

Towards Democratic Consolidation in the Free African Countries?

The Case of Namibia

Abstract

There are currently only six countries in Africa that can be considered as free. However, none of them are yet democratically consolidated. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine what issues remains to be dealt with for these countries to become democratically consolidated. The method used is a case study on Namibia analyzed through the theory of Linz and Stepan. The findings are that Namibia is well under way to become democratically consolidated, but there are several problems. Most of these problems concerns that government officials make exceptions in the law in order to secure their own position as the ruling party. Corruption, occasional violations of freedom of expression, and elections that are free and fair yet with minor flaws, are only a few of the problems that need to be solved. Since the six free African countries are very similar in most aspects, it ought to some extent be possible to apply the results of this case study to the other free countries in Africa as well.

Key words: Democratic consolidation, Namibia, Linz and Stepan, SWAPO, Africa

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1 Introduction

1.1 Research problem

In the African mainland there are currently only six countries that can, according to Freedom House Index (2010), be classified as free. These are Mali, Benin, Ghana, Namibia, Botswana and South Africa. All of these are post-colonial countries that, apart from Namibia and South Africa¹, became independent in the 1960ies. Another common denominator for all six countries is that none of them seems to have achieved democratic consolidation, since they all have a political rights score around 2, and a civil liberties score around 2. (Freedom House Index 2010) Democratic consolidation is an indication that the democracy is “secure”, thus making them immune against the threat of authoritarian regression (Schedler 1998 p 91), and is therefore of great importance. In countries that are not democratically consolidated it is easier to seize the power through coups, which poses a risk to the national democracy’s further exercise. As Lemon (2007 p 823) argue, holding is almost certainly more difficult than conquering. Therefore, it is important to consolidate the democracy to reduce that possible risk. In order to be able to fulfil the process towards consolidation, it ought to be useful to know what is preventing the same. A study of what is in the way to gain a complete democratic consolidation in the free African countries is therefore important.

1.2 Research question

Thus, the question to be answered is:

- What stands in the way for the free African countries, Namibia in particular, to gain complete democratic consolidation?

¹ The situation of South Africa is a bit more complex. They became autonomous in 1910, but did not become entirely free and independent from Great Britain until 1994. (Freedom House Index 2010)

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine for what reasons the free African countries, Namibia in particular, are not yet consolidated. Thereby we will gain an insight into what a democratic development may look like, and deepen the understanding of what kinds of consolidation issues can arise.

2 Methodology

As mentioned in the introduction, there are today six free countries in Africa. Methodologically, one way to answer the above research question would be to study all of these countries, and make a comparison. The advantage of a comparison is the possibility to generalize the problems of consolidation to all of the countries, but in this study I am primarily interested in identifying all possible aspects of the problems of democratic development. Moreover, the result of an extensive study would be rather shallow, instead of deepening the understanding of the consolidation issues, which is the purpose of this study. The case study possesses the strength that one can obtain many more aspects of the case examined, and make a more deepened analysis of the democratic consolidation, which can give a better insight into the problems of consolidation in the free countries of Africa, than a very shallow comparative study. This aspect richness is the reason for why I chose to examine only one of the free African countries – an analysis of six countries would have been far too shallow.

In order to answer the question asked above I therefore choose to make a single case study of Namibia. The reason for choosing Namibia as a case is that this country only have been independent for 20 years, and in addition it received help internationally from for example its “contact group” consisting of Germany, England, USA, Canada and France, as well as the UN (Taylor 1999 s 56) in order to become a democracy. This was not the case in the other countries – they did not receive the amount of help that Namibia did. Furthermore, Namibia had a bit of an advantage since they became independent in the 90ies, when democracy was considered to be much more important then it did in the 60ies when the other countries became independent. Thus, I argue that the prerequisites for consolidation in this case are much better than in the other free African countries, which means that Namibia should be closer to a fulfilled democracy then the other countries.

Despite this, there are according to Freedom House Index (2010) indications saying that Namibia is not completely democratic. Thus, what remains to be dealt with before the country can be considered to have consolidated its democracy, must be the most difficult aspects of democracy to bring about. By identifying which aspects these are, one is given the opportunity to develop/improve these, also in the other free countries so that the consolidation process may be accelerated. Consequently, the choice of case is based on a variant of the “most likely” method (Teorell & Svensson 2007 p 154).

Furthermore, as Teorell and Svensson (2007 p 18-19) argue, it is good to contribute with new information in a field. This I believe I will do since there has not been very much written about the Namibian democracy in the past few years. Most of the literature regarding the democracy in Namibia was written before

Hifikepunye Pohamba became president, so I do believe that I can contribute with new perspectives by applying the theoretical framework on Namibia.

2.1 Conceptual definitions

To make a study understandable to others, it is of great importance to define the terms being used. This is important in order to avoid misunderstandings, since terms may mean different things to different people. (Teorell & Svensson 2007 p 38) The concept “democratic consolidation” is one of these very abstract and elusive concepts, and therefore may differ in definition depending on person using it.

Democratic consolidation is an area in which plenty of research has been carried out, yet with many different definitions of the concept (Schedler 2001 p 67). It makes it difficult to develop previous research made in the field if we do not have a coherent definition. Moreover, the results may turn out differently depending on what definition of democratic consolidation that was used.

For this reason I choose to use already established concepts. Hence, I define consolidation as Linz and Stepan do, as when all the leaders and the citizens of the country consider democracy to be the best system of government (Abdulai & Crawford 2010 p 28, Diamond 1999 p 69), or – summarized – when democracy can be considered to be “the only game in town” (Linz & Stepan 1996 p 4).

2.2 Choice of theoretical framework

The theory about democratic consolidation that I have chosen is that by Linz and Stepan (1996). In the literature, there appear to be two theories that are predominantly used for discussing democratic consolidation and its criteria. The first one is the one mentioned above, and the second one has been developed by Diamond (1999).

The reason for not choosing Diamond’s (1999) theory is that it is very belief-oriented which I believe to be difficult to examine, especially in a state like Namibia with many rural areas that are difficult to reach. A study without access to material from the more remote areas does not seem reliable since large parts of the country are left out of the study. It is also very difficult to find out peoples true beliefs. It is one thing to say that you believe in something, another to actually believe in it for real. This I find to be a weakness in Diamond’s (1999) theory.

Linz and Stepan’s (1996) theory however, is built upon behaviour, which I find more favourable because it is more measurable. Moreover, Schedler (2001 p 85) has found that behavioural evidence is more accurate than attitudinal and structural data when it comes to assessing democratic consolidation. For these reasons I choose to use Linz and Stepan's theory for my analysis.

Furthermore Schedler (2001 p 66) claims that several studies of democratic consolidation have been exposed to a lot of criticism. However, it is not the concept as such that is problematic, but rather the operationalization of the concept. Democratic consolidation has been observed and measured differently by different researchers, and in inconsistent ways. In order not to increase this apparent confusion further and to facilitate comparison and future developments, I choose a well used theory for my study.

The operational definition of the terms, that is, how one can measure (Teorell & Svensson 2007 p 39) when democracy is “the only game in town” can perhaps be rather difficult to make. As Schedler (2001 p 67) argue, consolidation is not a thing that can be measured but rather an argument and a conclusion. This means that one draw conclusions for the future from past and current behaviour.

I will borrow the operational definition from the tables presented by Walker (2006) and Linz and Stepan (1996) (see appendix).

2.3 Sources of Data

The data material that I have chosen consist of secondary material, containing both scientific journal articles, as well as scientific books. I have also used the Namibian constitution and indexes such as the “Africa barometer”.

As previously stated, the information used has mainly been collected from scientific articles and books. Since the articles I have found are published in scientific journals, and thereby have been reviewed by other experts, I should be able to trust that the material is viable, which is not the case with much information on for example the Internet. I have also used some information from Namibian newspapers, and information from UN Data and other similar indexes.

The constitution of Namibia will be used as a base for the study. Yet, having a good constitution does not always ensure that it is followed, and for this reason I have emphasized the information obtained in the articles I found and put it in relation to the constitution.

2.4 Validity and reliability

Since I am using a commonly used theory and base my operationalization on an already established one, I believe that the reliability of the study is good. I also believe that the validity is good since I have defined the concepts that I am using. This means that there are little room for misconception and systematic measurement errors as Teorell and Svensson (2007 p 56) would put it. Since I

have based my study on secondary data, I will have to struggle with the fact that it has already been interpreted once. However, I still find the material very reliable since it was reviewed before it became published in scientific journals.

The ability to generalise becomes limited since I only examine one specific case. This is not entirely in accordance with Teorell and Svensson (2007 p 230), who argue that a study must be generalizable. This is not really possible in this study, and in fact not in any other single case study. However, I argue that the lack of generalization possibilities does not make the study less interesting, but rather that one can bring forward much more information as well as many more aspects by considering fewer cases.

I also believe that an analytical generalisation would be possible (Teorell & Svensson 2007 p 238) since I am using a well known and much used theory, and because of this I look at the same things that others have done when they were using it as their theoretical framework.

Although some limited generalization – as I wrote above – is possible, direct generalizations are not; instead I choose to prioritize the possibility to explain, rather than the possibility of direct generalizations (Denk & Silander 2007 p 114).

2.5 Disposition

I will start this thesis by a review of theories that are well known within the consolidation field, as well as a review of the theory that I will be using as my theoretical framework. Thereafter I will give a brief introduction to the Namibian colonial background and their struggle for liberation, and then roughly present the Namibian constitution. After this I will present my analysis integrated with the empirical data, followed by the conclusion.

3 Theory

3.1 Literature review

Although much research has been made within the consolidation field, only few theories deal with criteria for measuring whether or not democratic consolidation has taken place. Abdulai and Crawford's (2010) study on Ghana, Gallina's (2010) study on Armenia and Georgia as well as Arthur's (2010) study on Ghana are just a few of many authors that have been using the two theories by Diamond (1999) and Linz and Stepan (1996) – the two theories that are among the few that deals with criteria for consolidation. These two theories are in many ways the same (since Diamond bases his theory somewhat on Linz and Stepan's) but they also differ. Both argue that democratic consolidation has occurred when democracy is “the only game in town” (Diamond 1999 p 65, Linz & Stepan 1996 p 4)

Diamond has divided his framework into three levels: elite, organizations and mass public. The elite level consists of the top decision makers in the state, the leaders of organizations and political activists in politics, government, economy and society. The intermediate level – organizations – contains all parties, organizations and movements, whereas the mass public level consists of the state's citizens. (Diamond 1999 p 65ff)

These three levels are then analysed through the dimensions “norms and beliefs” and “behaviour”, since Diamond (1999 p 66) argue that the people on all three levels must believe that democracy is the best way to govern.

At an elite level, behaviour is not the only important factor. Since the elite are likely to be guided in their actions by their beliefs, and since they also have more influence of political events, a non-democratic belief might become a problem. Behaviourally elites shape political society in inducing what behaviour is appropriate respectively inappropriate. Therefore it is important that elites respect each other's rights to compete peacefully for power, without violence, and that all respect the laws and the constitution. Elites must not use rhetoric that can encourage others to violate laws or use violence. (Diamond 1999 p 66,69)

On an organizational level there are many different views among organizations, and therefore the most effective way of analysing these levels of beliefs and behaviour is by observing the democratic consolidation in its inverse. For example one might study the use of violence, fraud or any other illegal activity carried out by organizations and/or associations in order to gain power. This means that democratic consolidation can only take place when no organization or similar, challenge the legitimacy of democratic institutions, nor violate its laws, procedures or norms. Diamond (1999 p 67) however recognize the problems that these criteria are difficult to achieve, and therefore argue that

organizations with anti-democrats must play a marginal role. There cannot be any politically significant anti-system parties or organizations. (Diamond 1999 p 67f)

At the level of mass public, democratic consolidation is achieved when a large majority believes that democracy is the best way to govern. This support must be given by two thirds of the citizens at a minimum, but 70-75% of the population is a more convincing indicator. Yet, this is not the only important factor for consolidation. It is also important that this support is shown during a certain period of time, and that those with opposing anti-democratic views holds only a minority at a maximum of 15% of the population. Diamond (1999 p 68ff) argue that even though there might be a low turnout in elections, the democracy may still be consolidated as long as the low turnout is not a result of violence, fraud or lawlessness as a method of political action. Also, citizens must be willing to defend the democratic values – as Weingast puts it “to survive a constitution must have more than philosophical or logical appeal; citizens must be willing to defend it.”(Diamond 1999 p 68ff)

Since Diamond partially has based his theory on Linz and Stepan’s theory on democratic consolidation, there are many similarities. Yet, there are also many differences.

Linz and Stepan have categorized democratic consolidation into five arenas: civil society, political society, rule of law, state apparatus and economic society. Of these five the three first arenas are crucial to democratic consolidation, whereas the two last arenas are important and helpful factors when consolidating democracy, but not necessary. (Walker 2006 p 755)

Within the civil society it is the social movements such as associations and organizations, but also the ordinary citizens that play an important role by expressing their opposition to the authorities and thereby challenge the regime. (Linz & Stepan 1996 p 7f)

The political society consists of the core democratic institutions; political parties, elections in which the rules must be followed and legislatures etc. (Linz & Stepan 1996 p 8ff)

The third arena – rule of law – implies that the established laws are followed and that they are embodied in the constitution. An independent judiciary is also necessary. (Linz & Stepan 1996 p 10)

A well functioning state apparatus is advantageous so that people can be ensured basic entitlements and their rights being preserved, as for example not being a victim of crime. (Linz & Stepan 1996 p 10)

A good economic society also serves beneficial for democratic consolidation. The economic society should be a free market economy, but should still be regulated by the government when it comes to for instance stock market and protection of property. The state must also be able to correct the market when it experience market failure, and it must also be able to ensure the citizens education, transportation and health. (Linz & Stepan 1996 p 11)

Because Diamond (1999) focus not only on behaviour, but also on beliefs and norms I find it very hard to put his study into practice with an evaluation of the beliefs and norms in a country like Namibia. With many rural areas that are difficult to reach it would result in unreliable material with only a few groups

represented. Since Africa is a continent that is highly influenced by tribes and ethnic groups, I find it very important to get all of the perspectives, or the result probably will become flawed. Without all of the groups represented, the study probably would not make Namibian consolidation justice. Moreover, as Schedler argue (2001 p 85) behavioural evidence is more accurate than attitudinal and structural data when it comes to assessing democratic consolidation because attitudes guide the structural context and the result becomes the behaviour. Thus, if the behaviour is democratic, the attitudes and the structural context must be democratic as well.

For these reasons I choose the more behaviourally focused theory by Linz and Stepan (1996).

3.2 Theoretical framework

According to Linz and Stepan consolidation is achieved when

... sufficient agreement has been reached about political procedures to produce an elected government, when a government comes to power that is the direct result of a free and popular vote, when this government de facto has the authority to generate new policies, and when the executive, legislative and judicial power generated by the new democracy does not have to share the power with other bodies de jure. (Linz & Stepan 1996 p 3)

To summarize the over all meaning of this: democratic consolidation has occurred when democracy can be considered to be “the only game in town”. Linz and Stepan (1996 p 4) emphasizes that there obviously still may be disagreements among the democrats – because this is normal, and the country could still be a consolidated democracy. However, there should never be any deep ambivalence about the democratic institutions with no sign of accommodations to the institutions. Therefore are not only the values of democracy important for consolidation, but also the institutions. (Linz & Stepan 1996 p 4f)

Linz and Stepan (1996 p 7) have categorized democratic consolidation into five arenas:

- Civil society
- Political society
- Rule of law
- State apparatus
- Economic society

Civil society consists of social movements such as for example religious groupings, neighbourhood associations and so forth, and civic associations from all social classes as for example trade unions, journalists, etc. The reason for

stressing the civil society as an important arena is for its capability to mobilize the opposition, which were the case in e.g. Brazil and many countries in Eastern Europe. However, it is not only the organizations that play an important role in the civil society, but also the ordinary citizens. Provided that they are democrats (which they have to be in order to be democratically consolidated – as Schedler (2001 p 70) argue, there cannot be a democratic game if there are no democratic players.) the citizens turn up in the streets in protest marches, to some extent express their opposition to the authorities, and thereby challenge the regime. Yet, Linz and Stepan argue, the ordinary citizens cannot in an unorganized form overthrow a regime, neither establish a new democratic one. For this reason Linz and Stepan turn little attention to this unorganized group. (Linz & Stepan 1996 p 7f)

Political society implies the core institutions of a democratic political society such as political parties, elections, electoral rules, legislatures etc. The political parties represents the differences between democrats, as was mentioned above. In this arena civil society also plays a role, since it is in the civil society where people help pushing transition forward towards consolidation. (Linz & Stepan 1996 p 8ff) In short, Linz and Stepan argue that “political society, informed, pressured and periodically renewed by civil society, must somehow achieve a workable agreement on the myriad ways in which democratic power will be crated and exercised” (Linz & Stepan 1996 p 10).

Rule of law means that everyone must respect and uphold the laws that have been passed, and that these laws are embodied in the constitution. In this arena it is also important to have a clear hierarchy that is interpreted by an independent judiciary, and strengthened by the legal culture in the civil society. (Linz & Stepan 1996 p 10)

Linz and Stepan argues that the three above-mentioned arenas are critical to democratic consolidation. However, the two arenas “state apparatus” and “economic society” plays an important, yet not necessary, role in order to gain democratic consolidation. (Walker 2006 p 755)

In spite of this, Linz and Stepan reason that in order to sustain the rights of the civil society, the state needs compulsory taxation to be able to pay for the police, judges and other basic services. If the citizens cannot be ensured to have their rights respected, or receive basic entitlements, then the prospects for democratic consolidation is not very good. To be able to tax the civil society, the state therefore needs a functioning *state apparatus*. (Linz & Stepan 1996 p 10)

The last arena, *economic society*, is the arena that calls for a “socio-politically crafted and socio-politically accepted norms, institutions, and regulations” (Linz & Stepan 1996 p 11). So what should this economic society look like? Linz and Stepan (1996 p 11) argue that it should not be a completely free market economy, nor a completely state regulated economy. The ideal economic society would rather be at an intermediate level, where the market is free, but not completely. The reason for this is that all market economies require corporate regulations, such as those of stock markets, protection of property etc. Furthermore, since even the best market economy will experience market failure, it is important that the state can correct these market failures and get the market to recover properly.

Moreover, the democracy must be able to produce policies that ensure government-mandated public goods such as education, health and transportation, as a safety net for its citizens that may become victims of major market swings, some alleviation of gross inequality, etc. Without these fundamental public goods, democracy would not be possible to sustain. (Linz & Stepan 1996 p 11ff) This means that to gain democratic consolidation, the economic society requires the institutionalization of a socially and politically regulated market. But in order to maintain the economic society, the country needs an effective state.

As could be noticed from the above, all of the arenas are more or less supported by one another. As Linz and Stepan (1996 p 15) argue; “for example, civil society in a democracy needs the support of a rule of law that guarantees the right of association and needs the support of a state apparatus that will effectively impose legal sanctions on those who would attempt to use illegal means to stop groups from exercising their democratic right to organize”.

I will operationalize these arenas for my study by using the guidelines made by Walker (2006 p 756) presented in figure 2 in the appendix.

4 Background – the road to independence

In 1884 Namibia was occupied by Germany, who named the country German Southwest Africa. However, the original inhabitants (the ethnic groups were San, Nama, Ovambos and Herero) got tired of the harshness of the German rule, which led to a war between the Hereros and the Germans in 1904. 80% of the Hereros and 40% of the Namas were killed, in what we nowadays would refer to as a genocide. (Davidson 1991 p 1f) In 1915 South Africa captured the German colony, and the League of Nations awarded South Africa trusteeship to the territory, which was now renamed Southwest Africa. By this the South African government gained full control of the administration and legislation of the territory. They soon introduced restrictive and discriminatory laws that only applied to Africans, and not to the white population. (Lamy-Giner 2010 p 4)

In 1945 when the League of Nations was replaced with the United Nations, South Africa saw Southwest Africa as an annexed territory, and refused to let it be placed under UN trusteeship. (Davidson 1991 p 3)

Meanwhile the dissatisfaction among the Africans rose, and a nationalist movement called the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) emerged to start an armed liberation struggle. This was mainly a group of Ovambo people, led by Sam Nujoma, and because of the strongly divided ethnic groups the other groups launched their own movements, e.g. SWANU, largely sponsored by the Hereros. (Davidson 1991 p 6) Internationally however, the SWAPO movement was considered to be the sole authentic representative of the African people in Namibia. (Melber 2003 p 269)

The UN also helped legitimize Namibia's liberation struggle. In 1978 the UN Security Council ratified resolution 435, which proclaimed that South Africa had to withdraw its troops, and that an election should be held. This however, did not become the big breakthrough as the UN had hoped. Instead it took about eleven years, meanwhile Namibia's contact group (Germany, USA, England, France and Canada) negotiated with both SWAPO and South Africa, to implement the resolution. (Taylor 1999 p 56) The discriminating laws were eradicated, and approximately 42 000 Namibians returned to the country. (Davidson 1991 p 7ff) The first internationally recognized election was held in 1989 under UN supervision, and SWAPO won by 57 % of the votes – which was lower than expected. DTA gained 28 % of the votes, and therefore failed to emerge as a really powerful opposition. In March 21st 1990 Namibia was officially declared independent. (Melber 2003 p 270)

5 The constitution

After independence, the recently elected government had to develop a new constitution, under UN supervision. The final constitution consisted of a list of fundamental human rights, and a restriction in the incumbency of the president. Furthermore, it contained proportional representation in the 72-member National Assembly that in addition has the legislative power. The executive power however, lies on the Cabinet that is headed by a President. The President is elected through a secret ballot of the National Assembly, and then has the right to appoint the Prime minister, Chief Justice, Attorney General and Ombudsman. (Davidson 1991 p 12)

The constitution also proclaims that there should be an upper house called the “House of Review”. This consists of two members from every region in Namibia, elected by an electoral college (regional councils and municipalities). The House of Reviews task is to view the bills that are made by the National Assembly. If it is rejected, the bill will be sent back to the Assembly. (Davidson 1991 p 12)

Regarding the judiciary it is said that it should be independent. (Davidson 1991 p 12)

When looking further at the meaning of “fundamental human rights” one see that the constitution proclaims the Protection of life (e g. no death penalties), Protection of liberty, Right to education, Fair trial, Equality and freedom from discrimination, Children’s rights (e g. children under the age of 14 should not work), Freedom of speech and expression, etc. These are just a few of the Fundamental Human Rights mentioned in the constitution. (Chapter 3 Namibian Constitution) The Namibian people were by this given rights and freedom, as well as obligations, they have never before possessed.

Consequently, the new governmental system was a parliamentary system, with a separation of powers. This divided the public sector into the legislature (National Assembly, National Council, Regional and Local Councils), the executive (the Cabinet and its subordinate public administration) and the judiciary. (Fogelmarck 2000 p. 28) Even though the constitution was controversial among the parties, this constitution promoted by SWAPO finally was accepted, and remains the constitution of today. In 1989 the constitution of Namibia was considered as one of the most democratic in Africa and the world (Bauer 2001 p 37).

6 Namibia today - analysis

Today, 20 years after independence, the Namibian constitution remains the same. However, as mentioned above, a democratic constitution does not always assure that it is followed. Even though the constitution generally is followed, there has been some restrictions since it was accepted – and there still is.

6.1 Civil society

Within the civil society, The US State Department has reported that many government officials have attacked journalists, human rights groups and opposition politicians as a response to critique aimed at the ruling party and government. Privately owned media is under pressure from the President, Prime Minister and others criticised for “negative coverage” such as for covering sensitive news stories and leaking supposedly confidential policy documents. Talk show hosts have even been removed from their posts, allegedly for political reasons, and so forth. (Bauer 2001 p 46, 51) This is not a new problem – groups that criticise the regime have since independence been more or less exposed to attacks. (Davidson 1991 p 42f) One journalist summarizes the freedom of expression and the freedom of media in Namibia:

... Although it is guaranteed by our constitution it's a constant fight to protect those rights... because... government tends to feel that the media should play the role of praising them, and you know that they shouldn't criticize government or be negative about anything government does. I would say that since independence the media in Namibia have managed to play the role that they should within society, of being a voice for the community that they serve and the people of the country in general. Although this often brings the media into conflict with government... Namibia is fortunate that unlike other in countries the government... has grudgingly come to accept that the media is there, it has a role to play and it's not going to go away. (Wasserman 2010 p 574)

Although journalists are under pressure from the government, they still seem to operate rather independently of the dominant party. (Melber 2010 p 204)

Pressure from the government has also increased upon union federations and church federations, as these federations have started to question some of the regime's decisions and actions. (Bauer 2001 p 49) However, these too seem to operate rather independently. From the perspective of Linz and Stepan's the government's interfering with media and organizations are rather worrying, yet the fact that journalists, federations and organizations despite this still seem to operate independently is a very good thing for consolidation. That the regime

feels that there is a need to silence opposing voices, indicates an awareness among the people and that the people actually do oppose some of the regime's actions, which according to Linz and Stepan is a criteria for democratic consolidation.

Although many journalists are in many cases harassed, the overall climate within the media sphere is considered to be good. There is proliferation of private media – both spoken and written – and the presence of organisations such as Media Institute of Southern Africa safeguards the constitutional guaranties. Politicians are generally positive about the media and are describing them as fair and objective on the whole. One government politician argue that it plays a major role in communicating political messages on behalf of the government to remote areas. (Wasserman 2010 p 574, 581)

The regime putting pressure on the media is however not the only problem within the civil society. In Namibia, there are little of investigative reports about e.g. corruption or human rights abuses, partly due to that the information is hard to access, but also the lack of experience and training among the journalists. Very few of them have got a proper journalist training, and therefore do not quite know how to do investigative research. Economic obstacles are also an explanation – the in-dept coverage requires significant financial investment. (Wasserman 2010 p 577f) The lack of investigative reports has an impact on the way that policy matters are explained and reported to the public, and therefore more investigative reports are desirable. If citizens were more aware of the things going on within the government and in the society, then maybe they would be more ardent about joining associations that lobby for interests in legislatures and promote non-governmental cooperation.

However, Afrikaans, German-speaking and other indigenous language-speaking radio stations that are allowed unfettered programming during most of the day (Forrest 1994 p 96), facilitates public opposition as they raise awareness about the policies among the citizens that do not speak the official languages.

As Linz and Stepan (1996 p 7f) argue, ordinary people have little chance to sway the regime as individuals, and they therefore need to gather in organizations. This is a problem in Namibia; the amount of citizens that are members of associations or community groups are very low. Only 11,4% are active members, and 14,7% are inactive members. 72,5% are not members in any kind of association or group. (Afrobarometer 2010) This way they will have a hard time affecting the government, which is not improving the prospects for democratic consolidation.

According to the Afrobarometer survey Namibia is a country that can be classified as “a democracy without democrats”, yet their survey also show that Namibians “are among the most satisfied populations in African democracies in terms of how democracy works in the country” (Melber 2009 p. 2, 14) which serves as a good thing for democratic consolidation according to Linz and Stepan. The fact that people do not believe in democratic values may be due to that they are not engaging themselves in any association where they can talk about these things.

6.2 Political society

There is within the political society only one large party, SWAPO, which was the most prominent movement during the liberation struggle. Other parties are DTA, UDF, APP and CoD. (Melber 2007 p 65) But as mentioned, SWAPO is by far the largest party.

Explanations for the large majority of SWAPO within the parliament, could be that SWAPO was considered to have lead the successful liberation struggle, when other parties (as DTA for example) is more associated with the regimes before independence. SWAPO also have, what appears to be, free access and use of the states large resources, which is something that other parties do not – they are rather struggling with their finances. (Bauer 2001 p 43) Moreover, the largest ethnic group in Namibia is Ovambo, and because SWAPO is considered to be an “Ovambo party”, it does have a small advantage. (Lindeke 1995 p 9) The latter might be a problem since voting therefore may be explained as providing material benefits and security for the personal voter, rather than voting for what is best for the country as a whole. However, most of the citizens now regard themselves more as Namibians rather than part of an ethnic identity (Forrest 1994 p 98), which would mean that ethnic voting maybe is not as large of a problem as one might believe in the first place.

Another explanation for the large support of SWAPO is that many of the alternative opposition parties are weak and disorganized. Moreover, In Namibia the citizens began to participate in elections before competitive norms and practices were established, leading to distrust of opposition. By the time that the first democratic election took place, the country was still not a democracy and the democratic procedures had not taken root. Still though, there are other parties which is a criteria for democratic consolidation.

Because of SWAPO’s strong position within the parliament, it is hard to foretell how a possible transfer of power outside the party would look like. The only transfer of power that has happened up until now, was the one in 2004 within SWAPO itself when Sam Nujoma had to step down in favour of Hifikepunye Pohamba, who now became president and head of the party. The transition of power in itself was a peaceful one, since Sam Nujoma’s presidency had already been extended to three terms. As SWAPO once more won the election, the new president became Hifikepunye Pohamba (Melber 2010 p 204f).

Pohamba’s five years in office just run out and in 2009 there was a new election, which Pohamba won, although many believed in a change since this was the first election where the so called “born-frees”² – that had no particular political allegiances rooted in the struggle for liberation – were allowed to participate (Africa Monitor: Southern Africa).

As far as Linz and Stepan’s requirement for peaceful contestation is concerned, there have been a couple of incidents during the elections. Two years before the election in 2009, a new party, called Rally for Democracy and Progress

² The “born-frees” are those that were born after independence, and therefore have no political allegiances that are rooted in the struggle for independence. (Africa Monitor: Southern Africa)

(RDP) was formed. The party consisted of former high-ranked political office-bearers from the first generation of SWAPO. RDP was considered to be a serious challenge to SWAPO's dominance. Because SWAPO now felt an increased threat from another party, SWAPO were encouraged with an aggressive approach. They accused RDP for being traitors, and were on various occasions refused campaigning freely because they were said to provoke SWAPO supporters in their local strongholds. (Melber 2010 p 204f) SWAPO ultras even encouraged party members to boycott businesses that were run by RDP members – and thereby put them out of their jobs. (Africa Confidential 2008) The Afrobarometer project proclaimed in 2008 its worries of the Namibian peace and stability. This was something that had not been seen since independence. (Melber 2010 p 204f)

The hostile approach to government opposition is rather disturbing. Given the strong consolidation of power in the hands of SWAPO, it seems odd – almost paranoid – to act hostile and insecure towards opposing parties, as well as towards media and federations.

Despite this, the election 2009 was considered to have been free and fair by the Southern African Development Community, and the African Union. Although some claimed (e.g. the Namibian Institute for Democracy) that there were a few minor flaws, they were not many enough to falsify the results – they were still largely credible. (Melber 2010 p 206)

The election may be considered as free and fair, but the fact that opposition in many cases are harassed is a major set back for the possibilities of democratic consolidation. However, it is a good sign that Namibia actually has an institute for democracy of their own that can audit the state and thereby ensure fair elections.

6.3 Rule of law

In general, the rule of law is respected, but there have been cases where the law has been restricted. For example, in 1997 SWAPO wanted to extend the term for presidency of office from two to three years.

The argument was that president Sam Nujoma was not popularly elected by the people of Namibia, since the National Assembly elected him. Therefore, SWAPO argued, the citizens should be allowed a second opportunity to vote for him in 1991. Yet, the third term would only be allowed this particular election in 1999 – future presidents would only serve two terms. As SWAPO had a two-thirds majority in both of the houses of Parliament, the change was approved, and in 1999 president Sam Nujoma won his third term for president. (Bauer 2001 p 37) This cannot be considered as “unconditional adherence to constitution” as Linz and Stepan (1996 p 10) puts it. There shall be no exceptions in the law for those in power, and this is certainly an exception. Even though this happened a couple of years ago, I do believe that it is still of importance for the Namibia of today. If there is one exception made, it is possible that others are to come. Since SWAPO still has a majority within the parliament, another exception like this would be possible. Notwithstanding though, is the fact that Sam Nujoma actually

did step down after his third term, instead of increasing it yet again. So, on condition that these exceptions do not repeat themselves, Namibia's chances for consolidation ought to be rather good.

Furthermore, the Namibian involvement in the Angolan civil war, has violated chapter 3 in the constitution concerning human rights. I e. in many tourist destinations within the Caprivi-region, killing and losses were being reported in 2000. The US State Department and Amnesty International issued separate reports raising concerns about the respect for the fundamental human rights and freedom within Namibia. It was reported that members of the parliamentary Special Field Forces, among others, shot civilians and tortured suspects and detainees during their operations in the Caprivi region. (Bauer 2001 p 39-40) 42f) This bespeak that, occasionally, the law is not enforced since they violated the most fundamental human rights that are ensured in the constitution.

The president at the time, Nujoma, was also charged for failing to consult with the parliament and the cabinet before he sent Namibian troops to the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1998 (he argued the intervention was a matter of securing Namibian stability and peace, as well as an important action for international solidarity). This action would violate the constitution, referring to Article 96. Yet, this article is only considered to be "principles of state policy", and is therefore not binding. (Bauer 2001 p 38)

Although this might not qualify as a crises, even though Nujoma argued it was, and again these things happened a few years ago, but I believe that it might still serve as a possible indicator to what might happen in crisis. Still this happened during Nujomas time as president, but as I argued above, this is concerning because it might happen again. However, the current president Pohamba's leadership style is perhaps different than the former president Nujoma's. Pohamba is known for trying to rule in a collegative style, and to accommodate opposing viewpoints and persons. (Africa Confidential 2008) This might mean that he would perhaps prefer to first consult with the parliament and the cabinet in the case of a possible crisis.

Despite the government's pressure upon organizations in many areas – including the judiciary – the judiciary is still operating independently according to the constitution. This has been evident when they on several occasions have made rulings rejecting the arguments made by the regime. (Forrest 1994 p 97) As I argued above, the fact that the government is trying to interfere with what is supposed to be independent government bodies is disturbing and should be taken into account when talking about democratic consolidation. Even though the judiciary is operating independently – according to Linz and Stepan's (1996 p 10) criteria – there is still an indicator of that the democracy is not very consolidated because of the government's interference. However, the judiciary's determination to adjudicate independently of the regime, might indicate that the rule of law is actually rather consolidated democratically since they still judge according to the written laws.

Another issue within the Namibian society is corruption. Even though the government has tried to get it under control by granting a wide investigatory power to the Frank Commission consisting of three prominent judges. These have

uncovered little large-scale fraud, but a wider degree of petty corruption in several ministries, e.g. abuse of travel allowances. (Forrest 1994 p 93) Despite this, it is difficult to get it all under control which is to be seen in the number of corruption scandals that have taken place both in the society and within the government. In 1999 a decision was made to establish an anti-corruption unit, but no legislation has yet been formed to require members of government to publicly declare their assets. The new legislation was promised for 2000, but has not yet been enacted. (Bauer 2001 p 41) Although Namibia may have problems with corruption, one must remember that Namibia today is the third least corrupt land in Africa (after Botswana and South Africa).³ (Transparency International) However, that does not mean that corruption can be justified. It is still a problem consolidation wise since it is violating the criteria “no exceptions made for those in power”.

Apart from these episodes, the laws are consistently enforced. The Namibian constitution was as a matter of fact considered to be the most democratic constitution in the world when it was established. (Bauer 2001 p 37)

6.4 State apparatus

The Namibian crime rate is rather high, and crimes such as credit card fraud are one of the largest problems. There has also been an increase of baby dumping that is rather worrying. (The Namibian 2010) There is also a large amount of violent crimes as robberies, targeting both businesses and individuals (The Namibian 2009) In 2007 14% of the people had been assaulted and 23% had property stolen (Legatum Prosperity Index 2010)

This suggests that the police force is not all that effective. However, this could also be an effect of widespread corruption. It could be assumed that corruption exists within the police force as well as in the government.

According to Namibians themselves, Namibian infrastructure is one of the best in Africa. It has an immense network of roads, but only about 12% is paved. However, there are good railways and highways between economically significant areas. The same goes for shipping lines. Namibia also has a large number of airports, and its own national carrier – Air Namibia. (Nationencyclopedia) The amount of telephone users per 100 inhabitants were in 2008 56%, and the amount of internet users per 100 inhabitants were 5,3%⁴ (UN Data). That Namibia themselves find the infrastructure to be one of the best in Africa, is of little help when discussing democratic consolidation. In general, infrastructure is rather poor in African countries, so even though they find it to be good, it will hardly meet the expectations from a consolidated democracy nowadays. What is good though is

³ Namibia received a score of 4.4 on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 meaning the country is highly corrupt, and 10 meaning the country is highly clean. In comparison with the score in 2001 (5.3) there has been a decline in corruption. (Transparency International, Bauer 2001 p 41)

⁴ The population was in 2008 about 2 130 000. (UN Data)

that they greet themselves for being the best, since this might make them even more eager to continue improving.

According to Linz and Stepan (1996 p 10) it is important that the unemployment rate is low and the literacy among the population is high in order to be considered to be a democratically consolidated country. In Namibia however, the unemployment rate is 21,6% (UN Human Development Report 2010), which cannot be considered to be very a good rate. Yet, Namibia enacted a new labour law in 1992, which aimed for the improvement of the conditions for Namibian workers. This law sought to, among other things, reduce the unemployment rate and, consequently reduce the number of people living below income poverty line⁵ (Bauer 2001 p 40). If this labour law works, then the possibilities for democratic consolidation would look better. Unlike the current unemployment rate, the literacy level is rather good. Among the adults (those who are 15 years old and older) literacy is 88,2% (UN Human Development Report 2010). This could indicate that democratic consolidation is not that far away after all.

6.5 Economic society

Namibia is a modern market economy, which stands for most of the country's wealth. The GDP is considered to be relatively high compared to other developing countries, yet they struggle with problems of high inequality in income distribution. This is an area where there has been little change since independence other than that black economic empowerment is applied selectively to the benefit of a post-colonial elite. (Lemon 2007 p 827, 837)

Namibia's economy is heavily dependent on the mining industry that stood for about 10,4% of the Namibian GDP in 2009. Due to the worldwide economic downturn, the Namibian economy also dropped in 2009 because of its focus upon extractive industries. Still, between 25% and 40% of the citizens devote themselves to subsistence agriculture and herding. Not only minerals are important to the economy; other vital sectors are livestock and fish. Since the financial downturn, the Real GDP growth is likely to bounce back to grow by 4.1% in 2010 as world demand of Namibia's minerals is increasing. (Morley 2010 p 12)

The government has since independence pursued free market economic principles that have been designed to promote commercial development and job creation to bring disadvantaged citizens into the economic mainstream. (Morley 2010 p 12) To make this happen, the government, among other things, developed the Foreign Investment Act of 1990, which provides for freedom from nationalization, freedom to remit capital and profits, currency convertibility, and a process for settling disputes equitably (Foreign Investment Act 1990). These regulations that have been made, is a good thing according to Linz and Stepan's

⁵ Living below income poverty line means living on less than 1,25 USD a day. (UN Development Report)

(1996 p 11) theory about democratic consolidation, because it is creating an economic infrastructure.

Namibia's economy is closely integrated with that of South Africa since most of Namibia's import (80%) comes from South Africa, and much is exported to this country, either to stay there, or just as a transit. Furthermore, both the Namibian dollar and the South African rand are accepted in Namibia, although the Namibian dollar is not accepted in South Africa.

Linz and Stepan (1996 p 11ff) stress the importance of stable inflation and employment rates, and that it is important that the government can handle these market swings in order to prevent unemployment etc. In Namibia it is however not very stable. Inflation fell to 6,7% in November due to a massive drop in food prices. Because of the economy being so closely integrated with South Africa, the future of Namibian inflation is depending on that in South Africa. However, one may expect that the average inflation would slow down to 5,7% in 2010 (Morley 2010 p 12). The Namibian dependence on South Africa shows a weakness in the Namibian economy, since inflation also have an effect on the employment rates in Namibia. Thus, if the Namibian economy is relying on the South African one, it will be harder for the government to handle the market swings as they could be a consequence of the market swings in South Africa.

6.6 Summary

There are many situations within the Namibian society that can be interpreted as indications both for consolidation and non-consolidation of democracy. The table below (Table 1), based on the analysis above, attempts to clarify what in Namibia are remaining problems to be dealt with, and what are indicators for moving towards democratic consolidation.

	Evidence of Consolidation	Evidence of Non-Consolidation
Civil Society	Public Opposition to Governmental Practices. Public Confidence in Democratic Institutions.	Low Participation in Diverse Associations.
Political Society	Existence of Multiple, Developed Parties and Healthy Competition. Not Entirely Free Contestation. Peaceful Transfer of Power Within The Party	Not Entirely Free Contestation.
Rule of Law	Consensus on Rules of Democracy Established in Written Constitution. Not Always Following Constitutional Guidelines Even in Crisis. Exceptions in the Law Has Been Made For Those in Power. Not Always Consistent Enforcement of Law	Not Always Following Constitutional Guidelines Even in Crisis. Exceptions in the Law Has Been Made For Those in Power. Not Always Consistent Enforcement of Law
State Apparatus	High Literacy. Rather Developed Infrastructure.	Relatively High Crime Rates. High Unemployment rates.
Economic Society	Functional Market Economy. Laws for Corporation.	Instable Inflation and Employment Rates. Government Regulation Can Be Insufficient.

Table 1: Summary – Evidence of Consolidation and Evidence of Non-Consolidation in Namibia.

7 Conclusion

There is no doubt about the fact that Namibia is not yet democratically consolidated. However, they seem to be well under way. Although there is a low participation in various associations, there are reasons to believe that an improved and increased investigative journalism would possibly also increase the awareness and the interest in democracy and citizens would thereby be more inclined to join the associations mentioned above. However, there are many that actually involve themselves in the democratic culture within Namibia, which is promising for future democratic consolidation. Media and federations still oppose some of the government's practices despite occasional harassment, and even though the contestation is not entirely free, the opposing parties are still operating.

All but one of Linz and Stepan's criteria in the arena "political society" is met. There are many parties and there has been a peaceful transfer of power within the party. However, when (or maybe if) there is a transfer of power to another party, there are reasons to believe that it will not be quite as peaceful since the opposing parties are occasionally harassed.

The arena that faces the most difficulties for democratic consolidation is "rule of law" where there is a worrying tendency of not always following the constitution. Although most of the incidents happened during the last president's period in office, it is not impossible that they will happen again. One can only hope that the said more democratic management style of Pohamba turns out to be true and that he does not make exceptions for himself the way Nujoma did, since this may effect the consolidation process the most. Still however, there is a written constitution that is mostly followed.

Even though the criteria for state apparatus and economic society are not fully accomplished, it is important to remember that these two arenas are considered to be helpful for democratic consolidation, but not necessary. Because of this one might find these two arenas to be the most troublesome ones since most of economic society and state apparatus is perhaps not perfectly regulated in the constitution in a way that the other arenas are. Yet, the rule of law, despite its regulations, seem to be the most troublesome for democratic consolidation

Moreover, as Linz and Stepan argue, all of the arenas affect one another, and Namibia is not an exception in this matter. A non-democratic rule of law for instance, will probably make the civil society even more foregone consolidation wise since the public probably will lose its confidence in the democratic institutions.

The most prominent problems that need to be conquered in order for Namibia to become democratically consolidated are SWAPO's sometimes paranoid behaviour, especially since there is, at this point, no real alternative to the dominant SWAPO party because of the fragmented opposition.

There is also a risk that Namibia is only appreciating the importance of democracy for their international image and aid-worthiness, and that they therefore have no plans of becoming completely consolidated.

When looking at the rest of the free countries in Africa by using Freedom House Index (2010), we find that they are similar in terms of corruption problems, occasional violations of freedom of expression, and that elections are free and fair yet with minor flaws. Given that they seem to have rather the same problems and the same conditions, it seems fair to believe that my results can be applied to the other free countries of Africa as well. It is therefore likely that these countries also have to work with their rule of law-arena to become democratically consolidated.

To conclude; the free African countries are well under way to become democratically consolidated, but there are still several issues that remains to be dealt with. As for Namibia, the future of its democratic consolidation is dependent on the political opposition. They will face the challenge to maintain peace and stability within the country. The peremptory factor in this, I believe, will remain SWAPO.

7.1 Final reflections

I would like to end this thesis with some reflections on the Linz and Stepan model. In general, it has been working well as a theoretical framework for this study. However, it could be argued that certain factors might be lacking. I can for instance imagine that there could have been a few problems to apply the framework if Namibia would have had more difficulties with different ethnic groups, since there is no measure of cultural issues.

In addition, I think it is somewhat problematic to measure democratic consolidation in this way. The existing frameworks do not acknowledge that democratic consolidation in an ongoing struggle for the countries. Therefore, using the frameworks, it is difficult to say at what stage, or how far a state has come in their democratic consolidation process. A way to overcome this problem would be to develop a more dynamic model of democratic consolidation. This might not be an easy task, though, since different variables may have reached different stages, but it would be a more useful tool for analysing a country's consolidation process.

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9 Appendix

Arena	Guiding Principles	Evidence of Consolidation
Civil Society	Freedom of Association and Expression	High Participation in Diverse Associations that Lobby for Interests in Legislature and Promote Non-Governmental Cooperation; Public Opposition to Governmental Practices; Public Confidence in Democratic Institutions
Political Society	Free, Fair and Regular Elections	Existence of Multiple, Developed Parties and Healthy Competition; Free Contestation; Peaceful Transfer of Power; Even Extreme Parties Allowed to Participate in Politics; Generally Universal Suffrage
Rule of Law	Unconditional Adherence to Constitution	Following Constitutional Guidelines Even in Crisis; No Exceptions in the Law Made for Those in Power; Consensus on Rules of Democracy Established in Written Constitution; Judicial Review and Autonomy; Consistent Enforcement of Law
State Apparatus	Usable and Effective Bureaucracy	Low Crime Rates; High Literacy and Low Unemployment; Developed Infrastructure (Roads, Utilities)
Economic Society	Institutionalized Market Economy	Functional Market Economy with Sufficient Government Regulation; Stable Inflation and Employment Rates; Laws for Corporations.

Table 2: Linz and Stepan's five arenas of democratic consolidation. Based on Walker (2006).