Varieties of Partisan Dominance in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Abstract

Dominant parties are very common around the world, particularly in developing countries. Much research has focused on how they can be problematic for democratic development, as well as some works dedicated to understanding how they lose their grasp on power. However, there is not as much scholarship devoted to analyzing varieties of partisan dominance. This dissertation proposes a framework that separates dominance into three modes: electoral dominance, organizational dominance, and social dominance. Three chapters comprise the investigation. In the first, I conceptualize these three modes of dominance and build a measurement for each of them focusing on dominant parties in Sub-Saharan Africa since 1960 until now. This measurement is constructed with several variables taken from the V-Dem and V-Party projects, arriving at a classification for each dominant party in the region per electoral cycle. In the second, I utilize the classification as subsidy to understand the association between different varieties of partisan dominance and political stability, by leveraging data from the ACLED project, as well as public opinion surveys from

the Afrobarometer. In the final chapter, I select three dominant parties from Southern Africa for detailed case studies, to further explore how all three modes of partisan dominance interact with political stability.

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Chapter 1. Types of Partisan Dominance in Sub-Saharan Africa

What does it mean to be a dominant party in a polity? The answer to this question depends as much from contextual factors as any in political science, but it also requires a more systematic approach. This dissertation explores the phenomenon of partisan dominance in Sub-Saharan Africa, with this chapter focusing on exploring the different types of dominance a party organization can have over their countries. The prevalence of dominant parties in African politics has been a subject of scholarly debate and controversy for decades, seen as either a problem for the development of democracy as it contributes to authoritarianism, or as a particular feature of the political reality in the region, to be reckoned with and understood in its own terms. Some studies have attempted to analyze partisan dominance; this is an effort in descriptive analysis to achieve a framework aiming to capture the complexity of dominance.

As an exploratory chapter, this has four main parts. In the following sections, I recover some of the literature on the topic to better establish partisan

dominance as a subject, with an emphasis on Sub-Saharan Africa as a particularly important region due to the prevalence of dominant parties and the variance observed in how they are organized in their countries. Then, I move to a conceptualization effort to operationalize a more distinct approach to partisan dominance, defining it as a convergence of three types of dominance. Subsequently, by using data from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project and its spin-off Varieties of Party Identity and Organization (V-Party), I classify Sub-Saharan Africa dominant parties across these three types, through the usage of K-means clustering techniques and principal component analysis. Finally, results are presented and compared to other classifications in the literature, and the relevance for this framework in analyzing political stability.

1.1 Dominant Parties in Review

The importance of party systems cannot be understated. Although sometimes considered ineffective or not very useful for explaining political phenomena (Krehbiel 1993), parties are natural developments of organized political action by groups and individuals, existing in several forms in almost every polity. Additionally, there have been major works highlighting how organizational and institutional features of political parties are important since at least Panebianco

(1988) and how political regimes end up reflecting at least part of their institutional features from political parties, particularly those representing the status quo (Ziblatt 2017). But parties and party systems are not all created equal. Some exert clear *dominance* over their polities, winning most if not all major elections and having a larger and more organized group of supporters when compared to other parties in the same territories. Thus, they typically enjoy legislative majorities capable of shaping and reshaping institutions, relegating opposition parties to the role of mere supporting actors in legislatures and civil society (Pempel 1990; De Jager 2013).

These dominant party systems have been considered a problem for those identifying societal benefits to electoral competitiveness, particularly alternation of power and strength of opposition (Lindberg 2004). The two-fold problem of how to define which parties are dominant and at which point their dominance turns polities into non-competitive systems has been tackled in a variety of ways. For example, in his classic typology of party systems, Sartori goes to great lengths to differentiate between "predominant-party systems" and "hegemonic parties"; the first would be an example of a party system that is still somewhat competitive and therefore democratic, while the second would be typical of more authoritarian situations, closer to one-party rule regimes and autocracies (Sartori

1976). Although acknowledging these thresholds tend to be arbitrary, scholars usually dealt with the problem by selecting some criteria to find which parties fall under such definitions or not, frequently deciding that dominance is a characteristic more appropriately associated with autocracies. One recent example of this trend is Reuter (2017), whose definition of dominant parties explicitly regards them as authoritarian.

This tendency to associate partisan dominance with authoritarianism and undesirable outcomes in terms of governance and democracy has been very influential, not completely without reason. Most recent examples of dominant parties, particularly after the third wave of democratization in the 80s and 90s, came from polities in which ruling parties had the contribution of electoral fraud, clientelism, violent repression, and other forms of corruption as instruments for keeping their place as dominant political entities (Magaloni 2010; Schleiter 2014). Authoritarian successor parties are the most likely candidates to be dominant after some alternation for varying levels of party system institutionalization (Riedl 2014; Loxton 2018), with special attention to how some of them wane in popularity (Magaloni 2006; Greene 2007; Dasgupta 2016).

Even before democracy's third wave around the globe, normative democratic theory moved to abandon earlier "minimalist" definitions for

democracy and established additional criteria to assess its quality and development. Relevantly for our discussion, those tend to include the level of electoral competitiveness in characterizing how polities should be regarded with respect to their adherence to democratic values (Dahl 1971). Thus, as the level of competitiveness became a categorizing tool, party systems exhibiting a lack of alternation due to hegemonic parties winning most if not all elections tended to be considered more undesirable, as they lacked features commonly thought as necessary for a democratic polity. The implied logic is that if electorates do not change over time giving opposition parties opportunities to be in power, then the ruling party is likely to have an undemocratic grasp on power through fraudulent, coercive, and/or clientelistic means.

However, it is not necessarily the best option to define dominant parties relying solely on the level of electoral competitiveness. There are at least two reasons to avoid the trap of discussing minimum democratic criteria, one historical and another theoretical. First, almost every country regarded today as a democracy had dominant parties at least subnationally, if not in the national level. As a widespread phenomenon, it also comes with a high level of internal variety, calling for a more nuanced approach to what partisan dominance entails. For starters, parties in both democratic and authoritarian regimes can exhibit

very different strategies and features depending on their political contexts; likewise, different circumstances can engender different types of dominance, not necessarily founded on oppressive characteristics.

A second reason derives from observational equivalence. The aforementioned problem acknowledged by Sartori in separating "hegemonic" from "predominant" parties is not without cause. It may be difficult to empirically differentiate the ability to represent large societal sectors in an electorally successful manner, converted in votes and general support, from employing authoritarian and/or fraudulent means to win elections handily. For example: are electoral rules (e.g. majoritarian systems) that generate an advantage for a particular group undemocratic? Or are they an expression of people's will in a polity? Are programs that distribute benefits to specifically prejudiced groups a form of corrupt favoritism or a way to level the field in an unequal society? These questions are probably easier to answer in some contexts, but due to be especially harder in dominant party systems, as party organizations at high enough levels of dominance are particularly well-situated to change the rules if required through the governing institutions they control (De Jager 2013).

Dominant Parties in Sub-Saharan Africa

In the Sub-Saharan Africa context, dominant parties have been the norm around polities since the processes of independence, starting in the 1950s until the end of *apartheid* in South Africa in the 1990s, with many dominant parties entering into the 21st century still in power. These parties have maintained their hold on power through a variety of means, including the use of violence, patronage, and suppression of opposition voices. It is also common to identify several manipulations of electoral processes, both before and during elections. Some have been successful by relying on a charismatic and/or militaristic leader, while in others there have been multiple changes in leadership rising from the party's structures, and also combinations of both. As in many other contexts, a concern from multiple scholars regarding disrespect to democratic values and political stagnation has been present in most evaluation of African politics because of partisan dominance.

A minority, however, praises dominant parties as stalwarts for stability and national unity over the risks of social fragmentation and civil conflict (e.g. Southall 2005). In some contexts dominant parties have also been credited with capitalizing the stability they bring into socioeconomic development and preventing ethnic and racial struggles, as these are very prevalent political

cleavages in African politics. It is not always the case, however, as some dominant parties also utilize their advantages to privilege specific ethnicities over the others, usually the ones representing a majority in their countries. Additionally, many of these parties have been characterized by a lack of clear ideological constraints, presenting a "big-tent" approach that allows flexibility for changing course depending on external pressure, as noted by Magaloni (2010) in the case of PRI in Mexico.

For the purposes of this dissertation, delimiting our analysis to Sub-Saharan African dominant parties is important for two reasons. First, many African countries share reasonably similar historical experiences, particularly the timeline of European colonialism followed by struggles for independence and the subsequent challenge in developing functioning political institutions. Second, Sub-Saharan Africa has been particularly prone to dominant parties, and examining this phenomenon in a regional context can provide a more nuanced description of party dominance and its varieties that are particularly relevant for polities in the past few decades and the near future.

The conceptualization of dominance developed in the following section, however, is not designed to be exclusive to Africa and could be considered for different regions or historical moments. The intention is for this research to

provide a framework for understanding party dominance in general as well, examining the diverse components identifiable in partisan dominance. This research can also contribute to the development of theories and frameworks for understanding party systems in general, including the challenges and opportunities they present for political stability and economic development.

Another goal for this research is to decouple the discussion around different types of partisan dominance from the theoretical debate over their democratic legitimacy. Although this dimension is very important for many questions within the field of political studies, a tighter focus on the variances of partisan dominance allows for a better descriptive understanding of how parties exert control over their polities, sidestepping the normative debate over where to draw the line between democratic and authoritarian parties in every context.

1.2 Conceptualizing Partisan Dominance

Partisan dominance can be defined in a number of ways, as seen throughout history. In common parlance, even parties that do not enjoy "permanent majorities" could be described as such if they often win majoritarian elections, regardless of how much those results actually stem from a place of dominance. In scholarly works, however, the concept often refers to the situation in which a

single political party possesses a significant advantage over all the other parties, more often than not defined in terms of electoral support, but also through their access to resources, their relative organizational strength, and historical importance in a polity. We already discussed how Sartori considers a predominant-party system to be characterized by massively positive electoral results, while still leaving the door open for contestants. Such a party, however, is not necessarily dominant across the board and its electoral success might be a result of specific circumstances or particularly good electoral cycles. In contrast, a hegemonic-party system is characterized by a more complete dominance of a single party, presenting a near-total control of the political system.

However, partisan dominance should manifest itself beyond elections. Dominant party systems do require electoral success to be described as such, but a perspective that considers other factors intrinsic to dominance is arguably essential to understand the phenomenon more accurately. To account for these other dimensions of partisan dominance that, although closely connected to electoral success, can be present or not in any given dominant party system, I propose to distinguish three modes of dominance that will be instrumental for categorizing partisan dominance in the following sections. Before detailing the framework for this effort, however, it is necessary to consider the different

methodological approaches around the subject with respect to observing and measuring partisan dominance.

Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

Different conceptualizations of partisan dominance can yield different measurement strategies. As posed by Vampa (2020) and other scholars, those can be divided into quantitative and qualitative approaches. The first type employs quantitative measurement strategies, relying on mostly numeric or ordered measures that can be compared directly across cases, such as party vote share, seat share, and other measures derived from them, such as "effective number of parties" indices that aim to assess, among other things, the degree of dominance a particular party or coalition exhibits in a polity. These measures are useful insofar they allow for a "continuum of dominance", potentially providing a more nuanced understanding of partisan dominance, as well as establishing clear rules or heuristics to define which parties should count as dominant or not. By taking into account the distribution of votes and seats in a party system, a continuous measurement can therefore identify not only which systems have a dominant actor, but also how dominant they are compared to each other.

Of course, there are methodological limitations to this kind of quantitative approach. First, it usually takes only the final results in vote and seat shares into account, limiting the perspective on dominance to its electoral aspect and potentially failing to identify how strategic calculations from both the dominant party and other minor parties could have impacted the final numbers. Second, and most importantly for elections in developing democracies, dominant numbers result from a variety of strategies. Beyond easily recognizable ones, such as electoral fraud and unfairness, there are less explicit possibilities, from clientelism to favorable electoral rules. In some instances, the prevalence of specific strategies should correlate well with some types of partisan dominance but not others -- for example, a dominant party reliant on political violence might not go through the effort of securing social adherence to its project, preferring to reinforce its organizational features to win handily. A purely electoral measure of dominance will fail to capture if a party is well-positioned to pursue any specific strategy; it will only see the direct impact on the ballot box.

On the other hand, qualitative approaches address these issues more clearly. Whether relying on necessary and sufficient conditions that should be required to classify any party as dominant, or by employing a mixed measurement strategy to arrive at categorical variables that can describe parties

and their varieties, qualitative analyses have some advantages when applied carefully. That can be difficult, though, especially if a given research question requires considering a multitude of party systems at once. Acquiring comparable data sufficient to an adequate analysis based on categorical definitions for partisan dominance may be challenging. Ultimately, following a mixed strategy should be a better option despite issues of operationalization, and this is the approach used here to arrive at our three different modes of dominance, which will be discussed below.

Three Modes of Dominance

In a dominant-party system, it is seldom the case that the party dominates through electoral prowess alone. In fact, to obtain good results with voters, any given party must be well positioned through its organizational structure and social embeddedness. Acknowledging that many other conceptualizations are possible, I propose a framework that considers how partisan dominance occurs in a three-pronged way: through *electoral dominance*, dominant results that lead to legislative majorities (and, in the case of most Sub-Saharan Africa countries, presidential wins); through *organizational dominance*, a combination of structural and institutional advantages the dominant party presents over the others; and

through *social dominance*, the ability to have ties or to directly control other relevant actors in society. These comprise three distinct modes of partisan dominance that will be explored by this research. Other divisions are possible, but this has the advantages of staying focused on dominance itself, rather than confounding it with other related subjects, like quality of democracy or authoritarianism. Additionally, three modes are also quantitative and qualitatively tractable in a way a more intricate typology cannot be.

It is notable that they are not mutually exclusive features of a party, but rather complementary characteristics for improved descriptive accuracy. Electoral dominance is still a *conditio sine qua non* for partisan dominance, as failing to obtain majorities immediately puts into question the very categorization of a party system as "dominant". On the other hand, otherwise dominant parties could present varied levels of organizational or social dominance irrespective of their direct electoral results -- that is, parties with lower levels of organizational or social dominance can be electorally very successful and even operate as a *de facto* one-party system, but can also be relatively fragile as an electoral force in some situations and face significant opposition.

Electoral Dominance

Perhaps the easiest to define as it has been the basis for most scholarly works on dominant parties, electoral dominance is crucial in many ways. First, it directly addresses the main reason why a political party is formed in the first place: to win elections. Even in countries without multiparty competition, elections have been held frequently for a variety of reasons, not the least of which to ascertain the dominant or hegemonic party domain over the citizenry (Gandhi & Lust-Okar 2009). In political environments where there is at least some level of partisan competition, ensuring electoral dominance is more important, and a dominant party capacity to win elections handily against other contestants exerts an impressive role in shaping public opinion in a broader way. In other words, convincing wins can reinforce the belief that a party is invincible and thus either the best alternative or the only alternative, depending on an individual's perspective.

Not every electoral dominance presents itself the same way, though. In parliamentary systems it can mean having the ability to govern without other parties, usually through a majority of seats obtained. That is often the threshold used in research conducted on dominant parties in Europe, where parliamentarism is more prevalent. However, some scholars pointed to the

importance of considering vote shares as well, given how in some systems dominant results are achieved mostly through electoral rules designed to create majorities than by massive popular vote advantages. Adding to the complexity, presidential systems (like most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa) also should take presidential vote into account, arguably as a more important metric. Finally, merely obtaining majorities does not tell the whole story, as in some cases a dominant party might need to achieve supermajorities, particularly for constitutional reforms.

Organizational Dominance

Political parties are official organizations of individuals united toward a common goal: to win elections. How much parties can rely on their organizational capacity and coordination to achieve their objectives is an important matter to consider, even more so for a dominant party. Ultimately, a poorly organized party can enjoy electoral success through several means, including reliance on violence, a charismatic leader, corruption, etc. More often than not, however, organizational capabilities can enhance all of these means and make it easier for dominant parties to keep their prominent position. Efficient partisan organizations will also be able to identify threats to their domains faster,

a major reason why even authoritarian countries tend to enjoy more stability and perceived legitimacy when they can rely on strong organizations (Levitsky & Way 2012).

Organizational dominance itself, therefore, is defined by stronger infrastructure, resilient internal institutions, and capacity to coordinate successfully not only preparing for elections but while in government. In some cases, a dominant party acts more like an extension of governmental structures, which can be co-opted to act on partisan interests as needed. When that occurs, it might be analytically appropriate to consider state capacity as at least partially related to partisan capacity, but it requires a cautious approach. For the purposes of this framework, organizational dominance is limited to intrinsic partisan characteristics that speak directly to its capacity to coordinate their strategies in a harmonious way.

Social Dominance

Beyond its electoral and organizational powers, a dominant party can be characterized by its social embeddedness, that is, its ability to establish relationships with other prominent actors within their polities that are not political parties. Those include religious organizations, unions and cooperatives,

sports clubs, media companies, for-profit companies and NGOs, among many others. For this research, relationships with external actors will not be considered part of social dominance, as external actors may have objectives arguably much less likely to be aligned with partisan interests than internal social forces could be; however, a different version of this framework could consider international actors, particularly in cases where the dominant party can grow more entangled with or even curbed by them, as was the case of the National Party in South Africa as international pressure for the end of the *apartheid* regime grew stronger, or the historic importance of American, Soviet/Russian, and Chinese influence over domestic politics in Sub-Saharan Africa, which continues today.

The main idea behind defining social dominance as a distinct mode is to account for partisan operations that are not directly electoral. Social affiliations can take many forms, as a party can maintain some distance but still collaborate with other social organizations, control them directly, or antagonize them as potential rivals. It is important thus to consider the number and prevalence of relationships to civil society as a sign of higher embeddedness, but not necessarily through a pluralist approach, which should be assessed through different lenses. In any case, a dominant party should be capable of achieving a reasonable amount of social dominance and establish itself as a permanent actor

in society beyond politics. In Sub-Saharan Africa specifically this can be observed in the number of partisan organizations that emerged from the groups seeking independence in the 1950s and 1960s, with many of them asserting their case for dominance by emphasizing their superior representation of the nascent nation's aspirations. In some cases, however, conditions changed since then and, as civil society evolved, so did the relationships between the dominant party and other social actors, not always in favor of the ruling organization.

1.3 Methodology and Measurement

In this section I describe the exploratory process leading into the operationalization of the three modes of dominance in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa. Depending on data availability, a similar operationalization could consider different groups of dominant parties with appropriate modifications; for this research, all measurements are relative to the subset of dominant parties in Sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, a comparison between this classification and others should consider these specific scope conditions.

Data and Scope Conditions

Data on party dominance itself is scarce and usually put together through a qualitative assessment of each party, although in some cases numeric thresholds are established. For this classification, data is taken from the Varieties of Democracy Project (V-Dem 2023) and its spin-off Varieties of Party Identity and Organization (V-Party 2023). For most of their indicators, these two projects rely on multiple experts in the countries, constructing a measure of the underlying concept through aggregation of their answers. Other indicators that do not rely on subjective evaluation are taken from a multitude of sources. As per indicated in the V-Party notes, I use their data for objective values, such as vote and seat shares, as they are more likely to be correct (V-Party 2023).

The subset of Sub-Saharan Africa countries contains yearly observations on V-Dem, while V-Party aggregates information based on electoral cycles, or regular intervals if elections were not held in the country. As V-Party contains the relevant variables for describing the modes of dominance, the unit of observation reflects a dominant party during an electoral cycle.

As a minimum threshold to consider a party as "dominant", I selected only the observations indicating at least 50% of seat share in the lower chamber (that is, at least a majority) for *consecutive* electoral cycles. This standard

guarantees that a temporary majority is not considered "dominant", while at the same time is flexible enough to include most parties that could be described as exhibiting at least some level of partisan dominance. A few miscodings present in the data were eliminated.

The final sample includes 236 observations of dominant parties in the timeframe of their countries electoral cycles, including a total of 53 parties in 39 countries. This approach has a few advantages over some traditional classifications, as it allows for identification of how dominant parties evolved over time in the modes of dominance analyzed here, both within each country and across the whole sample.

It is also important to emphasize that the classification effort described below refers to a *relative* assessment of how different dominant parties are in terms of electoral, organizational, and social dominance. In other words, the results are relevant to the subset of Sub-Saharan Africa, and when a party is classified under one specific category it is in comparison to other dominant parties in the same region and timeframe. For example, a party classified here as presenting high social embeddedness would not necessarily be considered high on that category if the scope were to be expanded to include more world regions or historical moments.

Electoral Dominance

The case of electoral dominance is relatively straightforward, as it has been the most discussed in the literature of dominant parties. However, in many cases, as we see in Bogaards (2004), the focus has been on establishing absolute thresholds for dominance and then establishing subdivisions based on other variables. Here I take a more minimalist approach, founded on a theoretical evaluation of how different degrees of electoral dominance can describe parties in a qualitative manner. By considering mostly the lower chamber seat share as the variable of interest, I posit three categories for electoral dominance that also consider vote share to some extent. In the cases where vote share was missing, I applied multiple imputation based on a few other variables present in V-Party and V-Dem:

> *Contested Dominance*: dominant parties that achieved 50% or more of seats for the lower chamber but failed to achieve 70% or more. A secondary condition is that parties with at least 60% could be included in the next category if their seat share is at least twice the size of the second largest party (for example, 62% and 28%). This category reflects that, despite exhibiting formidable electoral force, such a party has enough organized opposition for its status to be considered at least contestable within one

electoral cycle. It also indicates that elections do provide a path, however straight, to opposition parties development and participation.

Constitutional Dominance: parties between 70 and 90% of seat share, or above 60% with the second largest party still below half its share. This category describes parties enjoying supermajorities, capable of altering the country's constitution and not facing significant electoral threats to their status as a dominant party.

Preclusive Dominance: parties above 90% of seats are considered examples of "preclusive" electoral dominance. In most cases, these polities are not only authoritarian but effectively one-party systems, with little to no space for minority parties. The choice for "preclusive" as an adjective to describe these parties instead of "authoritarian", for example, is to prevent the misunderstanding that the other types are necessarily more democratic, and to emphasize how these parties have electoral dominance to the point of effectively precluding other participants to have a significant role in the legislature.

Under these criteria, the sample contains 24 cases of contested dominance, 103 cases of constitutional dominance, and 109 cases of preclusive dominance. If we only consider cases after 1990, the number for preclusive electoral cycles plummets to 17, reflecting the change from one-party systems to electoral competition following the Third Wave of Democracy -- 21 of the 24 cases of contested dominance are post-1990 as well.

An alternative operationalization of the concept could dispense with discrete categories and measure the level of dominance in a continuous manner. For our purposes, however, it is important to consider how particular thresholds of legislative control reflect specific features of the dominant party. For example, the 2005 elections in Ethiopia exhibited a stark decline in seat share for the dominant Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), from 481 out of 524 seats (91.8%) in 2000 to a century-low of 327 out of 547 (59.8%) in 2005. This was a result of increased participation and electoral freedom (Abbink 2006). Faced with increased opposition, the EPRDF adopted more repressive measures to contain the opposition, leading to more instability in the electoral aftermath (Abbink 2006). The abrupt change from preclusive to a more contested dominance is an instance of how different levels of electoral dominance can lead to changes in behavior within the context of a dominant party government.

Organizational Dominance

Measuring parties based on the strength of their organizations is a challenging endeavor, particularly if the goal is to build a cross-sectional dataset. Even V-Party does not have many variables specifically designed to capture this concept, leading to the need to find appropriate combinations of proxies that can at least provide some insight into the different levels of organizational power the dominant parties under analysis can exhibit.

After performing multiple imputation to account for a few missing values based on an array of correlated variables, three specific indicators from V-Party are selected: *Local Party Office*, *Local Organizational Strength*, and *Internal Cohesion*. The first one refers to the party's presence around its national landscape, the second to the level of partisan activity these local offices exhibit, while the third measures the extent by which the party shares a common strategy and the level of dissent. The first two are highly correlated, so instead of utilizing both I opted for an average, which should serve as a proxy for local capacity. Internal cohesion, by its turn, indicates how strong the organization is in following strategies, but does not indicate how robust or pluralized the decision-making processes are within the dominant party.

For this concept, the exploratory analysis sought to identify clusters of observations that would reveal the interactions between organizational factors, leading to emerging categories beyond a mere continuum of more or less organized. The reason for this approach lies in the possible arrangements of organization: it is possible to have strong local presence but in a disjointed manner, with low cohesion; and vice-versa. Different combinations could lead to specific characterizations more apt to describe how dominant parties are organized in Sub-Saharan Africa.

To identify these groups, I employed the K-means clustering method. It is a relatively simple machine learning technique aiming to identify how to divide n observations into k clusters by minimizing distance to the centroids of each cluster. Defining the value of k is equivalent to knowing previously how many clusters you desire. A way to identify the optimal number of clusters involves iterating over multiple specifications of k and comparing them based on diagnostics like elbow plots (a measure of fitness) or finding the average silhouettes (a measure of similarity within clusters). I utilized both methods to compare multiple specifications but did not follow them blindly, as this particular application is not a predictive but a descriptive endeavor.

By employing K-means to the combination of these two indicators, the silhouette diagnostic indicates the optimal number of clusters as three. Inspecting the results based on the variables provides insight into how these clusters can be described, as seen in Figures 1.1 and 1.2.

Figure 1.1: Cluster Assignment for Organizational Dominance

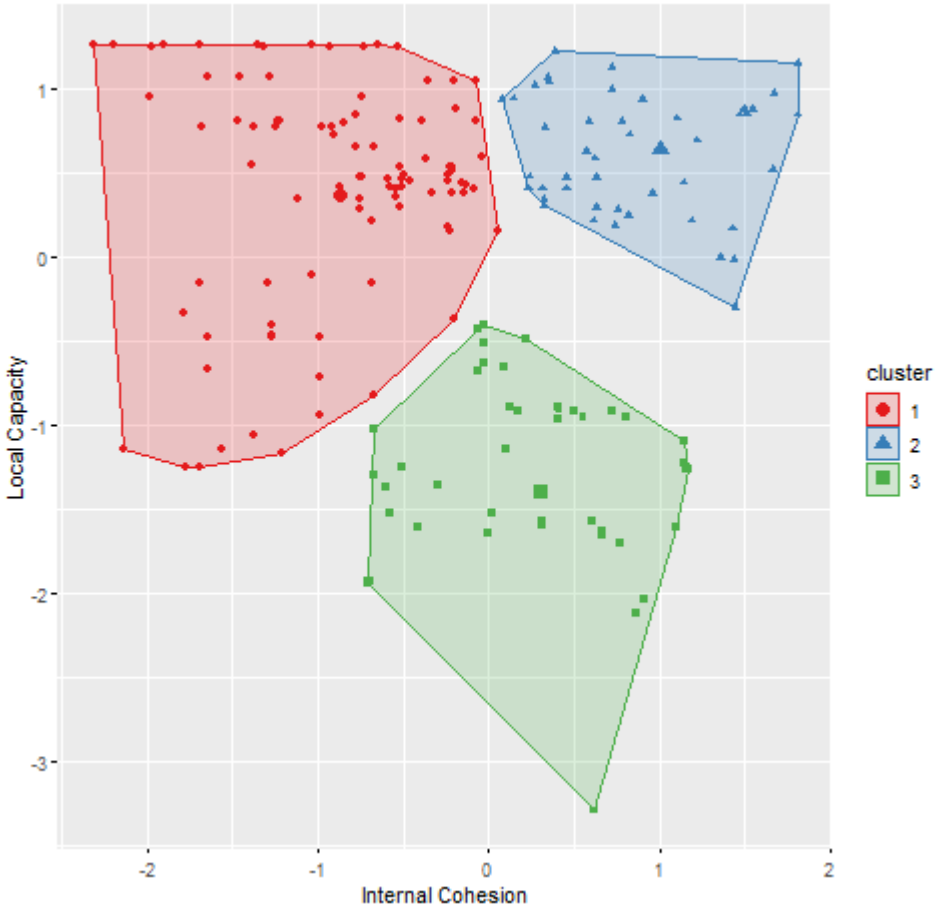
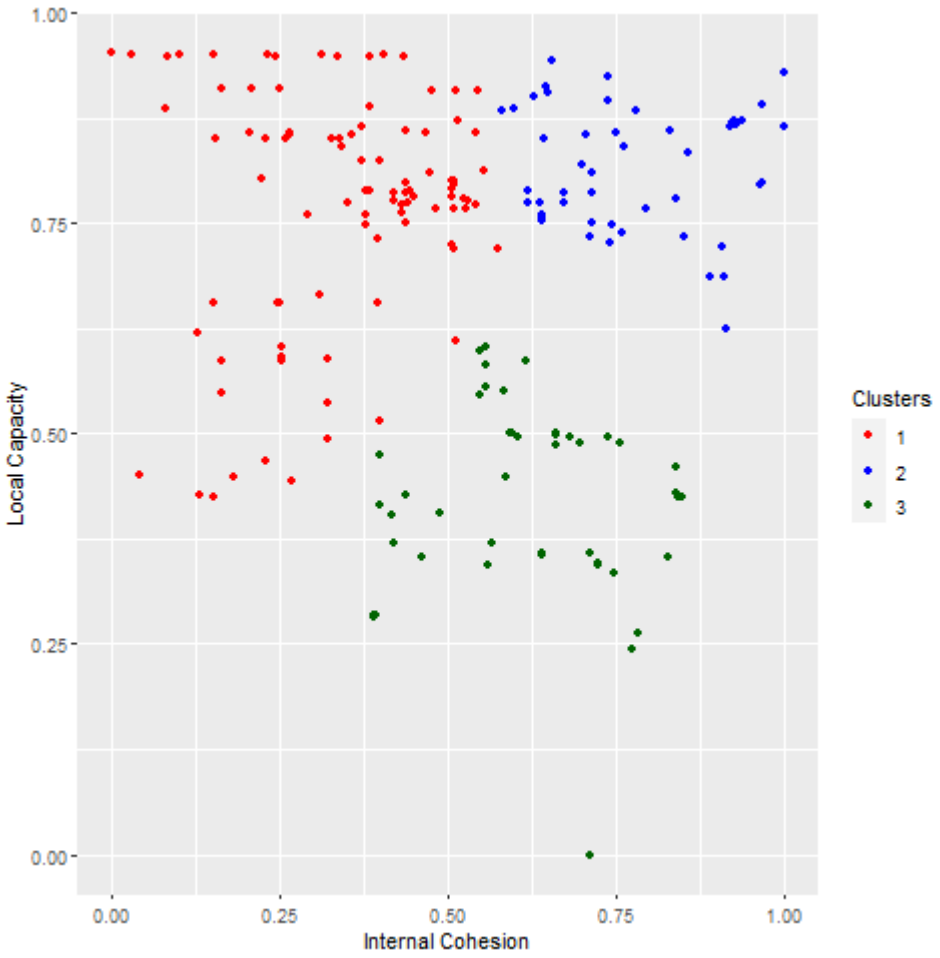


Figure 1.2: Scaled Datapoints (from 0 to 1) by Cluster Assignment



Both figures demonstrate well defined clusters based on the two variables, capable of summarizing the data reasonably well. Upon inspection of Figures 1.1 and 1.2, the three clusters present respectively 1) high values in both local capacity and internal cohesion, 2) low values in cohesion but higher in capacity, and 3) middling levels in both but with more cohesion than capacity.

Interpreting in terms of types of organizational dominance, there are then three types:

Structured Organization: referring to parties scoring on the upper half for both measures. It indicates a party with relatively high levels of internal cohesion but also with an established presence around the country. It allows for grassroots organizations to implement the party line quickly, to mobilize voters, and to keep a tight message for elections and beyond, exhibiting then as a full partisan structure.

Factional Organization: this cluster points to parties with a heavy local presence but lacking cohesiveness as an organization. It can still have an admirable electoral performance, but it is mostly reliant on a sum of all parts rather than in a structure. "Factional" is a loaded word in political contexts, as it usually refers to infighting; that is not necessarily the case with these parties, but factional in the sense of sectorial is an apt description of the quality of their organization compared to the other dominant parties in the sample.

Centralized Organization: In a way, this group is the opposite of factional, as it presents relatively high levels of internal cohesion but poor local strength. Naming them "centralized" is making a choice to emphasize not only how it is cohesive, but also how that does not come out of structure, but out of relatively low capillarity and activity outside the party's headquarters.

Within this sample, 72 observations present a relatively "structured" organization, while 104 are described as "factional" and 60 as "centralized". Somewhat surprisingly, if we restrict the sample to electoral cycles starting after 1990, there are much fewer structured organizations (22) compared to factional (64), which can indicate again an effect from the transition to multiparty systems in many polities, leading to weaker capacity and a loss of cohesion within the average dominant party.

Examples of all three types can be found across the continent, including with variance within dominant party spells. The African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa was classified as "factional" in its two initial electoral cycles (1999 and 2004), due to their relatively low levels of party cohesion. This reflected their early years after Nelson Mandela's presidency, when several party

leaders vied for control of the party. The categorization for the later electoral cycles identifies the party as very strong locally but with much more cohesion as the internal opposition to then-President Jacob Zuma defected or was marginalized within the ANC (Cooper 2017).

A different example of changing into a "structured organization" comes from Angola. In their initial decades, with infrequent elections, the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) was clearly defined as a "centralized" party, under the control of President José Eduardo dos Santos. It was particularly lacking in organizational structure, mainly due to the civil war against the opposition represented by the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). As a ceasefire was obtained in 2002, the MPLA kept its capacity to act cohesively, while decisively expanding its party structure to reach the entire Angolan territory, becoming a clearer example of a "structured" dominant party (Martins, 2017).

Social Dominance

Across V-Party and V-Dem, there are some variables pertaining to the subject of social dominance, particularly social groups that support the party, affiliations to other organizations, origins of financial resources, etc. However,

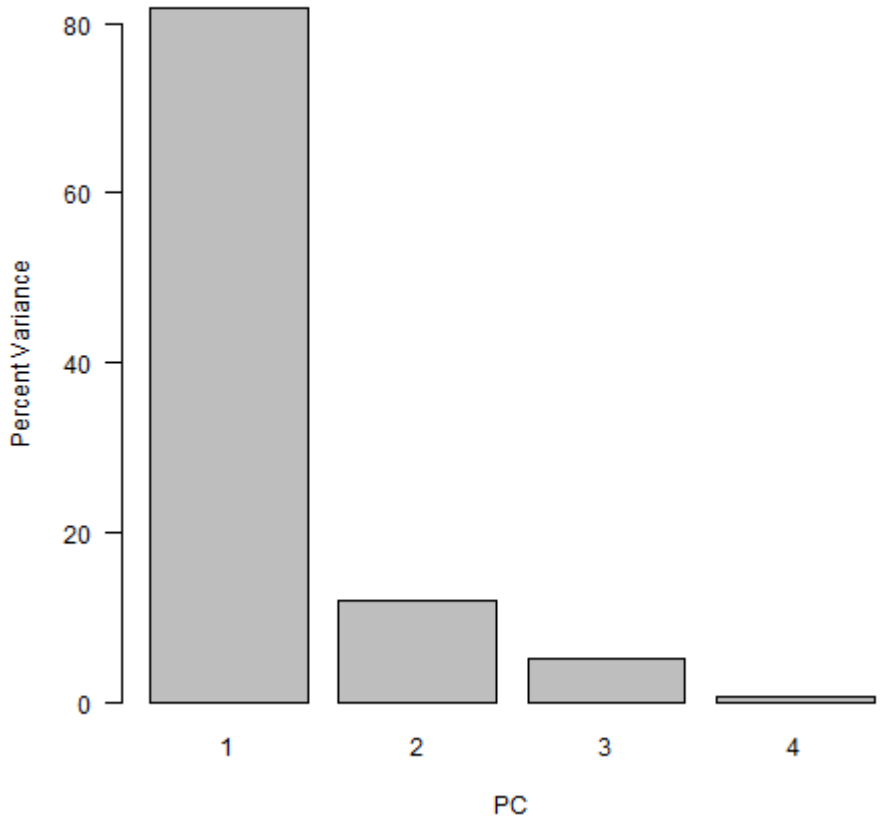
some of these variables have difficult operationalization as continuous measures and require even more context from the polity as those directly related to organizational dominance. Therefore, I opted to use many of them for the multiple imputation step.

The selected variables are four. *Social Affiliations* measures how connected the party is to other social organizations, in a spectrum ranging from complete isolationism to total control of other social entities. The other three variables are those used to construct the *Civil Society Index* in the base V-Dem dataset, therefore measured at the country-year level, rather than the party-electoral cycle level. All three are concerned with how the governing party relates to civil society organizations: *Entry and Exit*, the extent of control the government has over which organizations get to participate in public life; *Repression*, how much the government tries to repress these organizations; and *Participatory Environment*, measuring how much the population is involved in these organizations.

For building the measurement for the concept of Social Dominance, I applied principal component analysis (PCA) to this set of variables. As a method for summarizing data, PCA builds components aimed at maximizing the amount of variance in the data explained by them, while such components are

uncorrelated between each other. Figure 1.3 demonstrates how much variance each component explains in this data, with 81.9% subsumed into the first component, while the remaining components explain each 12.1%, 5.2%, and 0.8% respectively.

Figure 1.3: Variance explained by components in PCA for Social Dominance



By taking the first component as a measure of Social Dominance, we are effectively defining it as a combination between how many ties the dominant party has with other social actors and the extent to which they directly control their activities. This differs from the concept of Organizational Dominance as it is considered a continuum instead of discrete categories, while keeping its characterization as a relative measure – that is, pertaining to the subset of dominant parties in Sub-Saharan Africa, given our scope conditions.

This summarization translates the concept of Social Dominance better than taking each variable isolated. One eloquent example comes from Tanzania. Ruled by the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), which translates to Party of the Revolution. In its first decades of existence, the CCM was the only party allowed in Tanzania, having a strong level of control and participation in civil society. From the constitutional reform of 1992, which allowed more than one party to operate, the number of ties to other actors decreased given the proliferation of other partisan organizations with better access to some societal groups, widening their space to operate. More recently, as the CCM faced stronger opposition, the party evolved to a more controlling role, shrinking the civic space in general (Nguyahambi 2021).

1.4 Classification Results

Given the complexity of this three-pronged framework, it is necessary to demonstrate how the three modes of dominance are correlated among each other. First, Table 1.1 presents how many observations are present within the three types of Electoral Dominance and the three types of Organizational Dominance, with nine possible combinations.

Table 1.1: Summary of Modes of Dominance in the Sample

Types of Dominance (% of sample)		Organizational		
		Centralized	*Factional*	*Structured*
Electoral	*Contested* (50-70% seat share)	5 (2.1%).	3 (1.3%)	16 (6.8%)
	Constitutional (70-90% seat share)	29 (12.3%)	17 (7.2%)	57 (24.2%)
	Preclusive (90-100% seat share)	26 (11.0%)	52 (22.0%)	31 (13.1%)

Contested dominance is by far the least common subtype in the sample, as expected. Dominant parties that face significant electoral opposition are likely to either lose an election eventually or rebuild their advantages up to the point where they can enjoy a larger majority. As seen above, the "preclusive" subtype was much more common before the Third Wave of Democracy, mostly due to

one-party states: their prevalence in that era still makes them a majority in the sample. Finally, constitutional dominance is the most common category in the more recent three decades, where some level of organized opposition is present but does not prevent the dominant party from achieving very comfortable majorities.

When considering the interaction between electoral and organizational dominances, it is visible that preclusive parties are much more likely to be characterized as "factional". Conversely, constitutional electoral dominance is the mode among "structured" parties, with higher levels of cohesion and local capacity. As theoretically expected, centralized parties tended to be preclusive before the 1990s, but with the advent of multiparty elections, although in many cases far from fully liberal regimes, they are more likely to have a constitutional control over their legislatures that still has space for some representation of alternative parties.

In Table 1.2 we focus on common descriptive measures for Social Dominance, separated by each subtype of the other two modes of dominance. It presents mean and standard deviation of our indicator, again scaled from 0 to 1 for ease of interpretation.

Table 1.2: Social Dominance tendencies by subtypes of Electoral and Organizational Dominance

Subtypes of Dominance		Social Dominance			
Electoral	*Organizational*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Min*	*Max*
Contested Dominance	Centralized	.338	.186	.137	.531
	Factional	.346	.052	.287	.376
	Structured	.351	.155	.092	.610
Constitutional Dominance	Centralized	.385	.161	.137	.673
	Factional	.465	.211	.000	.699
	Structured	.393	.184	.006	.742
Preclusive Dominance	Centralized	.544	.206	.137	.915
	Factional	.661	.182	.319	1.000
	Structured	.580	.140	.251	.904

One-party and generally preclusive regimes are clearly more likely to also have higher levels of social dominance, as they tend to control civil society organizations more stringently regardless of their organizational subtype. In that sense, contested and constitutional types of Electoral Dominance have similar averages, with more variation within constitutional ones. Another interpretation from these numbers suggests that contested dominance types are more similar to each other, while constitutional dominances can vary widely in their level of Social Dominance.

Given how this study is also an effort to bring variance in dominant parties to the forefront, it is also necessary to undergo a comparison with other classifications of particular dominant parties by other scholars, considering their criteria against those developed here. In Table 1.3, we perform this exercise by looking at four examples of countries selected randomly from the sample: Botswana, Kenya, Mauritania, and Zimbabwe.

The classifications below are taken from Bogaards (2004), who was evaluating different criteria for considering parties in Africa as dominant. These classifications were not aimed at distinguishing specific parties but their party systems; however, due to the relative scarcity of research oriented to discuss subtypes of dominance, this is the best approximation comparing different criteria for partisan dominance among political parties in Sub-Saharan Africa. Bogaards (2004) developed a table for 18 countries, not all of them included in this dissertation's sample; for simplicity, I select only four countries and three specific elections included in his sample and also in mine.

The table demonstrates how this framework based around modes of dominance adds more information about how these parties are structured. For example, Botswana is merely characterized as either dominant or predominant for the three electoral cycles included, while in our framework there was a

Table 1.3: Selected comparison between the Modes of Dominance framework and categorizations of parties and party systems in Sub-Saharan Africa, as summarized by Bogaards (2004)

		Blondel	Ware	Van de Walle & Butler	Sartori	Modes of Dominance Framework (electoral and organizational)
Botswana	1989	Too Dom.	Predominant	Dominant	Dominant	Preclusive / Centralized
	1994	Too Dom.	Predominant	Dominant	Dominant	Constitutional / Centralized
	1999	Too Dom.	Predominant	Dominant	Dominant	Constitutional / Centralized
Kenya	1992	Not. Dom	Dominant	Fragmented	Not Dom.	Contested / Structured
	1997	N/A	Predominant	No classification	Not Dom.	Contested / Structured
	2002	Not Dom.	Not Dom.	Dominant	Not Dom.	Not included (less than 50%)
Mauritania	1992	Too Dom.	Predominant	Dominant	Dom. Auth	Not included (first term)
	1996	Too Dom.	Predominant	Dominant	Dom. Auth	Constitutional / Factional
	2001	N/A	Predominant	Dominant	Dom. Auth	Constitutional / Factional
Zimbabwe	1990	Too Dom.	Predominant	Dominant	Dom. Auth	Preclusive / Structured
	1995	Too Dom.	Predominant	Dominant	Dom. Auth	Preclusive / Structured
	2000	N/A	Predominant	No classification	Dom. Auth	Contested / Structured

change from "preclusive" to "constitutional" in Electoral Dominance, indicating a better environment for the opposition parties in the 1990s. Likewise, a similar change occurred in Zimbabwe, but with starker consequences as a previously preclusive regime immediately entered contested status.

Both Kenya and Mauritania were not included as dominant parties in our samples for the electoral years of 2002 and 2001, respectively, for two different reasons: in the first case, the ruling party failed to obtain a clear majority in the legislature, while in the second case it was the first election. Regardless, their characterization is more nuanced here as the features of electoral dominance and organizational dominance indicate different types of control over their countries: on one hand, the dwindling formerly authoritarian Kenya African National Union, with 1997 marking the last time a Kenyan party was included as a dominant party in our sample; on the other, the Democratic Republican Party for Renewal, formed solely to contest elections in favor of President Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya, aptly characterized as a factional organization.

Finally, it is important to visualize how the modes of dominance interact and vary temporally within the context of one country by briefly looking into one of our previous examples: the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) in Tanzania. The classifications for this dominant party are presented below in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4: Modes of Dominance of the Chama Cha Mapinduzi party

Year of Election	Modes of Dominance		
	Electoral	Organizational	Social
1965	Preclusive	Factional	.524
1970	Preclusive	Factional	.544
1975	Preclusive	Factional	.544
1985	Preclusive	Structured	.437
1990	Preclusive	Structured	.399
1995	Constitutional	Structured	.292
2000	Constitutional	Structured	.273
2005	Constitutional	Structured	.321
2010	Constitutional	Structured	.312
2015	Constitutional	Structured	.375

The three modes of dominance fluctuate in the country according to theoretical expectations: as a one-party regime representing only the continental portion of Tanzania until 1977, the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), the former iteration of the CCM, is characterized in its first three electoral cycles as an electorally preclusive, organizationally factional party, with high levels of Social Dominance. After the incorporation of Zanzibar and its counterpart dominant party, the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP), the ruling party was then renamed into the CCM. Now more cohesive in relation to its society, the party moved to

an organizational definition of “structured”. Social dominance gradually declined as the regime opened to multiparty competition, reaching an all-time low at the turn of the century; however, levels of constitutional Electoral Dominance were still attained. Recently, Social Dominance has been on the rise reflecting a larger effort from the ruling party to curb opposition to the regime (Nguyahambi 2021).

Chapter 2. Modes of Dominance and Political Stability

This chapter employs the typology for dominant parties in Sub-Saharan Africa developed previously as a subsidy to investigate the relationship between the modes of partisan dominance proposed and their relationship to political stability within their polities. The goal is to develop the subject taking into account what previous works have assessed, outlining our theoretical expectations and hypotheses, while attempting a quantitative analysis based on two types of data: on one hand, events of political violence and unrest against civilians; on the other, public opinion surveys, focusing on the questions pertaining to the ruling parties and how they contribute or not to enhance political order and stability.

This chapter is divided in four sections. The first briefly analyses some scholarly works relating partisan dominance to questions in the realm of political stability; the second draws the theoretical expectations our typology elicits; the third employs data from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) in an attempt to identify how political violence correlates with our categories; the fourth investigates the issue from another angle, by relying on

public opinion survey data from the Afrobarometer, also concluding and pointing to avenues for future research.

2.1 Partisan Dominance and Political Stability

Political order is among the most important topics within social sciences, and several theories about its emergence and variation have been advanced for centuries since classical thinkers like Machiavelli and Hobbes to more recent scholarly endeavors. In many cases, partisan dominance is generally viewed as undesirable for democratic development, but not necessarily so for achieving a stable regime. Huntington's classic study on political order (1968), for instance, explicitly emphasized the role of political organizations, including parties, in assuring the stability of a country, which in his view was paramount and prioritized over democracy. Normatively speaking, tyrannical stability is not a good outcome per se, but its occurrence compared to chaotic regimes and processes of regime chance remains an important question to be answered.

There have been many studies of how specific types of party systems contribute to polity stability and other outcomes (e.g. Taylor 1971, Powell 1981, Midlarsky 1984). More recently, Kuenzi and Lambright (2005) demonstrated how in the African context partisan organizations that stand the test of time also affect

positively regime stability. Within our framework their results are not surprising, given how major regime changes would likely also involve the destruction or neutralization of the previous regime stalwarts, particularly political parties and other organizations directly involved in sustaining order. Yan (2022) argued that the presence of an authoritarian successor party, which was by our and most definitions a dominant party, also contributes to the stability of the party system and therefore that of the regime.

While focusing on parties and party systems from Sub-Saharan Africa, the literature had to contend with their different contexts to analyze the impact of parties on political order. For example, Arriola (2009) developed a model of how patronage and clientelism directly impacted stability, with African leaders increasing their likelihood to stay in power by controlling and expanding cabinet appointments. In our framework, Arriola's results could imply a qualitative change in organizational dominance, by strengthening party organizations through inclusion of more local leaders in the direction of a more structured, albeit still very centralized and personalistic mode of organization.

When we concentrate on explaining how dominant parties and, more importantly, different types of dominance can exert varied effects for stability, the literature becomes scarcer. Van Eerd (2010) posited that structural features of

individual polities lead to different kinds of dominant parties and therefore expectations regarding their ability to improve stability or lead to more democratic countries should vary as well. In his typology, Van Eerd focused solely on what we conceptualized here as electoral dominance, investigating party systems based on how fluid or stable they were, in addition to if they were dominant or not.

More focused on the participants of dominant parties, Reuter and Remington (2009) theorized the formation of partisan dominance as a solution for the commitment problem between the ruler himself and elites. As previously mentioned, Reuter (2015) explicitly considers dominant parties as authoritarian entities, in large part due to their ability to preclude the opposition from achieving power through democratic and/or peaceful means. That does not mean that the perspective relating partisan dominance to an agreement between elites and rulers is not useful here, but it falls short of considering how there could be more beyond striking this balance, as one can presume several arrangements of this kind are possible.

Pertaining to how these agreements take place, and in connection with Arriola (2009) and his consideration of cabinet appointments as vital for parties to organize their support, Kroeger (2020) defends the rulers face constraints

when making these appointments as they need to balance how much they give to each group of supporters. This leads to potential instability when significant cabinet changes occur, strikingly so right after elections as they could signal shifts in relative power among elites or regional leaders. Kroeger emphasizes the differences between personalistic leaders, regimes more reliant on a partisan organization, and military leaders. Our framework is focused on the party as the unit of analysis and takes different features as meriting evaluation for potential explanatory power, namely the type of organizational dominance and the level of social dominance a party exhibits.

2.2 Theoretical Expectations

Under the conceptual framework developed and implemented in the previous chapter, a dominant party will exhibit three different modes of dominance: electoral, organizational, and social. Regarding the first type, it is important to notice how similar electoral results can be achieved through very different means. An election that produces an 80% lower chamber majority in favor of the dominant party can be relatively free and fair – if we discount the inherent advantages a dominant party has, even if restricted to brand recognition –, but can also be riddled with voter suppression and violence promoted by state or

party actors. Thus, the ability of our classification of different levels of electoral dominance to identify how polities are stable is limited, but so are most of other alternative definitions of dominance relying solely on electoral results, which comprise much of the literature.

There are also theoretical expectations for subtypes of both organizational and social dominance to be correlated with some specific outcomes. For instance, dominant parties categorized as "factional" organizations are expected to be associated with higher levels of conflict than partisan organizations that are either "centralized" or "structured". On the side of social dominance, it is expected that parties exerting higher levels of dominance to experience less political violence and thus a higher degree of stability.

Before moving to our operationalization of these relationships, it is necessary to point out there are several other explanations for instances of instability, even more so when we consider differences within the very concept of instability. For example, the determinants associated with military coups are not necessarily the same that will correlate to violence against civilians in a society. Our hypotheses here posit that, everything else equal, countries that have dominant parties classified in different groups regarding our modes of dominance framework will be more likely or not to be stable, in a probabilistic

fashion. Within this framework, we posit two non-mutually exclusive hypotheses regarding the effect different types of electoral and organizational dominance are expected to present when considered in the sample of Sub-Saharan African countries with well-established dominant parties:

> *Hypothesis 1*: with respect to *electoral dominance*, parties classified as "contested" will be more likely to experience violent instability in their polities. That expectation derives from these types of dominant parties having, by definition, a relatively strong opposition, represented in the legislature and able to credibly contest elections, even though unlikely to win. In contrast, "constitutional" and "preclusive" electoral dominances lack a strong opposition and therefore are here considered to be no more likely to experience violence, with variance probably better explained as a factor of other variables.

> *Hypothesis 2*: with respect to *organizational dominance*, parties classified as "factional" are more likely to employ an excluding approach to confer membership and participation to their marginal supporters, either because of insufficient infrastructure or lack of partisan cohesion. This leads to the

expectation that factional dominance is more likely to produce higher levels of instability and violence. Conversely, "structured" parties should prevent more violence than "centralized" parties, as they combine local capacity with a coherent approach to partisan objectives.

For both hypotheses, the consideration of *social dominance* comes in the form of a control variable. The reason for this approach is two-fold. First, it is unclear if social dominance would actually have a linear or even parabolic relationship with stability. It may be that parties more socially dominant have a positive effect on regime stability, but it is unclear if lack of social dominance would necessarily be negative, as relative "detachedness" could be the result of a pluralistic, more democratic society, which could be stable even at very low levels of social dominance. However, we cannot ignore the level of social dominance altogether, as it could influence the effects on the other modes of dominance. For example, a factional party exerting high levels of social dominance will probably be more stable as a result of controlling societal actors directly, or a structured party might experience relatively more instability due to its lack of social impact compared to its electoral prowess.

2.3 Data on Political Instability

I employ data from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), which measures events of conflict and civil unrest over the entire world. Raleigh et al. (2023) recently analyzed ACLED in conjunction with other datasets of violent events with worldwide coverage, finding its methodology to be better for external validity, due to including a wide range of events, but sacrificing internal validity as a result. I selected ACLED both for focusing on a measure that captures as many events as possible and for its relative comprehensiveness on an yearly basis compared to other databases.

For this analysis, I used their aggregated data on two specific outcomes: Events of Political Violence, including from battles in a civil war or insurgency to acts of terror, and the specific Anti-Civilian Violence, which codes violence targeted against unarmed groups of people. Given my data on dominance types is presented in temporal cuts associated to electoral cycles, I consider the average of violent events over the period in which that configuration of partisan dominance was observed. ACLED is also limited to the previous three decades, so the number of observed parties is much lower than the original sample.

Model Specification

As the dependent variable, the model considers the average of violent events per year within the electoral cycle under analysis. This was done to ensure comparability to our unit of analysis, dominant parties by electoral cycle. Thus, the model results should be interpreted as the relative effect of each variable over that period, which varies per country – some have a four-year electoral cycle, others have a five-year period, and a few are intermittent.

There are several independent variables included. The main ones are our three modes of dominance: electoral, organizational, and social. I include each of them in a separate model instead of putting them together, to identify the effect of each mode of dominance separately. Social dominance is included as a continuous measure that goes from 0 to 1, scaled for interpretation ease according to Chapter 1. Both electoral and organizational dominances are included as categorical variables, with three discrete groups, also as outlined in Chapter 1. Given the data constraints for ACLED, the number for each category is skewed, with fewer preclusive electoral dominance and factional organizations represented compared to the previous period pre-1990s.

To account for potential confounders, a series of variables representing potential explanations for political instability that are not subsumed into our

classification of parties. A measure of population (logged) is included as a control given the number of violent events will necessarily be higher in more populated countries. Another common variable to include is GDP per capita, as a proxy for socioeconomic conditions – polities that are more prosper are less likely to suffer instability. Both of these variables are taken from Fariss et al. (2021) and are measured at the country-year level.

Another economic measure included is the total of exports for that country, logged to account for differences in country economic size. Taken from the Correlates of War database, this indicator aims to control for one very common explanation for political conflict: the resources curse. In addition to this, measures of corruption and governance from the World Bank are also included, as we expect the quality of governance to influence decisively the likelihood of instability within any regime.

Finally, and particularly relevant for Sub-Saharan Africa, I include a measure of ethnic homogeneity, extracted from Dražanová (2020). Countries with high ethnic heterogeneity have been associated in the region as more prone to conflict; in some cases, dominant parties have been instrumental in stifling instability as they favor one ethnic group over another, as has been the case in

Ethiopia (Abbink 2006). As a result, I include this measure to account for the expected difference in violent conflict due to ethnic reasons.

To ensure the model would not be overconfident about how significant the events would be, I clustered standard errors by dominant party spell, which in this subsample is also equivalent to cluster errors by country, as there was no occurrence of two separate dominant parties in the same country within the timeframe under analysis. The procedure makes sure that the presence of many observations from one specific country does not skew the results, while still isolating the effect of our variables of interest. It also guarantees that if a dominant party transitioned to different categories in the modes of dominance considered here, that its effect would be considered separate from those specific to the country, including the variation in socioeconomic features.

Results

Table 2.1 presents the results for the first three models, which have as dependent variable the general number of political violence events per year. Given data constraints for ACLED and the other variables, there are only 38 observations, contributing to the overall lack of statistically significant results. Due to the clustered standard errors, the socioeconomic variables, including

Table 2.1: Results for Models of Political Violence Events

	Average political violence events per year (by electoral cycle)		
	n = 38	n = 38	n = 38
Population (logged) (Fariss et al. 2021)	24.646 (19.483)	34.099 (19.444)	33.625 (18.326)
GDP per capita (Fariss et al. 2021)	-0.215 (9.342)	-4.489 (12.643)	2.472 (9.126)
Total exports (logged) (Correlates of War)	24.938 (29.796)	23.711 (33.743)	18.771 (29.795)
Control of corruption (World Bank)	-19.600 (68.718)	-22.111 (58.627)	-8.695 (67.521)
Government effectiveness (World Bank)	-70.240 (124.399)	-58.231 (67.143)	-88.646 (84.606)
Ethnic homogeneity index (HIEF)	-136.723 (72.401)	-179.862 (130.355)	-146.270 (126.198)
Electoral Contested Dominance	105.761 (80.665)		
Electoral Preclusive Dominance	-16.813 (57.358)		
Factional Organization		-92.482 (93.961)	
Structured Organization		-73.159 (115.371)	
Social Dominance Index			47.692 (215.698)
Constant	-240.902 (132.399)	-172.365 (105.462)	-271.897 (239.109)

Note: standard errors clustered by dominant party spell. *** p<0.05**

population, which should have a significant effect if considered in isolation, also have a relatively reduced impact, as we are estimating their effects over time.

In general, despite no statistical significance, most coefficients are in the expected direction across the models. Exports are positively associated with more violent events, lending a modicum of support for how export-heavy countries may face instability due to several mechanisms pertaining to the resource curse – infights over rents, susceptibility to external conditions, focus on extraction sectors over other industries, etc. In a similar fashion, good control of corruption and governance effectiveness present a negative correlation to violence, again far from statistical significance but in the expected direction. Finally, ethnic homogeneity is a strong predictor for fewer episodes of political violence in all three models.

Considering our expectations outlined in hypotheses 1 and 2 in the previous section, it is not possible to affirm these analyses support them decisively in a statistical manner. However, the regularities theorized above are not entirely discarded as well. As expected, the first model indicates that contested dominance is more likely to increase political violence than preclusive dominance. Considering the second hypothesis, however, there is no indication factional organizations are more prone to violence compared to structured ones.

Table 2.2: Results for Models of Civilians Targeted for Political Reasons

	Average number of civilians targeted per year (by electoral cycle)		
	n = 38	n = 38	n = 38
Population (logged) (Fariss et al. 2021)	5.609 (15.252)	15.818 (15.466)	14.946 (14.001)
GDP per capita (Fariss et al. 2021)	-1.505 (7.409)	-3.118 (9.117)	-0.132 (7.522)
Total exports (logged) (Correlates of War)	24.558 (21.711)	20.637 (23.387)	17.764 (20.561)
Control of corruption (World Bank)	-36.177 (49.115)	-33.971 (46.199)	-30.698 (52.771)
Government effectiveness (World Bank)	-22.602 (81.309)	-26.271 (45.190)	-51.123 (54.991)
Ethnic homogeneity index (HIEF)	**-173.986*** **(63.396)**	-210.408 (129.585)	-205.965 (127.664)
Electoral Contested Dominance	117.760 (73.654)		
Electoral Preclusive Dominance	-20.529 (36.668)		
Factional Organization		-56.529 (56.709)	
Structured Organization		-44.399 (68.638)	
Social Dominance Index			-47.344 (146.175)
Constant	-88.837 (96.879)	-50.159 (99.406)	-70.623 (169.923)

Note: standard errors clustered by dominant party spell. *** p<0.05**

Table 2.2 focuses on a different dependent variable: number of civilians targeted by political violence. With very similar specifications to the previous model, the results do not differ that much – there is only one case of statistical significance, for the ethnic homogeneity index, in the model that evaluates electoral dominance, but with so many variables and models included that could be considered just the result of randomness.

With regards to our theoretical expectations for the independent variables' relationship with violence, they are largely unchanged. Exports are still positively associated with more civilians being targeted, while less corruption and better governance are negatively associated. The relative strength of the ethnic homogeneity index here is also noticeable, and despite being all but flimsy evidence statistically speaking, it is in the expected direction, with ethnic homogeneity negatively correlated with violent events against civilians.

Also, very similarly to Table 2.1, the hypotheses for electoral and organizational dominance do not see much evidence for being dismissed or supported. Contested dominance appears to be an important factor but cannot be distinguished from zero in this specification, and factional organizations are no more likely to be associated with more violence than structured ones. In summation, these models can be described as inconclusive.

2.4 Public Opinion on Stability and Dominance

As a secondary analysis to further investigate the relationship between different modes of dominance and political stability, although not through an econometric model, I select specific questions from the Afrobarometer project to evaluate them in eleven countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, based on the most recent wave of questionnaires which includes the largest number of polities present in the sample constructed in Chapter 1. For all cases, I considered the most recent observation as a proxy for the different modes of dominance, given that the questionnaire was applied between 2019 and 2021.

Afrobarometer conducts surveys of public opinion with thousands of citizens from over three dozen countries, but only eleven are included in this analysis. There are two reasons for this: first, many countries in Africa included in the sample for previous decades are not considered dominant party systems under our criteria anymore. Second, for those that remain there is not always an observation sufficiently close in temporal terms to the survey as to be feasibly considered referent to that electoral cycle.

Tables 2.3 and 2.4 summarize the results for two specific questions made in all countries included by the Afrobarometer project. Among these eleven countries, only one (Ethiopia) is considered as "preclusive" electoral dominance.

As a matter of fact, in most countries classified as preclusive in recent decades it would be unlikely that Afrobarometer were authorized to conduct the survey, given its status as one-party authoritarian regimes for the most part. Only Mozambique's FRELIMO and South Africa's ANC are considered "contested" dominant parties within these eleven parties.

In terms of organization, most dominant parties are classified as structured, demonstrating the tendency since the 1990s for ruling parties to build their local capacity as multiparty elections required structure – even in scenarios without meaningful efforts from opposition parties. Gabon and Sudan are the exceptions, showcasing centralized organizations due to their comparatively weak local infrastructure.

Specifically in Table 2.3, we see the average response to the question "does competition between political parties lead to violent conflict?" This serves as a reasonable proxy to how the population feels about challenges to the dominant party and how unstable the country can become if partisan competition is more intense. One way to look at the numbers is to focus on the extreme answers: Gabon and Sudan, for instance, the only representatives of centralized partisan organizations, have a very high rate of "Always" and "Often", with a significant majority of respondents believing party competition to be a factor of violence.

Table 2.3: Public Opinion on Party Competition as a Factor of Instability

Country	Election Year	Electoral Dominance	Organizational Dominance	Social Dominance	In your opinion, how often, in this country: Does competition between political parties lead to violent conflict? (%)				
					Never	Rarely	Often	Always	No Answer
Angola	2017	Constitutional	Structured	.543	23.0	24.8	14.8	20.3	17.2
Botswana	2019	Constitutional	Structured	.235	45.2	33.0	15.0	5.0	1.9
Ethiopia	2015	Preclusive	Structured	.646	16.9	38.7	28.1	12.8	3.4
Gabon	2018	Constitutional	Centralized	.251	4.0	17.5	34.7	43.8	0.0
Mozambique	2019	Contested	Structured	.316	17.9	21.6	24.8	32.9	2.8
Namibia	2019	Constitutional	Structured	.189	31.5	39.3	15.7	8.5	5.0
South Africa	2019	Contested	Structured	.179	10.8	18.3	30.2	37.4	3.4
Sudan	2015	Constitutional	Centralized	.673	4.7	16.1	29.4	42.9	6.9
Tanzania	2015	Constitutional	Structured	.375	31.3	38.6	22.6	6.0	1.5
Uganda	2016	Constitutional	Structured	.523	9.5	23.6	36.3	28.3	2.3
Zimbabwe	2018	Constitutional	Structured	.438	9.4	25.7	44.4	18.4	2.1

Table 2.4: Public Opinion on Support for Multiparty Elections in Dominant Party Regimes

Country	Election Year	Electoral Dominance	Organizational Dominance	Social Dominance	Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives: Only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office? (%)					
					Strongly Disapprove	Disapprove	Neither	Approve	Strongly Approve	No Answer
Angola	2017	Constitutional	Structured	.543	33.1	30.7	3.2	14.7	6.3	12.0
Botswana	2019	Constitutional	Structured	.235	69.3	15.0	0.7	7.8	6.9	0.3
Ethiopia	2015	Preclusive	Structured	.646	40.2	37.3	1.9	16.2	3.7	0.9
Gabon	2018	Constitutional	Centralized	.251	64.5	26.4	0.1	5.3	3.6	0.1
Mozambique	2019	Contested	Structured	.316	20.2	28.6	1.8	28.5	17.7	3.4
Namibia	2019	Constitutional	Structured	.189	48.1	33.7	3.4	8.4	4.8	1.6
South Africa	2019	Contested	Structured	.179	37.3	26.6	2.7	17.1	14.5	1.8
Sudan	2015	Constitutional	Centralized	.673	38.3	35.7	2.8	15.4	3.6	4.2
Tanzania	2015	Constitutional	Structured	.375	49.2	15.2	1.6	16.8	16.8	0.4
Uganda	2016	Constitutional	Structured	.523	55.3	22.0	1.3	12.1	7.8	1.4
Zimbabwe	2018	Constitutional	Structured	.438	56.0	18.5	1.5	11.8	10.4	1.8

Other two countries presenting high levels for the combination of these two answers are Mozambique and South Africa, the two dominant systems considered "contested". Among the modal dual classification of "constitutional" electoral dominance and "structured" organization, only Uganda is similar to the "deviant" observations – the ruling party in Ethiopia and its "preclusive" classification does not get results very different from other "constitutional" counterparts.

Moving to Table 2.4, where the question under analysis is how much the public would agree if "only one political party is allowed to stand for election and hold office", the attempt is to gauge attitudes toward the dominant party, as it would presumably be the most likely party to do so. Some of the highest levels of approval are again in Mozambique and South Africa, when adding "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" answers. Conversely, disapproval is also relatively high in these two countries, suggesting their "contested" nature is present as well in attitudes toward multiparty elections and division of power. Again, most countries classified as "constitutional" in electoral dominance and "structured" in organizational dominance have high levels of disapproval to the concept, suggesting that these dominant parties are part of an environment that is comfortable with their rule, but only to the extent it is confirmed electorally.

Although this public opinion data is certainly limited to explain cross-sectional regularities or to analyze them, there is some support for both hypotheses considered in this chapter. Countries experiencing contested electoral dominance are more likely to be perceived by their citizens as ridden by conflict and to have a sizable portion of their populations desiring one-party rule. Centralized organizations are also perceived as less stable within their countries compared to structured ones. Of note, three dominant parties in Southern Africa that are the subject of case studies in the next chapter have remarkably different scores to both questions, with Botswana exhibiting robust support for multipartyism and very low levels of conflict according to their citizens, while respondents in Mozambique and South Africa are more pessimistic regarding party competition.

Chapter 3. Case Studies of Partisan Dominance in Southern Africa

Even under ideal conditions, the modes of dominance framework developed in this dissertation requires careful evaluation of contextual factors to understand how different parties can exert their dominance. To achieve this, I examine three cases of dominant parties in Southern Africa countries. The case selection here obeyed two general principles: first, a regional focus to account for the interaction between the countries themselves and their geographic conditions; second, it was oriented around the main outcome of interest in Chapter 2, political instability. That is, these three countries are representative of a spectrum that goes from very stable to very unstable polities.

Botswana, the first case study, is an example of high political stability, with low levels of major political violence across the entirety of its history. Mozambique, on the other hand, has suffered since independence with civil wars, violent unrest, and terrorist insurgencies. Finally, South Africa, our third case study, is somewhere in between: its political regime is very stable and

largely considered democratic, but unlike Botswana the country faces high levels of general violence and a history of struggles associated with the *apartheid* regime and factional disputes.

Table 3.1 presents the ACLED data on political violence events to compare these three countries. The dataset goes from 1997 to 2022 and shows how Botswana has been clearly the most stable and less violent of the three countries. South Africa has in general as many events as Mozambique in the past decades, but that is due to being more populous (estimates place South Africa as currently having around 60 million people, while Mozambique is closer to 30 million) and for having better news coverage, as many locations in Mozambique are very remote while South Africa is a much more urban country, with more reliable records of violent events.

There is a similar structure for all three case studies. After going through a brief historical analysis of the dominant party, informed by the classification across all three modes of dominance, specific literature on the country and its ruling party is leveraged to understand how partisan dominance affected the patterns of stability observed over time, concentrating on important moments within partisan structures and their interaction with other actors in society, more importantly the opposition.

Table 3.1: Events of Political Violence per Country (ACLED)

Year	Botswana	Mozambique	South Africa
1997	0	3	29
1998	1	1	40
1999	0	1	42
2000	0	5	44
2001	0	0	26
2002	0	2	20
2003	0	14	12
2004	2	25	29
2005	1	8	8
2006	0	7	12
2007	1	8	32
2008	1	10	43
2009	1	30	50
2010	1	16	43
2011	1	8	58
2012	0	20	279
2013	1	69	191
2014	1	107	229
2015	1	22	360
2016	1	97	204
2017	2	87	147
2018	3	106	139
2019	1	304	195
2020	12	548	254
2021	6	407	351
2022	7	489	409

Comparing these three countries and their dominant parties can be done across a variety of approaches, even if restricted to the general modes of dominance identified in this work. As a result, this chapter proposes to evaluate dominant parties in a few specific dimensions that act as proxies for how partisan dominance interacts with country and system-level outcomes like stability. In general, the focus is on how these parties relate to country institutions, if and how they build internal institutions to deal with potential issues, and how they directly contribute (or not) to increase stability.

Theoretically speaking, the expectation is to demonstrate how some party options and developments that are integral to these three cases' evolution are also instrumental in understanding some of the differences between countries. Although these observations can hardly be considered causal evidence in themselves, the mere presence of variety in how dominant parties approach their contexts speaks to some consequences of partisan dominance manifesting itself, and to the importance of focusing on how different modes of dominance are directly correlated with other factors, such as political stability.

3.1 Botswana Democratic Party (BDP)

Botswana has been pointed out as a successful case of state building for decades, particularly due to their economic development (Acemoglu 2002). Discussion about the causes of this success, in a region that is prone to instability, usually goes to similar directions: institutional features, particularly those previous to the Bechuanaland Protectorate established by the British, but also those inherited from a much less disruptive colonization process than it was typical in the continent, improved upon by concerned and far-sighted leaders.

Formation of the BDP

The history of the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) can be confused with the history of Botswana as an independent country itself. Formed in the early 1960s by Sir Seretse Khama and Quett Ketumile Masire, two of the most important leaders in the nation and the first two presidents, it included from its start those involved in negotiations with the British Empire to obtain more autonomy and eventually full independence, gained in 1966.

Table 3.2 presents the categorizations obtained in our classificatory effort from Chapter 1. The only electoral cycle not included is the very first one, with elections held in 1965 – the BDP already obtained a very large majority, of 28 out

Table 3.2: Modes of Dominance of the Botswana Democratic Party

Year of Election	Modes of Dominance		
	Electoral	Organizational	Social
1969	Constitutional	Structured	.178
1974	Constitutional	Centralized	.177
1979	Preclusive	Centralized	.177
1984	Constitutional	Centralized	.177
1989	Preclusive	Centralized	.177
1994	Constitutional	Centralized	.177
1999	Constitutional	Centralized	.177
2004	Constitutional	Centralized	.177
2009	Constitutional	Structured	.159
2014	Constitutional	Structured	.173
2019	Constitutional	Structured	.235

of 31 seats. As it can be seen, for most of its history the BDP got significant majorities in the legislative chamber, an important feat for governance given how Botswana adopted many elements from the Westminster system, with first-past-the-post rules. Although starting out as a structured organization, for many decades the BDP has been classified as a "centralized" dominant party, due to its relatively low local capacity as a party. Similarly, the scores for social dominance are very low across the board, as the BDP refrained from controlling directly other actors in society; additionally, opposition parties also avoided using social

cleavages divisions as a strategy against the BDP, allowing it to approach domestic politics in a more "big tent" style (Seabo 2018).

Given its formation from the main leaders for independence, it was natural that the BDP would enjoy significant advantages early on, with access to considerable resources and organization (Nengwekhulu 1979). Another contributor was the BDP's insistence in building critical institutions for the constitutional order of Botswana, like the inclusion of a House of Chiefs as an advisor body to the government (Proctor 1968).

There have been some elements of luck to BDP's continued strength in power. During the 1970s, the discovery of large reserves of diamonds in Botswana, and its subsequent exploration by the company Debswana, then partially owned by the state, generated rents for Botswana to invest significant resources into social issues. Botswana went from one of the poorest countries in the world at the time of independence to one of the highest GDP per capita in Africa, while at the same time boasting relatively good socioeconomic indicators, particularly educational ones, in a very stable regime with freedom of press, freedom of association, and periodical elections.

However, as the literature on the resource curse demonstrates, finding valuable resources in the extractive sector is not necessarily a ticket out of

poverty and conflict. Good governance derived from good institutions, particularly when compared to other Sub-Saharan Africa countries, is likely to be the major factor leading to Botswana's relative prosperity (Acemoglu 2002). And it is arguable these institutional practices have been significantly helped by how the BDP organizes internally and presents itself as a dominant party in a democratic country.

Organization of the BDP

Since its beginning, early observers noticed how the presence of true multipartyism in Botswana, even more so compared to most other countries in Africa during the period from independence until the 1990s, was an important incentive for the BDP to solve disputes internally through mediation rather than centralize everything over the authority of charismatic leaders, despite the fact that Sir Seretse Khama was certainly popular enough to do so. For example, Wiseman (1977) posits that the threat of resignation from major leaders in case their demands were merely dismissed was instrumental in keeping the BDP united behind a common goal, as a multiparty system with first-past-the-post electoral rules could give a critical mass of discontents enough tools to achieve a meaningful electoral threat (Wiseman 1977).

Another important feature of the BDP has been its characterization as a big-tent party, aiming to represent the totality of Botswana's society. It was also instrumental the refusal from their leaders, more prominently Khama, to endorse more radical ideological tenets, including communism and alignment to the Soviet Union within the context of the Cold War (Polhemus 1983).This helped in establishing more stable connections with important regional and world powers, keeping good diplomatic relations with the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as reducing the amount of meddling the *apartheid* regime in South Africa would exert over Botswana – the National Party in South Africa would be more eager to extend its support to anticommunist groups in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe and Mozambique during that period.

In addition to these choices in keeping an unaligned multiparty setting, in contrast with other relevant countries from the time – notably Tanzania, where the Chama Cha Mapinduzi led by Julius Nyerere adopted a Marxist-inspired plan to develop the country, with at best mixed results – the BDP also managed to empower critical institutions to ensure instability. For example, upon the death of President Khama in 1980, the party went through the constitutionally mandated process for succession, with the legislature voting to decide who would become president. Similar situations caused chaos in many other

countries, but in Botswana the respect to the constitution prevailed and superseded potential claims from inside the party, as the BDP itself was committed to follow the Constitution (Maundeni 2012).

Informal institutions and agreements also played a role in quelling power disputes within the party. In the late 1990s, during the last term of President Masire, two factions were vying for power within the BDP, aiming to get the chairmanship of the party. A refusal for compromise precipitated elections for the position to be cancelled, with Masire brokering a deal to distribute the major party positions among the two factions (Maundeni 2013). Eventually, this led to a constitutional amendment allowing for the automatic succession of the Vice-President for the presidency of Botswana in case of impediment of the President, which further reduced the chance for factionalism to play a meaningful role within the party, as partisan power was effectively separated from government (Maundeni 2013).

Potential issues

Some cracks in the history of success are acknowledged even by some enthusiasts, with an eloquent example in how HIV spread almost uncontrollably across the country (Acemoglu 2002). Turning to the political system and how it

relates to society, some native scholars have described the regime as "authoritarian liberalism" (Botlhomilwe 2011) and representative of what is regarded as an authoritarian Tswana culture (De Jager 2017).

Additionally, the BDP experienced some factional fights since at least the 1990s (Mokopakgosi and Molomo 2000). More recently, internal fights between former president Ian Khama and his successor Mokgweetsi Masisi led to a challenge to Masisi's leadership made by former cabinet member Pelonomi Venson-Moitoi. It eventually led to Khama's departure from the BDP to contest the 2019 elections under a different party banner, with some begrudging support from the opposition – who disliked Khama's more authoritarian and militaristic strain of politics. That challenge ended up as not very meaningful, as Khama's popularity did not translate into more votes for the opposition, with the BDP winning again a comfortable majority of seats.

However, these concerns should be seen in relative terms. First, the BDP effectively managed to rule for six decades without major conflict erupting, and there were several instances of well-organized electoral challenges to its rule. Factional fights are in part due to diversification of interests and membership represented by the party (Mokopakgosi and Molomo 2000), and although this might indicate just petty disputes for power, the fact that these are solved

without resorting to violence is not irrelevant. Moreover, factional competition inside the party has been noted as an important feature for stability of the party and the country in general (Poteete 2012).

More recently, the outbreak of Covid-19 raised some additional concerns regarding the usage of presidential authority. President Masisi declared a state of emergency in 2020 and by the next year discussion around constitutional reforms led to protests. Concurrently, the war of attrition between Masisi and former president Khama increased its intensity, leading to Khama's exile in South Africa amidst charges of corruption (Makgala 2022). Considering the history of Botswana, these are significant signs that its democratic stability might be at more risk than usual, although still comparatively safer than in most countries affected by Covid-19 and populism.

Conclusions

Taking care not to consider the overall situation as perfect, the dominant party in Botswana arguably has had a major role in ensuring stability and order. Despite some remaining challenges, it is clear the leadership in the Botswana Democratic Party did its part to ensure presidential succession and cabinet appointments were done according to partisan institutions and, where not

possible, agreements were brokered to prevent defections and, more importantly, violent conflict. With most historical difficulties being resolved within the party ranks peacefully, it is possible to expect the current threats of instability to be dealt with in a similar fashion, ensuring Botswana's remarkable pattern of a very stable partisan dominance to either continue or eventually evolve into a more competitive, still democratic political system.

3.2 Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO)

One of the last countries in Africa to become independent after the Portuguese Empire debacle in the 1970s, Mozambique soon faced a bloody civil war that lasted more than a decade, decisively influenced by the South Africa *apartheid* regime and Rhodesia/Zimbabwe (on different sides before and after Robert Mugabe's ascension to power). The ruling party is the Liberation Front of Mozambique, usually called FRELIMO, of Marxist-Leninist tendencies (Borges Coelho 2013). Upon the signing of a Peace Accord in 1992 with the main opposition group, RENAMO (Mozambican National Resistance), an attempt at establishing a democratic, multiparty system has been a project for Mozambique.

History of FRELIMO

Like many dominant parties in Africa, FRELIMO started as a movement for independence. Formed around the early 1960s mostly in exile due to persecution from the Portuguese Empire that still controlled most of its territories in Southern Africa, the movement established roots in Tanzania, where they were accepted by that country's government given their similar attitudes toward building a Marxist-inspired alternative for Africa (Panzer 2013). This foreign-based experience of formation entrenched the ideological cohesion behind FRELIMO and positioned them well for the long struggle for independence, only concluded in 1975 after Portugal's Carnation Revolution initiated a process of devolvement and removal from Portuguese Africa, interrupting the Colonial Wars and effectively ending the longest-standing colonial project from a European power.

Table 3.3 outlines how FRELIMO has been categorized in our modes of dominance framework. The first election was in 1977 and was one of the catalysts for a major civil war that ravaged the country for fifteen years. In that election, FRELIMO assured its dominance over all other parties, including RENAMO, the major combatant on the other side, supported then by Rhodesia and South Africa as they were concerned with Mozambique becoming a beacon for anti-*apartheid*

Table 3.3: Modes of Dominance of the Liberation Front of Mozambique

Year of Election	Modes of Dominance		
	Electoral	Organizational	Social
1986	Preclusive	Factional	.839
1994	Contested	Factional	.376
1999	Contested	Factional	.376
2004	Contested	Structured	.362
2009	Constitutional	Structured	.362
2014	Contested	Structured	.340
2019	Contested	Structured	.316

groups from their countries, as it effectively happened (Munguambe 2017).

National elections have been periodically held in Mozambique since the 1992 Peace Accord put an end to the major conflict, although there are still militarized segments of both FRELIMO and RENAMO contributing to some minor episodes of violence over the decades, particularly around election times. As the table shows, since then FRELIMO has enjoyed mostly "contested" electoral dominance, with RENAMO managing to be a sizable force in Mozambican politics despite never winning a presidential election. Reportedly, elections have been far from free and fair, with many accusations of fraud leveraged by both sides and international observation classifying the procedures as rigged mainly by the government and FRELIMO (Pitcher 2020).

In terms of organizational dominance, FRELIMO was initially characterized as a "factional" organization due to how it was effectively non-existent in all regions of the country under the control of RENAMO. Despite that, it maintained its ideological cohesion and upon peace achievement strengthened its organization to be at least present even in RENAMO's strongholds, which still are largely voting against the ruling party but in reduced margins. Social dominance was always relatively high, as FRELIMO controls many of the social associations and prevents organizations that could become stalwarts for the opposition to become stronger.

Organization of FRELIMO

Despite some improvements (especially comparing the current situation with the long-fought civil war), achieving a reasonable degree of legitimacy is probably the biggest issue for the ruling party in Mozambique. As noted by Carbone (2005), FRELIMO is much better organized than RENAMO, while regional entrenchment and capture by personal interests led the opposition to not buy completely into the system, usually not recognizing legitimacy to FRELIMO's rule, pointing to pervasive electoral fraud and political repression. The incidence of some violence between the two groups has happened at every

election cycle. Mozambique's situation is therefore markedly less stable than Botswana or South Africa, and partisan efforts to prevent conflict outbreak are paramount for keeping some level of political stability (Alden 2001).

Although FRELIMO attempts to generate some level of responsiveness by channeling demands from the citizenry into its internal processes, rather than through the state (Sumich 2010), there are still fundamental problems to solve. For example, natural resource rents are captured by the ruling party through the state and used to respond to violent challenges by the opposition, with expenditures curbing Mozambique's ability to sustain high economic growth (Macuane et al. 2017). Thus, instead of providing enough stability by including relevant sectors of society inside the party in a more meaningful way, FRELIMO ended up choosing to accept conflict as they could use the state in their favor to win it. The choice for violence instead of accommodation may be a contingency beyond the control of the ruling party, but as the structure of FRELIMO is decisively mixed with that of the state, partisan institutions are unlikely to help reducing the amount of conflict in Mozambique.

Additionally, the inclusion of more people into the party ranks has been something that, despite increasing levels of "structure", contributed to more potential political instability as it became one of the more relevant ways for

people to ascend socially (Sumich 2010). Perceptions of corruption are so prevalent that, for most citizens, being a member of FRELIMO is the best and often the only way to ensure a living and climb the social ladder, leading to widespread mistrust of the party among not only the opposition but some of its supporters who were not able or willing to secure partisan connections. As "real power remains concentrated in the ruling party", "[d]isputes, negotiations and struggles have, thus far, remained largely internal" (Sumich 2010).

Impact on Political Stability

Considering the existence of a major civil war, as well as several other disruptions during the decades, it is somewhat surprising that FRELIMO managed to stay in power for almost fifty years, even after the death of most of its legendary leaders. Party leaders remain important within its ranks after their presidencies, but so far, no president managed to entrench its personal power to the point of removing term limits. Violent conflict has been managed for decades without the ensuing instability causing chaos to the party's internal affairs.

Beyond the difficult relationship with opposition parties, more recently Mozambique's dominant party has been facing a tough challenge in the form of an insurgency in its northern region, more notably in Cabo Delgado. Apparently

strengthened by social problems and inequality in a region that hosts a sizable portion of Mozambique's production of natural gas, the insurgency – which is now reportedly affiliated to the Islamic State – attacked several villages since 2017, leaving a trail of destruction (Chichava 2020). FRELIMO and the military proved unable to fight the insurgents, which led Mozambique to hire several mercenaries, including the Wagner Group from Russia, to help in quelling the group.

Although not directly affected by the general political affairs of Maputo, both the rise of an insurgency and the inability to repel it speak ill of FRELIMO's capacity to generate stable conditions and to protect Mozambicans from violence. In fact, numbers from ACLED regarding civilians targeted by violence may be underestimates considering the difficulties in reaching the region and getting accurate reports regarding the state of things. The fog of war is intensified by FRELIMO's censorship of news that shed negative light onto the government.

Conclusions

The memory of the civil war between FRELIMO and RENAMO still lingers strongly in Mozambique. Beyond that, the dominant party clearly requires a lot of its organizational strength to win elections without managing to

achieve supermajorities, remaining for most of the "democratic" period as a contested dominant party. FRELIMO's grasp to society is strong and ensures their rule to not be meaningfully challenged unless through violent means, with the superior strength of the ruling party, as it controls state resources directly, making the guerilla warfare of some actors like RENAMO dissidents a source of instability but not capable of overthrowing the government. Against actors less invested in keeping Mozambique as it is, like the Cabo Delgado insurgency, FRELIMO can be a catalyst for discontent and ultimately lacks the capacity to decisively win without foreign support, which further entrenches the tendency for more instability in the future.

3.3 African National Congress

South Africa is a prominent case in African politics for several reasons. Most relevantly to this research, South African politics have always been characterized by dominant parties since World War II. The *apartheid* regime was designed and conducted in its entirety by the National Party, while the end of segregation brought the African National Congress (ANC) into power to stay. Exclusion of blacks from politics and so many other aspects of social life easily warrant the *apartheid* regime a label of unabashed authoritarianism, while dominance by the

ANC should not be considered as such, despite high levels of clientelism and corruption. In terms of stability, the end of *apartheid* itself was a very important development as it determined a substantial number of violent actions conducted by groups opposing the regime and, more importantly, by the government against them. However, South Africa is still a nation undergoing a lot of civil unrest despite much better efforts by the ANC to increase stability compared to FRELIMO's approach in Mozambique.

History of the African National Congress

The ANC is one of the most well-known parties from Africa and in the entire world, mostly for its role as the largest movement – although far from being the only one – against the *apartheid* regime. Its leader, Nelson Mandela, achieved mythical status among supporters despite being considered in the West as a "terrorist" for decades. As the National Party-dominated authoritarian regime started to fall, the ANC emerged as the organization with the best claim to develop the new South Africa: democratic, not racially segregated, and ready to become a symbol for the entire continent.

Expectations were high and thus met with some amount of disappointment. Much of the previous regime proved hard to overcome, and

Table 3.4: Modes of Dominance of the African National Congress

Year of Election	Modes of Dominance		
	Electoral	Organizational	Social
1999	Constitutional	Factional	.000
2004	Constitutional	Factional	.000
2009	Constitutional	Structured	.006
2014	Constitutional	Structured	.155
2019	Contested	Structured	.179

the challenges faced in one of the most economically unequal countries in the entire world, with urban violence increasing over the years and radicalized groups uneasy to the ANC leadership, have been remarkable. Despite that, the ANC is still the most popular party and ensures governing majorities in national elections as well provincial ones, with the exception of the Western Cape, dominated by the opposing party Democratic Alliance.

Table 3.4 demonstrates the scores obtained for the ANC in the modes of dominance framework. Electoral majorities have been ensured over the electoral cycles, but dwindling constantly; now the Democratic Alliance is a major opposition party, getting over 20% of seats in the lower chamber, while the ANC obtained 56% of seats in the last election in 2019. As the rest of the legislature is very fragmented, the dominant status of the ANC is not under question, but is

not as secure as in past electoral cycles. In addition to that, the organization suffered some defections that increased its cohesiveness, allowing for the transition from a "factional" organization to a "structured" one. Finally, the social dominance index is the lowest among all countries, as the ANC does not control nor has meaningful ties to many other societal actors when compared to other dominant parties in the region.

Recently, the party has been under more scrutiny due to charges of corruption leveled against their main figures, including former President Jacob Zuma. These accusations eroded much of the favorable public image the ANC still enjoyed from their origins as the *apartheid* main foe. As a result, the grasp onto power is more questionable than ever, although unlikely to lead to an opposition win in the next elections in 2024.

Organizational Structure of the ANC

Expectations about the ability to promote internal inclusiveness were high, with many attempts early on to increase the ability of the party to have its internal institutions built for creating consensus rather than being a place for factional disputes (Lodge 2004). However, some works have demonstrated the ANC's attempts to integrate and connect local communities into their

organization have had varied levels of success for electoral mobilization. For example, Piper and Anciano (2015) demonstrate how that mobilization can only occur through patronage and clientelism, with citizens buying into the party for the immediate benefits but not achieving much real participation within its ranks.

This mobilization inside the ANC also brought more negative results in terms of governance according to some scholars. For instance, Stanton (2009) points to how municipalities were left alone dealing with service provision as both the government and the ANC wanted to improve relationships with local leaders, while Patel (2016) how housing policies led to a proliferation of slums, increasing social tensions and animosity towards the dominant party. The practice of devolution to local communities seems to operate as a more shortsighted mean to achieve narrow electoral goals, not aimed at developing the party as an organization or the country. Therefore, the ANC continues to act as a gatekeeper for patronage and power, according to Beresford (2015). As a result, the ANC is not particularly well-poised to take advantage of benefits associated with being a more structured party than it was in its first decade in power, when the legendary image of President Nelson Mandela was enough to ensure the party to remain authoritative in its projects for national reform.

Impact on Political Stability

There was a decrease in political violence immediately after the end of *apartheid*, as expected given the renewed democratic hopes presided over by the ANC. As Table 3.1 showed, however, the number of violent events remained relatively high, similar to those of a country that experienced a civil war and still had many localized fights, like Mozambique. Violence in general, not only of political nature, is very high in South Africa, and politically motivated episodes of civilians targeted for ethnic and partisan reasons are no different.

One relevant example comes from the easternmost province of KwaZulu-Natal, homeland of several prominent leaders of the ANC but also the base for the Inkahta Freedom Party (IFP), an organization with roots in the anti-*apartheid* movement but more associated with collaborationism due to the ambiguous positions of its leader, Mangosuthu Buthelezi. The IFP is one of many parties represented in the legislature and has the ANC as its fiercest rival for control of local offices in KwaZulu-Natal.

Failure to solve the contentious nature of ANC and IFP relations has been a thorn for stability in the province, with many political killings happening over the decades. As noted by Schuld (2013), it is particularly difficult for post-conflict countries to reduce the level of violence after the authoritarian regime has been

expelled from power. Exploring the example of KwaZulu-Natal, Schuld notes that persistent violence partially stems from incapacity or lack of intention to develop policies aimed at post-conflict reconstruction, something that both the government and the ANC have been unable or unwilling to pursue in order to change the culture of violence as a means to solve political disputes (Onwuegbuchulam 2022).

In addition to these trends, corruption is very high in all levels of government, mainly operationalized through ANC channels. This is obviously not something exclusive to dominant parties, but given their continuance in power opportunities for corrupt behavior become even more entrenched; when directly associated with the partisan structures, it becomes even more fungible as an issue. Recently, former president Zuma was accused of embezzlement and other criminal activities, leading to his arrest, after his second term was already very turbulent due to other accusations that warranted an attempt from the opposition to impeach him. As corruption is widespread, and political violence still a large issue as a rule, South Africa's instability is likely on the rise. Without meaningful reforms and attempts at improving the resilience of both the state and the dominant party, an electoral defeat could be in the horizon, which would

lead itself to more instability as the ANC could become more likely to use its advantages from dominance to improve its stand relative to the opposition.

3.4 Conclusions

After considering the challenges and resolutions for three different dominant parties, having a better grasp of their overall strategies given contextual factors helps in understanding how these organizations exert dominance through varied means and wield results according to their modes of dominance.

In Botswana, the BDP took measures to ensure both partisan and government succession happens within existing institutional rules, and when those proved insufficient, they were changed upon agreements. When recently the differences between party leaders became insurmountable, defection did not immediately lead to dissolution of dominance, contributing to stability. The current situation is not devoid of concerns, but the history of decision-making through collegiate ways is likely to endure until the BDP is the dominant force in Botswana politics.

Mozambique and South Africa, on the other hand, have dominant parties with a diminished concern for building institutions internally and still rely on favoritism to control rules of succession. Membership increases due to the

benefits associated with being in the ruling party, likely increasing opportunities for corruption and fostering challenges to the legitimacy of the regimes. Mozambique faces the hardest challenge, dealing with still militarized opposition parties, relying on widespread fraud to win harshly contested elections, and facing insurgencies and general unrest that prevents the country from achieving stability.

Meanwhile, South Africa is an example of a dominant party that grew beyond its own legend and struggles to deliver its promise. The result is a more unstable polity than desirable, although the democratic gains since the days of *apartheid* are unquestionable. A serious attempt to improve partisan structures and institutions could lead to a political environment that is more stable and less prone to violence, particularly by tackling corruption and patronage.

Table 3.5 presents a summary of how these dominant parties can be compared across three types of political challenges based on the findings from the case studies. First, we have those associated with country institutions: how likely are these dominant parties to exert their dominance without compromising their state or confounding themselves with it. As noted, Botswana has had multiparty elections throughout its history, allowing at least in principle for other parties to participate in government if they were to win elections or maybe

Table 3.5: Summary of Findings from Case Studies

Challenges	Dominant Parties		
	Botswana Democratic Party (BDP)	Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO)	African National Congress (ANC)
Country Institutions	1. Multiparty elections since 1965 2. Prevalence of rule of law 3. Constitutional reforms 4. Non-alignment during Cold War	1. One-party regime until 1992 2. Regionalized civil war over control of state institutions 3. Alignment with the Soviet Union and against South Africa's *apartheid*	1. Multiparty elections since the end of *apartheid* 2. History of discriminatory state institutions; localized conflict during the 1990s and 2000s
Party Institutions	1. Internal elections and debates 2. Brokering of accords preferred over defections	1. Informal rules of succession, favoritism 2. Few defections but over-reliance on electoral fraud	1. Institutionalized party but reliant on charismatic figure 2. Increasing defections over time 3. Apparent lack of presence over society (see Table 3.4)
Political Instability	1. Very low levels of violence 2. Partisan leaders not above the law 3. Possible authoritarianism, most often contested	1. Very high levels of political violence 2. Leaders shielded from criticism and prosecution 3. High level of social repression	1. High levels of violence, including politically motivated 2. Scrutiny over leaders possible but destabilizing 3. Lack of social coordination

force participation in a coalition in case of a hung parliament. Additionally, partisan disputes and critical junctures were mostly resolved within constitutional boundaries and, when insufficient, through reforms. Keeping the country outside the alignment to one of the two major forces in the Cold War also helped strengthen foreign relations and allowed Botswana to make the best use of their natural resources.

Conversely, Mozambique followed the opposite approach by stablishing a one-party regime that descended into civil war, with heavy regional and social grievances persisting today. In that sense, it is comparable with South Africa and its struggles in dealing with the heritage of *apartheid*, but in the case of the ANC partisan dominance occurred in the context of a multiparty system, mitigating some of the issues coming from a discriminatory history.

When moving to the parties themselves, it is important to note the impact of formal and informal institutions within their structures to prevent conflict. Both the BDP and the ANC approached their coalitions through a big-tent perspective, attempting to build a good connection between voters and the party beyond specific ideological commitments. However, the ANC relied mainly on the legendary figure of Nelson Mandela to build that legitimacy as the dominant party, while the BDP was able to construct a more predictable hierarchy within

the party ranks, fostering cohesion and agreement. Meanwhile, FRELIMO is also a cohesive movement but very entangled with a more factional approach, with opaque rules and heavily reliant on favoritism for rules of succession.

Finally, the main interest for this paper, the relationship between these different types of dominant parties and political instability. As a result of predictability and the preference for agreements, the BDP managed to prevent violence from playing a large role in political affairs of Botswana. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that BDP leaders are not above the law as former president Ian Khama was indicted for corruption; its subsequent defection from BDP did not create much instability in electoral results or potential for government repression so far. The natural inclinations dominant parties can present toward authoritarianism are not very strong in Botswana compared to Mozambique or even South Africa, where political violence is still rampant in many regions.

These comparisons suggest that following a party-oriented institutional development, if it is separated from specific state institutions, in the molds of Botswana could contribute to increase the ability of both FRELIMO and ANC to at least reduce the number of actors inclined to solve their disputes with the dominant party through violent means. In that sense, keeping multiparty

elections that can be trusted is very important, but also making sure partisan dominance is exercised not merely through electoral means, but through a socially strong and institutionally solid and predictable organization. Reforms in that direction are probably more likely to function in South Africa than in Mozambique, provided the ANC does not enact them with the mere purpose of perpetuating itself in power, but also to strengthen its own foundations. If that is the case, even when and if eventually removed from government through electoral means, the party can survive.

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