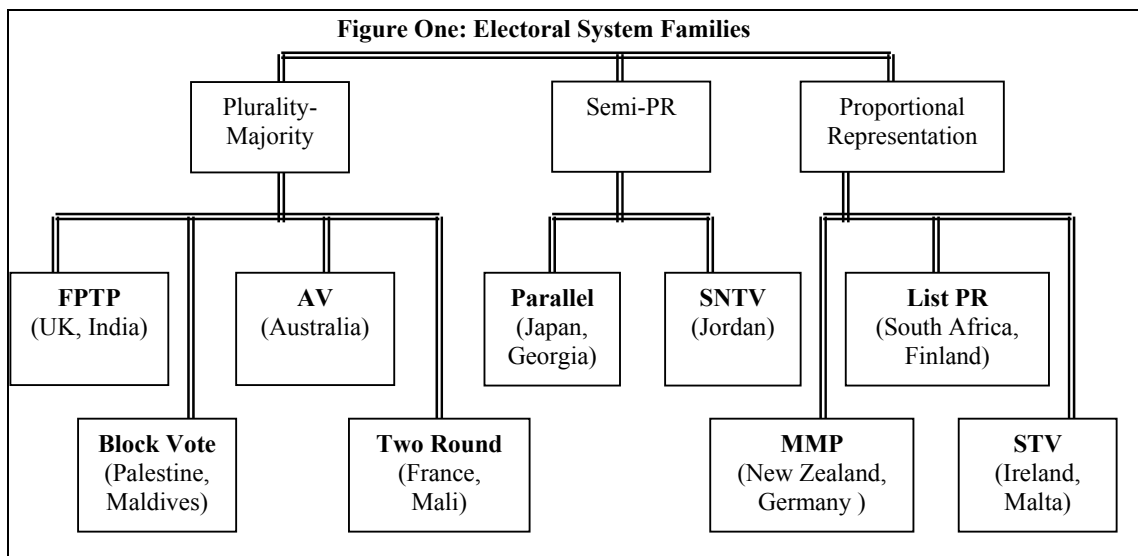
combination of circumstances, of a passing trend, or of a quirk of history, with the impact of colonialism and the effect of influential neighbours often especially strong” (Reynolds and Reilly, 1997:1). As Jackson and Jackson aptly observe “each political system offers certain benefits and disadvantages in terms of the representation of different groups in society” (1997: 371). Reynolds and Reilly advise appropriately that states of the world should endeavour to review and deliberately design electoral systems that suit their own conditions with a view to deepening democratic governance. In doing so, argue Reynolds and Reilly, it is advisable that eight (8) key criteria are used to guide the process:

- ❑ Ensuring a representative parliament
- ❑ Making elections accessible and meaningful
- ❑ Providing incentives for conciliation
- ❑ Facilitating stable and efficient government
- ❑ Holding the government and representatives accountable
- ❑ Encouraging “cross-cutting” political parties administrative capacity (2002:9-13).

Although there are, indeed, many electoral systems around the world and there is as yet no consensus within both academic and policy discourses on the best model for democracy, it is a lot easier to identify, on a global scale, four main types of electoral systems namely (a) plurality-majoritarian, (b) proportional representation (PR) and (c) semi-proportional representation systems with multiple variations within and permutations amongst them as shown in figure one below.

Source: Reynolds and Reilly, 2002 (2002

Key: PR-Proportional Representation
 FPTP-First-Past-The-Post
 AV-Alternative Vote
 SNTV-Single Non-Transferable Vote
 MMP-Mixed Member Proportional
 STV-Single Transferable Vote



Source: Reynolds and Reilly, 2000

For an extensive discussion of how these systems operate, refer to Reynolds and Reilly (2002), Harris and Reilly (1998), Reilly (2001) and Elklit (2003) from which the current debate draws critical lessons for the SADC region. It is worth noting, though, that the major distinction between and among the electoral systems globally relates to how “they translate national votes won into parliamentary seats won: that is, how proportional they are” (Harris and Reilly, 1998: 193). The key variable here is whether an electoral system determines parliamentary seats upon a simple plurality of votes, absolute majority of votes or proportionality of votes, hence the differentiation between plurality-majoritarian systems and proportional representation systems. Before dealing with each one of the three broad categories of electoral systems highlighting their distinctive impact on democratic governance in respect of accountability, representation and political stability, a few caveats are worth making at this juncture.

First, there is no gainsaying that the most dominant influence for adoption of particular electoral systems in post-independence SADC has been the overbearing colonial and neo-colonial linkages between the former colonies and the colonial metropolis. It should be recalled that SADC countries adopted the political institutions of their former colonial masters as part of the political settlement of the decolonization struggles. Let it be recalled also that a majority of the Southern African states were under the British colonial rule and upon independence they adopted the Westminster constitution and political arrangement that go with it. By the same token, it is worth refreshing our minds that very few Southern African states have thus far taken a deliberate effort to re-design their electoral systems in a manner

that addresses immediate challenges of their democratic systems such as accountability, representation and political stability. These include South Africa, Namibia and recently Lesotho. The rest of the SADC member-states operate electoral systems that are part of the legacy of the inherited political and constitutional arrangements left behind by the departing colonialists in the 1960s. It is, thus, no consternation that the British single-member plurality or the first-past-the-post electoral system has become a dominant political feature of electoral democracy in the SADC region given that Britain was indeed a dominant colonial power in the region.

Second, only recently have SADC states begun to engage in open public debate, most of these initiated by civil society organizations, to interrogate the utility of existing electoral systems in various countries for the nurturing and consolidation of democratic governance. This effort has led to the recent electoral reform process in Lesotho, which has witnessed a historic process in which the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) and the then Interim Political Authority (IPA) agreed to change the country's FPTP system and adopt the MMP system which was first put to the test during the country's 2002 general election. Debate is raging as to which electoral system to use in the country's forthcoming local government elections scheduled for sometime in 2004. Likewise, Mauritius has also undertaken a review of its electoral system which is principally a FPTP system injected with a Best-Loser arrangement. Following a Commission set up to review the electoral system and propose measures for electoral system reform, Mauritius is likely to adopt the MMP system highly recommended by the commission report in its forthcoming 2005 election.

Whereas in Lesotho the pressures for electoral reform were propelled mainly by political instability and the tendency for the FPTP system to exclude critical political actors, in Mauritius the pressures had more to do with political exclusion rather than political instability as such.

Third, electoral engineering and reform measures in SADC have also been part of political settlement of protracted violent conflict. It should be recalled that Southern Africa was a theatre of violent and costly conflicts of various types linked, in part, to the global Cold War of the time and propelled by apartheid destabilisation of the region. The hardest hit countries by the protracted violent conflict were Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa. It is no surprise, then, that when political settlement of violent conflicts in these countries one of the imperatives for constructive management of the conflict was some reform of the electoral system, among many other steps taken by the belligerent parties. Thus, as part of the peace-making and reconciliation, all these four countries adopted the PR electoral system. With hindsight, the adoption of the PR for these war-torn countries was one of the most prudent decisions that the political leadership undertook for, in fact, it has come to pass that the PR system has helped these countries, bar Angola, to consolidate their hard-earned peace and build bridges between former enemies who are today sharing the burden of statecraft and nation-building. It can thus be argued convincingly that the PR electoral system is the best electoral model for war-torn societies and easily lends itself to constructive management of violent conflicts.

Table 1: Electoral Systems in SADC

FPTP: Plurality/Majoritarian	List-PR: Proportional	MMP: Proportional
Botswana	Angola	Lesotho
DRC	Mozambique	
Malawi	Namibia	
Swaziland	South Africa	
Tanzania		
Zambia		
Zimbabwe		
Mauritius		
Seychelles		

From table 1 above, it is clear that a majority of SADC states (9 in all) operate the FPTP electoral system, a few (4 in all) operate the List-PR electoral system and only one (1) has recently adopted the MMP all these varying systems have their own distinctive impact on democratic governance in each state in terms of accountability, representation and political stability. And this is the subject of the next section of this paper.

How Electoral Systems Work and their Implications for Accountability, Representation and Political Stability

“While the choice of electoral system is one of the most important institutional decisions for any democracy, most electoral systems are not consciously and deliberately chosen. Often, the choice of electoral system is essentially accidental: the result of an unusual combination of circumstances, of a passing trend, or of a quirk of history” (Reilly, 2001:14).

A: The First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) Electoral System

In sum, the main features of the FPTP are presented in a tabular form below. The table itself is not exhaustive enough to bring out all the characteristics of the system, but only highlights the key ones that are important for purposes of our understanding of the workings of the system as well as its implications/impact on accountability, representation and political stability as it were.

The First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) or single-member plurality system is the most widely used, and indeed the simplest, electoral system throughout the entire world. Under this system, a country is divided into different, albeit relatively equal, electoral zones known as constituencies from which contestants have to emerge in order to occupy their seats in the legislature. The winner of an election is the candidate “who gains the most votes, but not necessarily an absolute majority of the votes. Voters choose their favoured candidate with a tick or a cross on the ballot paper, and the winner is simply the candidate who gains a

plurality of votes” (Reilly, 2001:15). Like all other electoral systems, the FPTP has its own strengths and weaknesses and it is important that political leaders and all other stakeholders in election management appreciate these in order to ensure a smooth process of electoral designs and reform efforts.

Table 2: Feature Characteristics of the FPTP

Advantages	Disadvantages
Clear choice between two main parties	Excludes minor parties
Ensures single party governments	Exaggerates electoral dominance of ruling parties
Gives rise to coherent parliamentary opposition	Problem of waste votes which amounts to disenfranchisement
Excludes extremist parties	Amenable to minority government problem
Links MP to constituency	Unresponsive to changes in public opinion
Allows independent candidates to contest elections	Open to manipulation of election boundaries
Allows floor crossing	Less conducive to women's participation
Simplicity and familiarity in Africa	Problem of single party parliament

The popularity of the FPTP is premised primarily on “grounds of simplicity, and its tendency to produce representatives beholden to defined geographic areas” (Harris and Reilly, 1998: 194). Table 2 above illustrates the main feature characteristics of the FPTP electoral system, which in a sense succinctly suggest its strong and weak points that have to be recognized in any process of electoral engineering, design and reform. The key strengths of the FPTP system are many and varied. First, given that the FPTP system basically ensures duopolistic party system (two-party system if you wish), it presents a clear choice of voters between the two main parties. Whereas this has been the case in the United States of

America and the United Kingdom for instance in terms of alternate regime changes between the Democrats and Republicans and the Labour Party and Conservative Party respectively, this has not been the case in the SADC region. If anything, in all the SADC countries operating the FPTP one-party dominance or hegemony has been the norm since independence to date, including in Botswana, the world-acclaimed liberal democracy (see tables 3 and 4 below). That is why the major test of the profundity of Botswana's liberal democracy today is for that country to experience electoral defeat of the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) and an opposition party takes over as a new government yet the socio-economic and political achievement of the country thus far are not reversed in any profound manner. This prospect will always remain a distant mirage so long as the FPTP still remains a feature of Botswana's political system. This point reinforces the downside of the FPTP system namely that it exaggerates the electoral dominance of broad-based parties (often-times ruling parties).

Table 3: Botswana Parliamentary Election Results, 1999

Party	No. of votes	% of votes	No. of seats	% of seats
BDP	192 598	54.3	33	82.5
BNF	87 457	24.7	6	15.0
BCP	40 096	11.3	1	2.5
BAM	15 805	4.5	0	0.0
Indpts	1 004	0.3	0	0.0
MELS	22	0.0	0	0.0
Spoilt ballots	17 481	4.9	-	-
Total	354 463	100.0	40	100.0

The picture of proportions of votes per party in Botswana since independence as shown in table above validates our argument that Botswana is, to all intents and purposes, a dominant party situation despite its world-wide accolade as shining liberal democracy. This situation is further depicted by the allocation of parliamentary seats since independence as vividly illustrated in table 4 below

Table 4: Number of National Assembly Seats by Party in Botswana (1965-1999)

Party	1965	1969	1974	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999
BDP	28	24	27	29	29	31	27	33
BPP	3	3	2	1	1	0	0	0
BIP	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
BNF	-	3	2	2	4	3	13	6
BPU	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0
BCP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
BAM	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Total	31	31	32	32	34	34	40	40

Source: Molomo, 2000; Somolekae, 2002

Second, related to the first point, the FPTP electoral system ensures single-party governments. It is not amenable to coalition governments. This feature is often-times considered good for it is perceived to ensure political stability. However, single party governments may amount to one-party state and lead to politics of exclusion that in themselves generate various types of conflicts and political instability as the political history of the small mountain kingdom of Lesotho so vividly demonstrate up until the major violent conflict of 1998 which in turn lead to electoral reforms of 2002. The single-party phenomenon also links to the weakness of this system in that it encourages one-party parliaments thereby undermining watch-dog role of the legislature vis-à-vis the executive organ of the state.

Third, the FPTP is also reputed for giving rise to a coherent parliamentary opposition. Again, this feature applies in circumstances where the opposition is able to win some constituency seats and form part of government. But in a majority of cases, the opposition is often unable to win a considerable number of seats to make it a viable force in the national assembly. Not only that; the FPTP system obviously leads to wasted votes – a phenomenon tantamount to disenfranchisement of a considerable segment of the electorate. Witness, for instance, the results of the general election of Lesotho in 1993 and 1998 in which the ruling party won so overwhelmingly that there was absolutely no possibility whatsoever for a parliamentary opposition and given the skewed correlation between the outcome and representation in parliament, the outcome resulted in wasted votes as table 5 below clearly illustrates.

Table 5: Lesotho's Election Results, 1993 and 1998

Year	Main Parties	No. of Votes	% of votes	No. of Seats	% of Seats
1993	BCP	398 255	74.7	65	100.0
	BNP	120 686	22.6	0	00.0
	MFP	7 650	1.4	0	00.0
Total		532 978	100.0	65	100.0
1998	LCD	355 049	60.7	79	98.7
	BNP	143 073	24.5	1	1.3
	BCP	61 793	10.5	0	00.0
	MFP	7 460	1.3	0	00.0
Total		582 740	100.0	80	100.0

This table then demonstrates the exclusionary tendency of the FPTP electoral system which in turn disallows official opposition in parliament and in turn drives political conflict out of parliament into the streets thereby generating violent conflicts with dire consequences for democratic governance surely. In contemporary political history of Southern Africa, only in Zimbabwe the FPTP electoral system allowed the main opposition party – the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) – a considerable representation into parliament since 2000 election almost tantamount to a two-party system, although the ruling party – the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) still exercises an enormous amount of political hegemony (see Table 6 below).

Table 6: Zimbabwe Parliamentary Election Results, 2000

Party/Representation	No. of Votes	% of Votes	No. of Seats	% of seats
ZANU (PF)	1 205 844		62	51.7
MDC	1 171 167		57	47.5
Zanu-Ndonga	15 776		1	0.8
Other	114 186		0	0.0
Total	2 507 973	100.0	120	100.0

Source: Electoral Institute of Southern Africa

Of the total 120 elected parliamentary seats, the ruling ZANU PF won a simple majority of 62 seats (about 49% of the total valid votes) while the main opposition, the MDC secured 57 seats (about 46% of the total valid votes). ZANU-Ndonga came third with only one seat and less than 1% of the total valid votes.

Fourth, one of the positive virtues of the FPTP electoral system is its ability to disallow extremist parties. While this feature is an important one in that it discourages fragmentation of the polity and the social fabric of already divided societies, it also leads to almost total alienation of minor parties. This is the area in which the FPTP suffers from the misrepresentation syndrome. In a word, it is one system that to all intents and purposes is the weakest on broad representation of key political forces in the management of public affairs of a nation and thus not suited at all for countries emerging from protracted violent conflict. Fifth, the FPTP electoral system is also reputed for linking the MP directly to the constituency. It is for this reason that it is, at least in theory, considered strong on accountability of

MPs to the electorate for MP contest elections as individuals representing their constituencies. This contrasts sharply with the PR system in which the party has more power over the MP and thus undermining accountability of the MP to the electorate. This point dovetails neatly into the sixth feature of the FPTP system namely that it also allows independent candidates to contest elections in their own right. Finally, given that the FPTP is the most commonly used electoral model throughout the world it is the most familiar system to a majority of SADC countries and indeed the most simple of all the electoral systems.

Fifth, given that the winner of an election in any given constituency has to get a simple plurality higher than the other contestant instead of absolute majority of votes, this leads to winners by minority votes both at the constituency level as well as the national level – a phenomenon that often-time generates a legitimacy crisis for governments. Both the candidates and parties that endorse candidates do not need absolute majority of votes to form a government. The most vivid demonstration of a minority government brought about by the FPTP system in contemporary times in the SADC region is surely the 2001 parliamentary election in Zambia. Table 7 depicts a situation in which the ruling Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) won election on a paltry 44%. Surely if a government wins an election on less than 50% of total valid votes, this simply becomes a pyrrhic victory and undoubtedly such a government is bound to face up to serious problems of credibility of its policy initiatives and legitimacy of its very existence both at home and abroad.

Table 7: Zambia Parliamentary Election Results, 2001

Party	No. of Votes	% of Votes	No. of seats	% of seats
Agenda for Zambia (AZ)	2 832	0.0	0	0.0
Democratic Party (DP)	115	0.0	0	0.0
Forum for Democracy and Development (FDD)	272 817	9.0	13	8.2
Heritage Party (HP)	132 311	3.0	4	2.5
LPF	175	0.0	0	0.0
Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD)	490 680	43.7	62	40.0
National Christian Coalition (NCC)	35 632	0.0	0	0.0
National Leadership for Development (NLD)	3 155	0.0	0	0.0
NP	1 228	0.1	0	0.0
Patriotic Front (PF)	49 362	1.0	1	0.6
Social Democratic Party (SDP)	809	0.0	0	0.0
United Party for National Development (UPND)	416 236	33.0	47	30.0
United National Independence Party (UNIP)	185 535	8.0	12	7.5
Zambia Alliance for Progress (ZAP)	3 963	0.0	0	0.0
Zambia Progressive Party (ZPP)	19	0.0	0	0.0
Zambia Republican Party (ZRP)	97 010	1.0	2	1.3
Independents	59 335	1.0	1	0.6
Total		100.0	159	100.0

Source: Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA)

Proportional Representation (PR) Electoral System

Proportional representation (PR) electoral systems are relatively more complex electoral models compared to the plurality-majority systems. While the plurality, especially the FPTP, electoral systems accord electoral victory to a party/candidate with a simple plurality of votes over other contestants, the PR systems essentially balance the party's share of national valid votes cast and the concomitant share of its legislative seats. In a word, each party's political track record in terms of national votes should be reflected in the composition of a parliament. For instance, if a dominant party wins around 60% of the total national vote, its share of legislative seats

should also be around 60% and the same applies to a minor party winning around 20% of the national vote whose share of the legislative seats should also be around 20%. It is thus the most inclusive and broadly representative of all electoral systems in the whole world. Thus, Harris and Reilly conclude "for many new democracies, particularly those that face deep divisions, the inclusion of all significant groups in the parliament can be an important condition for democratic consolidation. Outcomes based on consensus-building and power-sharing usually include a PR system" (1998:195). Countries that operate the PR electoral system throughout the world include Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, Israel, Finland, Switzerland etc. Under the PR system, there are no geographic

electoral zones as is the case in the FPTP electoral system, as the entire country forms one single constituency.

As with plurality-majority electoral systems, there are quite a number of variations of proportional representation (PR) system. This discussion will focus mainly on List-PR and mixed member proportional (MMP) varieties.

List-PR System

Table 8: Feature Characteristics of the List-PR System

Advantages	Disadvantages
Fair translation of seats into legislative seats	Weak MP-constituency link and accountability
Inclusion of minority parties in the legislature	Gives too much power to the party
Inclusive and socially diverse list of candidates	Little room for independent candidates
Regional fiefdoms restricted	May provide a platform for extremist parties
Leads to power sharing and coalition governments	Instability of coalition parties
Less vote wastage	Less likelihood of dislodging a ruling party
Less conducive to women's participation	Disallows floor-crossing
Conducive to gender-inclusive governance	Less known and less familiar in Africa

List-PR electoral system is the most widely used variety of the PR system in various parts of the world including Southern Africa. There are two main types of List-PR systems namely (a) the open or preferential list system; and (b) the closed or non-preferential list system. The former involves a direct participation of the party rank-and-file in the determination of the party list for a general election. The latter gives much more power to the party in determining the list of party candidates for a general election. Given that the latter is the most

common system in Southern Africa, we focus spotlight on this model. As Reynolds and Reilly reminds us, "in its most simple form, List PR involves each party presenting a list of candidates to the electorate, voters vote for a party, and parties receive seats in proportion to their overall share of the national vote. Winning candidates are taken from the list in order of their position on the list" (2002:61).

In the List-PR, candidates do not contest elections as individuals, in their own right, but as party candidates appearing on a predetermined party list. This explains why in the Southern African context the PR system does not provide room for independent candidates to contest election unlike in the case of the FPTP. Voters also do not elect individuals but political parties. The party list of candidates is "usually equivalent to the number of seats to be filled" (Asmal and de Ville, 1994: 6). As Jackson and Jackson observe "essentially, ... in all party list systems the election is primarily to ensure that the legislature reflects the relative popularity of the parties: individual candidates are a secondary concern" (1999: 373).

Furthermore, members of parliament are accountable to the party rather than voters. Hence, the PR is usually criticised for its inability to ensure the accountability of the MP to the electorate, while subjecting him/her to the dictates of the party leadership. The winner is determined by a calculation of total proportion of votes of each party relative to the overall valid votes cast. Using a threshold for qualification of parties to enter parliament (e.g. 0.25% in South Africa or 5% in Mozambique) qualifying parties are allotted parliamentary seats in equal proportion to their electoral strengths. It has many tenets as depicted in Table 7 above.

First, the List-PR system allows a fair translation of votes into parliamentary seats in that all parties contesting elections are able to get a fair share of their parliamentary representation depending upon their electoral performance and the entry threshold. However, it must also be pointed out that criticism has been leveled against the system in that it allows even minority or extremist parties to be represented in parliament and that this introduces a spoiler factor that could destabilize the political system.

Thirdly, unlike the FPTP, the PR is reputed for encouraging more inclusive and broadly representative mechanisms of governance. Hence, the PR lends itself easily to coalition governments. Undoubtedly, coalition governments could be a recipe for political instability especially in young and fragile democracies. However, if well managed coalition governments, or what are also referred to as governments of national unity, could prove useful in the process of peace-building, reconciliation and nation-building as the Mozambican and South African experiences clearly show. The inclusivity and broad representativity of the Mozambican electoral system can be demonstrated by the nature of the election outcomes in 1999 as table 9 illustrates.

Table 9: Mozambique's Election Results, 1999

Party	No. of Votes	% of Votes	No. of seats	% of seats
FRELIMO	2 005 703	48.5	133	53.2
RENAMO	1 603 811	38.8	117	46.8
OTHER	532 789	12.7	...	0.0
Total	4 132 303	100.0	250	100.0

Source: Electoral Institute of Southern Africa

In this way, the PR system has been found to be extremely useful as a conflict resolution mechanism especially for countries emerging from violent conflicts such as Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa (Harris and Reilly, 1998; Matlosa 2001; Reilly, 2001; Reynolds and Reilly, 2002; Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2003).

There is abundant evidence suggesting, in fact, that a major contributor to the resolution of the protracted violent conflict in Namibia, for instance, has been the adoption of the PR electoral model in that country following a negotiated settlement of the conflict. Namibia, like South Africa and Mozambique, boasts a fairly inclusive and broadly representative national assembly due in large measure to the PR system as table 10 below vividly illustrates. As a conflict resolution mechanism, this system could also serve countries like Angola and the DRC well in order to entrench peace and security at least as part of the political settlement of the war. This suggests that before the PR system could contribute positively to a constructive management of a conflict, a solid peace agreement to which all belligerent parties adhere to must be in place (Kumar, 1998; Matlosa, 2001).

Table 10: Namibia's Election Results, 1999

Party	No. of votes	% of total votes	No. of seats	% of seats
COD	53 289	10	7	9.7
DCN	1 797	0	0	0.0
DTA	50 824	9	7	9.7
FCN	764	0	0	0.0
MAG	3 618	1	1	1.4
SWANU	1 885	0	0	0.0
SWAPO	408 174	76	55	76.4
UDF	15 685	3	2	2.8
Total	536 036	100.0	72	100.0

Key:**COD-Congress of Democrats****DCN-Democratic Coalition of Namibia****DTA-Democratic Turnhalle Alliance****UDF-United Democratic Front****FCN-Federal Convention of Namibia****MAG-Monitor Action Group****SWANU-South West African National Union****SWAPO-South West Africa Peoples'****Organisation**

Fourthly, the PR system is considered more conducive for enhancing gender equality in politics and increased participation of women, while the FPTP system is the weakest on this front (Molokomme, 2000). In a recent study, Molokomme discovered that although PR by itself is not a sufficient guarantee for increased women's participation in the legislature and cabinet, it is surely a catalyst for gender equality in the political governance arena. Table 11 depicts women's participation in parliament in the SADC region and from this table evidently those countries using the PR electoral system are doing much better than those using the FPTP.

Table 11: Women in Parliament in the SADC Region

Country	Election	Seats	Women	% Women	Electoral System
Angola	1992	224	34	15	PR
Botswana	1999	47	8	18	FPTP
DRC	1970	210	-	-	FPTP
Lesotho	1998	120	12	10	MMP
Malawi	1999	193	16	8	FPTP
Mauritius	1995	65	5	8	Block vote
Mozambique	1999	250	71	28	PR
Namibia	1999	72	19	19	PR
Seychelles	1998	33	8	24	Mixed
South Africa	1999	400	119	30	PR
Swaziland	1998	95	7	7	FPTP
Tanzania	1995	275	45	16	FPTP
Zambia	1996	150	16	10	FPTP
Zimbabwe	2000	150	13	9	FPTP

Source: Molokomme, 2000

SADC States signed the declaration on Gender and Development during the 1997 summit in Blantyre, Malawi. The summit committed member-states to equal gender representation in all key organs responsible for decision-making by the State by the year 2005. In this regard, member states committed themselves to

immediately achieve at least 30% representation of women in decision-making structures. It is within this context that table 10 above must be understood. It is clear from this table that the top four countries in terms of high women representation in Parliament are South Africa, Mozambique, Seychelles and

Namibia. Three of these operate the PR system, while one operates a majoritarian (Block Vote) system. The bottom four countries in terms of women representation in Parliament are Swaziland, Malawi, Mauritius and Lesotho. It is instructive that three of these operate the FPTP (plurality) system, while one operates a mixed member (MMP) system. A plausible argument can be made, therefore, that the PR is surely a better system for the enhancement of gender equality in the legislature. The MMP is the next best system for this purpose too, whilst the FPTP is the worst case scenario for increased women's participation in the legislature. Further more, it is abundantly evident today that the PR system is more useful for constructive management of conflicts especially for countries emanating from protracted violent wars such as Angola and the DRC. The FPTP system has been identified as one of the various factors behind different types of both violent and non-violent conflicts in countries such as Lesotho, Zambia and Zimbabwe although it has not necessarily triggered conflicts of such magnitude in Botswana and Mauritius.

Mixed-Member Proportional (MMP) Electoral System

The most basic features of the MMP are summarized in Table 12 below. Since the major elements of the MMP are more or less similar to a combination of the PR and the FPTP systems, I have avoided a detailed discussion on these elements. This is because I have already discussed these in previous sections of the paper.

Table 12: Feature Characteristics of The Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) System

Advantages	Disadvantages
Retains Accountability of MPs inherent in FPTP	Relatively more complex than the FPTP and PR
Retains Broad Representation in the legislature inherent in PR	Lack of familiarity in Africa since it is relatively new in the continent
Widens the political complexion of parliament (inclusiveness)	May lead to a fragmented parliament
Combination of constituency vote and party-list vote	Double voting either in a two ballot or single ballot system
Establishment of entry threshold for MPs to hold seats in parliament	Calculation of an entry threshold into parliament by MPs rather lengthy negotiation and consensus among parties
Facilitates power-sharing in the legislature	Rather costly relative to the FPTP
Opens avenues for gender balance in the legislature	May generate a proliferation of parties

On the basis of the above table, the most vivid features of the MMP are as follows:

- A part of the parliamentary seats is determined on the basis of constituency vote
- Another proportion of the parliamentary seats is determined on the basis of party vote
- The system allows for the use of a double-ballot through either two votes on one single ballot or two votes on two separate ballot papers
- In this system independent candidates can only contest election on the constituency based voting and not on the party vote and
- A threshold or quota is devised and used for both the determination of winners and composition of an elected parliament.

Thus, the MMP, in general aims to broaden representation (through the PR component), retain accountability of elected representatives (through the FPTP component) and, given its inclusiveness, can add considerable amount of value to political stability.

A country like Lesotho for instance, has operated the FPTP electoral model bequeathed from the British colonial rule since independence in 1966. The country's historical record points to a disturbing trend of violent and non-violent conflict most of which were election-related. It was thus behind a political history of election-related turbulence in the small mountain kingdom that an electoral reform was subjected to a lot of public debate and finally the FPTP system was jettisoned in favour of the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system in May 2002. Thus, Lesotho "became the first African country to test the MMP electoral model in a parliamentary election" (Elklit, 2002:1). Lesotho used this electoral model during the 2002 national assembly elections for the first time (see Elklit, 2002). Its main tenets are summed up in Table 12 above.

Surely, given the positive result of the MMP electoral model following the May 2002 election in Lesotho, there is no doubt that much of the spotlight in the democracy discourse in the SADC region will focus on Lesotho as regional states attempt to review and reform their electoral models. Although a case can strongly be made that some SADC states will do well to reform their electoral models along these lines, it is also important to note that those countries that have just emerged from violent protracted conflict will certainly be better served by the Proportional Representation systems, if experiences of Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa are anything to go by. These include the Democratic

Republic of the Congo among others (See Kadima, 2003). Thus, I concur with Elklit that "there can be no doubt that the experiences from this first national level application of this electoral system to African soil will be studied carefully in many quarters, including outside the mountain kingdom. This is because discussions about possible electoral system changes are now part of the political discourse in many African countries or have been so recently. Countries where the MMP model has already been discussed include South Africa (where MMP is applied in local government elections), Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Mauritius" (2002:1). It should be noted, though, that the compared to the FPTP electoral model, the MMP is rather complex. This is so because it actually combines two systems into one composite hybrid. In fact the most difficult aspect of this system has to do with a formula for entry of MPs into the legislature and allocation of parliamentary seats. The value of the new MMP electoral system to Lesotho's fledgling and fragile democratic governance is demonstrated by the extent to which this model has changed the complexion of the national assembly as table 13 below vividly demonstrates.

Table 13: Election Results in Lesotho: 1965, 1970 and 2002

Year	Main Parties	No. of Votes	% of Votes	No. of Seats	% of Seats
1965	BNP	108 162	41.6	31	51.6
	BCP	103 050	39.7	25	41.7
	MFP	42 837	16.5	4	6.7
Total		259 825	100.0	60	100.0
1970	BCP	152 907	49.8	36	60.0
(annulled)	BNP	120 686	42.2	23	38.3
	MFP	7 650	7.3	1	1.7
Total		285 257	100.0	60	100.0
2002	LCD	304 316	54.8	77	65.3
	BNP	124 234	22.4	21	17.8
	BAC	16 095	2.9	3	2.5
	BCP	14 584	2.7	3	2.5
	LPC	32 046	5.8	5	4.2
	NIP	30 346	5.5	5	4.2
	LWP	7 788	1.4	1	0.8
	MFP	6 890	1.2	1	0.8
	PFD	6 330	1.1	1	0.8
	NPP	3 985	0.7	1	0.8
Total		554 386	100.0	118	100.0

Source: Matlosa, 2003

The MMP system has a great potential to deepen democratic governance and ensure political stability in Lesotho. The electoral reform process should not be confined to the political elite alone. The process must involve all sectors and sections of society from the planning stages, through design stages up to the implementation and review stages. This is an area where the Lesotho reform process has been weakest and this required a vigorous voter education prior to the 2002 election. The reform process must also not just lead to an adoption of a particular MMP only because it is implemented in New Zealand and Lesotho, but the reform process must be in accord with the particular political culture of each one of the SADC States. In other words the electoral reform process must be home-grown and driven by a national vision rather than being

externally derived and driven by aid donors (Matlosa, 2003).

As in the Lesotho case, Mauritius has also embarked upon a deliberate process of electoral system reform. It is interesting to note that whereas the electoral system reform in Lesotho was informed and driven more by desire to reverse an age-old pervasive phenomenon of political instability, in the case of Mauritius the main driving motive was to entrench an already mature and relatively stable multiparty democracy. In the entire SADC region, the two main relatively mature and stable liberal democracies are surely Botswana and Mauritius. Among many internationally acclaimed attributes of the Mauritian democracy is the holding of regular elections and hence installation of legitimate and credible government. Mauritius has thus, been renowned for its

constitutionally entrenched democratic tradition of regular elections since its independence in 1968. Since its independence, Mauritius has operated fundamentally a British-style FPTP electoral system. In contrast to the Lesotho FPTP, the Mauritian FPTP was improved by introduction of a compensatory mechanism known as the Best Loser System (BLS), which was an attempt to improve on the deficit of FPTP in relation to broader representation and inclusivity of the system and by extension broader participation of parties in the national assembly. Despite the compensation factor introduced by the BLS, Mauritius has not been satisfied with the FPTP system in terms of value added to its democratic governance.

The most recent election held in Mauritius on the 11th of September 2000 still demonstrate the inadequacies of the FPTP. The election outcome witnessed the MSM-MMM alliance claiming state power on a paltry 51.7% of total valid votes and grabbing all the 60 parliamentary seats. Although this disequilibrium is compensated for by the BLS the negative effect of the FPTP system on Mauritius' flourishing democracy still remains. Thus despite the BLS mechanism, the FPTP system still has a number of deficiencies which prompted the government in Mauritius to engage a Commission specifically to introduce a Proportional Representation (PR) component pretty much towards the Mixed Member Proportionality (MMP). It is, thus, anticipated that the new MMP system will be put into effect during the next general election in Mauritius scheduled for 2005.

It is abundantly clear from the two cases above namely Lesotho and Mauritius that there are indeed commendable efforts underway in the SADC region towards

electoral reforms and these efforts are certainly bound to nurture the region's democratic governance. Hopefully, various other SADC member states will follow these examples and revisit their electoral models with a view to deepen and consolidate their democratic governance too.

Electoral Reform Imperatives in the SADC Region

"If it is rare that electoral systems are deliberately chosen, it is rarer still that they are carefully designed for particular historical and social conditions of a country" (Reynolds and Reilly, 2002:1).

If democratic consolidation is to take root and be firmly institutionalized in the SADC region, regional states have to review and re-design their electoral models to suit their own peculiar historical and social conditions. Very rarely have states of the region deliberately embarked upon electoral reforms. So far only Namibia (1990), Angola (1991) Mozambique (1992) and South Africa (1994) reformed their electoral models following the political settlement of their protracted conflict, although Angola receded back to war as the opposition did not accept the result. These countries have adopted the Proportional Representation electoral system as we have already argued. This development was the culmination of the negotiations that aimed to end the violent conflict. Thus, it could then be argued that the adoption of the PR system in some countries such as Namibia, Mozambique and South Africa was indeed part and parcel of a constructive management of a conflict. In a sense, therefore, an electoral model could then be perceived as a conflict resolution mechanism as it were. From these three cases, we can argue strongly that the PR system is a perfect

model for war-torn societies emerging from deep-seated violent conflicts.

Having said this, though, the Angolan case also suggests that the electoral model alone is not a sufficient ingredient for a constructive resolution of a violent conflict. Here is a country, which operates the PR electoral model that many observers thought was making good progress in the early 1990s towards a resolution of its long-drawn war especially following the Bicesse Accords. This was not to be for the 1992 election was aborted by UNITA's refusal to accept the election outcome. This situation, however, does not invalidate our thesis that the PR system is a perfect model for resolution of protracted violent conflict. What this case does suggest, though, is that the PR system can play a conflict resolution role in these circumstances only and only if the belligerent parties sign a peace agreement and abide by the letter and spirit of the agreement. This was the case in Namibia, Mozambique and South Africa (see Lodge, 2003 for instance). This was not the case in Angola in respect to both the 1991 Bicesse Accords and the subsequent 1994 Lusaka Accord. In other words the electoral engineering in Angola, unlike in the other three countries lacked a critical anchor in the form of a meaningful and sustainable peace.

As we have argued earlier, a majority of SADC member states operate the FPTP electoral system. Of all these, Zimbabwe is the most fascinating in terms of the historicity of electoral engineering and how this country ended up with the FPTP. Post-independence Zimbabwe adopted semi-PR electoral model during its 1980 elections, as part of the Lancaster House political compromise, but later changed this model and adopted the FPTP system. It is not quite clear why Zimbabwe changed its electoral model in the mid-1980s, but what is obvious

however is that this was a major retrogression for the political system of that country for it formed part of various triggers for political centralization that formed part of the hyper-presidentialism that emerged since the mid-1980s in that country. There have been calls from various political forces and civil society organizations in Zimbabwe for electoral reform since the early 1990s. In fact one major single issue upon which the diametrically opposed government-led Constitutional Commission and the civil society-led National Constitutional Assembly were agreed upon during the 2000 constitutional review exercise was the reform of the Zimbabwe electoral model away from the FPTP towards some form of semi-PR model. This debate still continues and it is possible that Zimbabwe may have to reform its electoral model and adopt the PR system possibly before the next general election scheduled for 2005. In any case electoral reform was already proposed in the draft constitution by the Constitutional Commission, which was rejected during the 2000 national referendum. This issue has to be revisited as a matter of urgency as part of a long-lasting solution to Zimbabwe's current political crisis.

Of the SADC countries operating the FPTP system with impeccable results both for economic progress and political stability, Botswana and Mauritius stand out. Botswana has operated the FPTP system since its political independence and, unlike in Swaziland and Lesotho, has never experienced any major form of political turbulence. That explains, in part, why Botswana is rightly considered a relatively mature and institutionalized liberal democracy in the entire SADC region. Although Botswana has not experienced political instability as a result of the FPTP electoral model as such, this country still has to review and re-design this model. Such a review and electoral

reform will help address the problem of lack of broad representation and larger participation of other political forces in the political system, in part, by down-scaling the political hegemony of the ruling BDP. It is imperative that as Botswana undertakes its electoral reform, it learns lessons of experience from both Lesotho and Mauritius outlined above.

Both the Zambian and the Tanzanian situations also point to a dire need for electoral reforms especially following their conflict-ridden general elections of 2001. The violent conflict that marked the general election in Tanzania, especially in Zanzibar, is a clear evidence of the deficiencies of the FPTP system. Violent conflict also marked the Zambian election of the same year. Our argument for a causal linkage between violent conflict and the FPTP in both Zambia and Tanzania may appear tenuous at first glance. Actually the causal link is real in that losing parties know that even if they were to make considerable in-roads in galvanizing votes, they would neither capture state power nor be represented in the legislature given the degree to which the FPTP exaggerates electoral dominance of ruling parties. A similar spate of violent conflicts had rocked Lesotho's political system since the 1970s up to the time when the electoral model was changed from the FPTP to the MMP as illustrated vividly earlier on. It is imperative therefore that Tanzania and Zambia consider seriously reforms to their electoral models before their next general elections in 2006. Lessons learnt from Lesotho and Mauritius clearly make the MMP a suitable electoral model for Tanzania and Zambia.

Both the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Swaziland are rather eccentric cases in comparison to all the other SADC countries under review in this paper. In this case, unlike in all the rest,

the major challenge for democratic governance is really not so much the electoral reform *per se*. In Swaziland, the major challenge of governance revolves around the reform of the entire political system away from dynastic oligarchy towards a multi-party democratic governance. Having settled this bigger challenge, then Swaziland has to consider electoral reform. Thus, the Swaziland case suggests that a country cannot consider reforming an electoral system until and unless the institutional, systemic and cultural aspects of a working democracy are firmly in place. Thus, Swaziland should reform its political system towards a constitutional monarchy along the lines of Lesotho and then institutionalize multi-partyism in which the King remains the head of state and the prime minister becomes an effective head of government. Having done this, then Swaziland should then proceed to adopt the MMP along the lines followed in either Lesotho or Mauritius outlined above. The major challenge of governance in the DRC revolves mainly around the consolidation of the country's fragile peace and commitment of all the belligerent parties to peace-building, reconciliation and nation-building. On the basis of this, then a political climate must exist for the holding of elections. However, even before the election is held inter-party consultations and national debate must lead to a choice of an appropriate electoral model to be used. Given the profundity of the violent conflict in the DRC over the years, it is imperative that that country adopts the PR electoral model if it is to manage its protracted violent conflict more constructively.

Way Forward: What is to be Done?

“The most important electoral requirement for democratic transition is usually a system that maximizes inclusiveness, is clearly fair to all parties, and presents minimal areas for potential pre-election conflicts.... These goals are best achieved by some form of regional or national list PR which ideally leads to a ‘grand’ or oversized’ coalition government” (Harris and Reilly, 1998:201).

That the SADC region has made impressive progress towards democratic governance brooks no controversy. However, this study reveals that although much progress has been registered since the early 1990s, a variety of democracy deficits still bedevil efforts towards democratic consolidation. These include, among others, the form and content of electoral systems in place in the region. The major observation that we make in this paper therefore is that SADC countries have to make deliberate efforts to review and re-design their electoral systems if democratic governance is to be entrenched and institutionalized.

As they undergo electoral reform measures, SADC countries should take into account the eight (8) criteria for electoral system designs developed by Reynolds and Reilly and outlined earlier in this paper. Thus the following recommendations flow from the key observations made in this paper:

- **Angola** ought to take advantage of the currently prevailing peace and tranquility in the country predicated upon a new peace agreement to make arrangements for general elections in 2004; However, elections should not be held until and unless peace has been established in the entire country; only then will the country's PR

electoral system add substantial value to its conflict resolution mechanisms and begin to nurture its electoral democracy

- **Botswana** has to review and re-design its electoral system despite the fact that it is one of the internationally acclaimed stable liberal democracy. This reform process will address, in particular, the issue of broadening representation in the legislature and inclusion of key political actors in a manner proportional to their electoral performance. To this end, Botswana should work towards reforming its FPTP system towards the MMP system as exists in Lesotho and contemplated for implementation in Mauritius
- **DRC** needs to conclusively end the protracted violent conflict in that country and ensure that peace prevails and that all the belligerent parties have committed themselves to a sustainable and durable peace, reconciliation and nation-building, in order to avoid a repeat of the 1992 Angolan scenario. Only then should a general election be contemplated following a general agreement by the parties and the general public about the appropriate electoral model to use. Given the legacy of protracted violent conflict in the DRC, it will be prudent if that country adopts the PR electoral model
- **Lesotho** should consolidate the positive development since adoption of the MMP in 2002 by undertaking further reviews and refinement of the system through for instance a post-election postmortem so that the gains made are not reversed; one way in this direction would be a regional conference on lessons learnt involving representatives from other SADC

member states from both state and non-state sectors; the MMP system should not be subjected to any substantial changes before the 2007 general elections

- **Malawi** has undergone a political transition from mono-party and one-person authoritarianism in the early 1990s almost along similar lines of its neighbour-Zambia. Undoubtedly, a positive political transition has been achieved since the first democratic election of 1994. However, political polarization marked by election-related conflict has marked the current political landscape in the country and in this regard, the country's FPTP system has not helped de-escalate the conflict. Instead, the electoral system, itself, has tended to accentuate and escalate the conflict situation and thereby generating political instability. It is thus imperative that Malawi undertakes a reform of its electoral model towards the MMP system more or less along the route followed by Lesotho and Mauritius
- **Mauritius** has operated the FPTP electoral model modified in such a way that it allows for block vote and this element has improved the way the FPTP operates in this country relative to other SADC countries. Be that as it may, the political actors in Mauritius have been concerned about the lack of inclusiveness of the system despite the fact that Mauritius, like Botswana, is a world-acclaimed stable liberal democracy in the SADC region. As a consequence of these concerns about broad representativeness for enhanced legitimacy of rule, the Mauritian government is set on a path for electoral system reform that could see the implementation of the MMP system for the first time in the

country's forthcoming election in 2005

- **Mozambique** should adhere to its PR electoral system and consolidate the gains made since the political settlement of its violent conflict in 1992; there is no need for this country to reform its electoral model in any substantial way before the 2004 general elections; all that Mozambique needs to work on is to put in place effective conflict management mechanisms to deal with multivariate election-related disputes
- **Namibia** has to retain its PR electoral model for, as is the case in South Africa and Mozambique, this system played key role in the resolution of the country's protracted violent conflict. It has brought the belligerent parties together in the legislature and thereby assisting in healing the old wounds of the war of liberation. Like in South Africa and Mozambique, all Namibia needs to do is mainly to keep refining the system here and there in order to ensure accountability of the MPs and the stability of the political system
- **South Africa** need not make any attempts to fundamentally transform its PR electoral model as this model has helped the country a great deal in achieving sustainable peace and reconciliation; thus the same model should be used in the forthcoming 2004 general elections; all that South Africa needs to do is to continuously refine the system (without changing it) if only to ensure accountability and political stability
- **Swaziland** has to, first and foremost, reform its entire political system away from dynastic authoritarianism towards a working multi-party

electoral democracy before reforming its electoral model away from the FPTP towards the MMP along the lines of Lesotho and Mauritius before its next general election in 2005; democratic reforms cannot come on their own in Swaziland as pro-democracy forces have to agitate for this changes; this suggests a vibrant role for civil society groups in Swaziland if meaningful democracy is to take root

- **Tanzania** has to reform its FPTP electoral model especially following worrisome election-related conflicts in the country in the recent past; it is certainly in Tanzania's interest to transform its electoral model away from the FPTP and towards the MMP system before its next election in 2005; thus, the experiences of Lesotho and Mauritius will serve this country well in this regard
- **Zambia** has to review and re-design its electoral system to address both the problem of political instability and legitimacy of rule. No other political even has vividly demonstrated this imperative than the 2001 general election in that country that delivered a minority government with severe legitimacy crisis. Thus, Zambia, like Botswana and Tanzania, has to learn important lessons of experience from the electoral reform processes in Lesotho and Mauritius. Thus Zambia would be served well by the MMP system rather than the present FPTP system
- **Zimbabwe** is surely the most politically polarized of all the countries under study; it is a fact, that all the SADC countries are internally polarized along partisan political lines, but the profundity of this polarization differs from country to country; this

polarization is too deep in Zimbabwe and is often worsened by violent conflict during and in-between elections; part of the Zimbabwe crisis revolves around the electoral model in use namely the FPTP; Zimbabwe, thus, has to reform its electoral system away from the FPTP and revert back to its earlier PR system which was used only once in 1980; this development should take place before its general election of 2005.

Having gone through these electoral reform process SADC countries then may look like this in the not-so-distant future:

Table 14: Future electoral systems in SADC-A possible scenario

Country	Old Electoral System	New Electoral System
Angola	PR	PR
Botswana	FPTP	MMP
DRC	FPTP	PR
Lesotho	FPTP	MMP
Malawi	FPTP	MMP
Mauritius	FPTP	MMP
Mozambique	PR	PR
Namibia	PR	PR
Seychelles	FPTP	...
South Africa	PR	PR
Swaziland	FPTP	MMP
Tanzania	FPTP	MMP
Zambia	FPTP	MMP
Zimbabwe	FPTP	PR

It is worth emphasizing that the proposals in this concluding section of the paper are by no means definitive prescription for a particularized political behaviour and a set path for constitutional engineering. On the contrary, the proposals are meant to be rather suggestive and advance the debate forward by making actors in different fields of governance (especially elections) think deeper and much more creatively around how best the SADC region could nurture and consolidate their democratic governance through electoral engineering.

References

- Asmal, K. and De Ville, J. 1994. "An Electoral System for South Africa" in Stegtler et al (eds.) *Free and Fair Elections*, Cape Town: Juta and Co. Ltd.
- Elklit, J. 2002. "Lesotho 2002: Africa's First MMP Elections" *Journal of African Elections*, 1 (2).
- Elklit, J. 2003. "What electoral systems are available? An international perspective on the current debate in South Africa", in Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung, *ibid*.
- Harris, P. and Reilly, B. (eds). 1998. *Democracy in Deep-Rooted Conflict: Options for Negotiators*, IDEA Handbook Series, Stockholm, Sweden.
- Jackson, R. and Jackson, D. 1997. *A Comparative Introduction to Political Science*, N. J.: Prentice Hall.
- Kadima, D. 2003. 'Choosing an electoral system: Alternatives for the Post-War Democratic Republic of Congo', *Journal of African Elections*, 2 (1).
- Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2003. *Electoral Models for South Africa: Reflections and Options*, Seminar Report, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Kumar, K. (ed). 1998. *Post-Conflict, Elections and Democratization and International Assistance*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Lodge, T. 2003. 'How the South African Electoral System was Negotiated', *Journal of African Elections*, 2 (1).
- Luckham, R., Goetz, A. and Kaldor, M. 2003. 'Democratic Institutions and Democratic Politics', University of Sussex (mimeo).
- Matlosa, K. 2001. "Ballots or Bullets: Elections and Conflict Management in Southern Africa" *Journal of African Elections*, 1 (1).
- Matlosa, K. 2003. 'The Electoral Process and Democratic Governance in Lesotho: Lessons for the Democratic Republic of the Congo' *Journal of African Elections*, 2 (1).
- Molokomme, A. 2000. "Building Inclusiveness in SADC's Democratic Systems: The Case of Women's Representation in Leadership Positions" paper presented at the Southern African Elections Forum, Windhoek, Namibia, 11-14 June.
- Molomo, M. 2000. "In search of an alternative electoral system in Botswana", *Pula*, 14 (1).
- Reilly, B. 2001. *Democracy in Divided Societies: Electoral Engineering for Conflict Management*, New York, Cambridge University Press.
- Reynolds, A. 1999. *Electoral Systems and Democratization in Southern Africa*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Reynolds, A. and Reilly, B. 2002. *International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design*, Stockholm, Sweden.
- Somolekae, G. 2002. "Botswana", in Lodge, T., Kadima, D. and Pottie, D. (eds) *Compendium of Elections in Southern Africa*, Johannesburg, Electoral Institute of Southern Africa.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

***Dr. Khabele Matlosa is the Senior Advisor-Research Department at the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) Tel: +27 11 482 5495, Fax: +27 11 482 6163, Email: khabele@eisa.org.za**

THE EISA MISSION STATEMENT

To strengthen electoral processes, democratic governance, human rights and democratic values through research, capacity building, advocacy and other strategically targeted interventions.

ABOUT EISA?

The Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) is a not-for-profit and non-partisan non-governmental organisation which was established in 1996. Its core business is to provide technical assistance for capacity building of relevant government departments, electoral management bodies, political parties and civil society organisations operating in the democracy and governance field throughout the SADC region and beyond. Inspired by the various positive developments towards democratic governance in Africa as a whole and the SADC region in particular since the early 1990s, EISA aims to advance democratic values, practices and enhance the credibility of electoral processes. The ultimate goal is to assist countries in Africa and the SADC region to nurture and consolidate democratic governance. SADC countries have received enormous technical assistance and advice from EISA in building solid institutional foundations for democracy. This includes electoral system reforms; election monitoring and observation; constructive conflict management; strengthening of parliament and other democratic institutions; strengthening of political parties; capacity building for civil society organisations; deepening democratic local governance; and enhancing the institutional capacity of the election management bodies. EISA is currently the secretariat of the Electoral Commissions Forum (ECF) composed of electoral commissions in the SADC region and established in 1998. EISA is also the secretariat of the SADC Election Support Network (ESN) comprising election-related civil society organisations established in 1997.

EISA OCCASIONAL PAPERS

CODE	TITLE
OP 1	Municipal Elections in 1999, P. Roome, 1999
OP 2	An Overview of Local Government: Municipal Demarcation Act 27 of 1998, R. Cameron, 1999
OP 3	An Analysis of the Legal Framework for Elections, Lisa Thornton, 1998
OP 4	Voter Registration & Demarcation in Local Government, B. Gerber, 1998
OP 5	South African Electoral Commission: The Old and the New, Glenda Fick, 1998
OP 6	An Analysis of the Constitutional and Legal Framework For Elections in the Local Government Sphere, D. Craythorne
OP 7	Developmental Local Government and Local Economic Development, F. Khan, 1998
OP 8	Techniques of Public Participation in Local Government, Doreen Atkinson, 1997
OP 9	Issues of Representation in Local Government, Doreen Atkinson, 1997
OP 10	Local Government: A Review of Selected Legislation, Glenda Fick, 2001
OP 11	Conflict Management Programme Report: South Africa Local Government Election, August-December 2000, EISA AND IEC

To order or for a full list of list publications contact publications@eisa.org.za



The Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA)
2nd Floor, The Atrium
41 Stanley Avenue, Auckland Park 2092, South Africa

P.O. Box 740, Auckland Park 2006, South Africa
Tel 27-11-4825495
Fax 27-11-4826163

<http://www.eisa.org.za/EISA/publications/publications.htm>

Published with the kind assistance of NORAD

