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From Low-conflict Polity to Democratic Civil Peace?: Explaining Zambian Exceptionalism[*]

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Abstract

An absence of civil war and other significant sub-state violence makes Zambia an exceptional although not unique case in central-southern Africa. The literature devoted to explaining civil war has grown dramatically in recent years, but while it pays much attention to sub-Saharan Africa only rarely does it investigate counterfactual cases like Zambia. Similarly the growing field of research into post-conflict reconstruction fails to capture the distinct features of persistently low-conflict situations where many of the predisposing conditions for violent conflict might seem to be present. This paper examines Zambia's experience against a background of general theories that try to explain conflict. It is an "interpretative case study". The paper proceeds by substantiating Zambia's claim to a relatively peaceful record and introduces ideas of conflict and conflict theories, before arguing that no single general theory dwelling on just one primary "cause" will suffice to explain Zambian exceptionalism. The precise mix of arguments differs for each one Zambia's three republican eras, as the potential threats to peace have themselves evolved over the period since independence. The paper's main theoretical claim is that over time the explanation is both multi-layered and dynamic. That said, certain features do stand out, most notably an inherited political culture that is predisposed against the violent resolution of conflict and continues to insulate the country against social and economic traumas and democratic shortcomings.

Introduction

The new world disorder that succeeded the post-Cold War era has placed a spotlight on the prevalence of sub-state violence, just as the threat and incidence of major inter-state violence seemed to be in retreat. While not everyone believes the end of the Cold War is responsible for fuelling internal conflict (the so called "decompression

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effect"), theorising about the origins of such conflict has increased dramatically.[1]

Between 1981 and 1996 nearly half of Africa's states experienced significant episodes of violent conflict between government and opposition groups, such that by 1998 some 4 million people may have lost their lives as a direct result. At least 92 attempted military coups have been recorded, affecting 29 African countries (Goldsmith 2001: 128). Sub-Saharan Africa is unusual among regions in seeing no decline in the incidence of civil war in the last decade or so (Collier *et al.* 2003: 114-5). Central-southern Africa fits this pattern. This paper seeks to make sense of one of the exceptions - Zambia, a country possessing land borders with eight countries half of which have experienced significant levels of political violence including civil war in the years since achieving independence (1964). Rather than being a study in comparative analysis, the aim is to apply general propositions to the end of illuminating a single country, namely what Lijphart (1971: 692) calls an "interpretative" case study. While case studies naturally have limitations for larger endeavours in theory building, country studies nevertheless offer a legitimate focus of study in their own right, no matter how representative or unrepresentative they might be in regard to a larger set.

Zambia is an interesting case not least because so many of its immediate neighbours have experienced significant violent conflict. Mozambique's long running internal war came to an end only at the start of the 1990s. Angola's civil war ended only in 2002, with the death of the rebel leader, Jonas Savimbi. The so-called Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) – formerly Zaire - descended into violent conflict in the mid-1990s. In Zimbabwe considerable violence characterised the black majority government's repression of ethnic opposition in Matabeleland in the 1980s, and violence towards the political opposition is now routine. Namibia too gained its independence only after armed struggle and since then has witnessed violent opposition in the Caprivi Strip. Further south, there was bloodshed during South Africa's struggle for black majority rule, although the country is now a model of stability, while to Zambia's north large-scale bloodletting bordering on genocide marks the post-colonial era in Burundi and Rwanda. Generally speaking a "bad neighbourhood" increases the risk of violent domestic conflict, and while Zambia's relatively peaceful existence is not unique in the region, only Malawi, Tanzania and the relatively prosperous Botswana share its comparatively tranquil record. Routine

compilations of countries that have crossed a notable threshold denoting civil war, rebellion, revolution or other forms of violent protest such as successful military coups invariably leave Zambia as one of the few anomalous cases.[2]

Political violence is a contested concept. The requirement that it must have both political effects and political causes could be debated at length, as can arguments that the motives themselves must have some particular political content such as the overthrow of a political regime. Here the focus is on armed conflict, not all the other forms of "violence" such as famine, disease or gender discrimination that can seriously jeopardise human security and well-being. Goldsmith (2001: 130) defines an episode of political violence as an inter- or intrastate armed conflict involving at least 500 fatalities. Most conventional accounts of civil war - a major manifestation of political violence - specify a thousand combat-related deaths or more. The intention behind violence can be to preserve the status quo, as when an unpopular government resorts to force ("demicide" being an extreme example), as well as more radical initiatives like a popular revolution. In practice political violence is ubiquitous, found even in established democracies like Israel, India and Ulster, but the level or amount varies widely.

It would be wrong to say Zambia has a completely clean record. When the largely peaceful struggle for self-rule was gaining momentum in the late 1950s there were hints of mob violence, most notably the Cha Cha Cha episode (1961). In 1964 the Governor of Northern Rhodesia imposed a state of public emergency to counter the fanatical Lenshina movement (Lumpa church) in rural areas of the North East. Its followers have been various estimated between 50,000 and100,000 peasants; and numerous riotous incidents involving both the authorities and supporters of the United National Independence Party (UNIP) claimed as many as 1,500 lives (Binsbergen 1976). Roberts (1979: 551) says in late December 1963 large-scale fighting 'bordered on civil war'. Since then there have been several unsuccessful coup attempts (1990; 1997) and coup plots (1980; 1983; 1988). And from the mid-1970s to 1982 Adamson Mushala waged guerilla war against the one-party state, with support from exiles trained in South Africa. Riots in 1986 left 15 people dead. In June 1990 over 30 lives were lost in Lusaka, the capital, when the authorities used force to disperse rioters and looters – evidence of increasing popular discontent. A failed coup attempt followed

within days. The years since the return to political pluralism (1991) have witnessed a number of suspicious deaths of prominent politicians.[3] And in some most fiercely contested electoral arenas organised bands of youthful cadres mainly of the governing party (Movement for Multi-party Democracy) have used intimidating behaviour, reminiscent of some of their predecessors in UNIP in Zambia's First Republic (1964-71). In 2001, efforts to mobilise support for amending the constitution to allow President Chiluba to run for a third term looked for a time as though there might be a violent outcome, before Chiluba reconfirmed his intention to leave office.

Nevertheless, by comparison with many of Zambia's neighbours and, perhaps more significant, when seen against a background of the potential threats to peace, such as severe and prolonged deterioration in social and economic conditions, Zambia looks unusually stable and peaceful.[4] Zambia is such an interesting case precisely because at first sight it looks vulnerable to several of the more prominent features identified in the general theories that purport to explain violent conflict.

Conflict: Ideas and Explanations

Although many African countries have experienced serious conflict, violence is not the norm everywhere. Local differences in the nature, origins, and sustaining factors of conflict could be highly significant, making each case look special in their own way and Zambia appear not so extraordinary. For instance Namibia's difficulties with a relatively few secessionists in the Caprivi Strip hardly compares with the disintegration and external military involvement (most notably Ugandan invasion) in the vast DRC; genocide in Rwanda is different again. Thus not only is the explanation of conflict in all these cases unlikely to be identical, but in order to understand more peaceful cases like Zambia there may be several points of contrast that are relevant.

Violent conflict is not synonymous with political instability, although the two may be reciprocally connected. Weak government unable to control unruly subjects may be a factor in internal war, but that too requires explanation (David 1997). According to Fearon and Laitin (2003) state weakness offers the most compelling explanation of insurgency, but what defines weakness, is there some crucial threshold and can states sometimes be too powerful for internal peace? State collapse definitely conjures up scenes of violent conflict, but the opposite is not necessarily true. Contrarily, Ayoob

4

(1998: 42) reasons "internal war" is positively related less to state decline than to state-making and state formation, which he argues involve imposition and accumulation of power against the forces of resistance. So, there are crucial distinctions between whether it is the state (or perhaps just one branch) that is responsible for violence, or some distinct social group which may be targeting other groups or assaulting the political order more generally. In principle a violently oppressive regime, rebellion, popular revolution, military coups d'etat, inter-communal warfare, secession pursued through armed struggle, guerrilla warfare, and economically-motivated violent plunder may all be theorised in distinct ways.

Furthermore, conflict is a continuum extending from total war to "low-intensity" violence; from highly localised to nationwide incidents, either intermittent or sustained. Different reasons may be adduced to explain the origins of conflict and then its persistence or recurrence. The underlying conditions enabling conflict to occur or facilitating it may not be those that predispose a society to violent conflict or increase its likelihood. A weak state enhances vulnerability and means sub-state violence can spread yet may not itself cause such violence. The trigger(s), precipitating factor or proximate "cause" could be some singular event; the conditions that sustain conflict systemic are more enduring. While resentment about an elite's misuse of power may provoke dissatisfaction, poor people may channel anger into violent protest only in the absence of alternatives, or due to prolonged failure to secure redress of grievance. In such situations a sudden large increase in the price of the nation's staple foodstuff could prove catalytic. Yet the very circumstances that merely predispose to violent conflict in one society could serve as a catalyst in another.

Theoretical Explanations
The diverse literature on civil conflict offers several different theories. Considerable effort has been devoted to cross-national data analysis directed at confirming or refuting one or other, linking conflict to specific sets of circumstances such as poverty, inequality, environmental scarcity, cultural diversity, institutional weaknesses, and regional contagion. But we should be wary of investing too much significance in just statistical relationships. High correlations are not tantamount to cause and effect, and will need further explanation themselves. Such analyses

inevitably pay less consideration to the particularities of each case. These are more likely to be revealed by adopting an historical approach – the approach preferred here. This section briefly identifies the main theoretical approaches.

There are different ways of grouping the theories for purposes of convenience, such as political explanations, economic explanations, and cultural explanations: each category contains different versions. Structural and (neo-)institutional explanations can be compared with those that place most emphasis on the behaviour of individual actors, bad leaders for example. Accounts could also be distinguished into endogenous (domestic) "causes" and exogenous (regional, or wider international) "causes". Collier (2000) and Collier and Hoeffler (2001) contrast theories that stress motivation with explanations that focus on opportunity. Some accounts defy easy categorisation, or the terms of the categorisation are disputable. For instance, as wars over power relationships involving the state "ethnic wars" might seem primarily political and, possibly, cultural, but the roots could lie in the groups' divergent experiences of socio-economic modernisation and material well-being. And while references to "greed" or to economic inequality both relate to economic considerations, it seems only the former is awarded the status of economic driver in Collier's writings, which consign the latter to just one of many political "narratives of grievance".

Of course not all the arguments are mutually exclusive, and so no taxonomy is wholly unproblematic. Before turning to Zambia, then, briefly the following comprise most of the leading contenders.

First, there is the proposition that violence is fuelled by ethnic, racial and religious hatreds (Kaplan 2000). Second, there is the theory that a generally poor fit between society and state increases the likelihood of civil, highlighting political exclusion as an especially potent factor (Holsti 1998). State legitimacy is conducive to state capacity; weak state legitimacy encourages political contestation to take the form of challenges to the state (Englebert 2000). Third, political repression and persecution by the state apart from being violent themselves (for instance "politicide" – attempts at the systematic elimination of political enemies) can provoke a violent response. Fourth, there is the argument from Collier that opportunity (to build rebel

organisations) is the most promising predictor of rebel conflict. There is a "resource curse". As a proxy for economic greed here Collier uses significant income from heavy dependence on mineral enclaves, or primary commodity exports more broadly.

Fifth, there are a cluster of propositions incorporating economic or socio-economic circumstances that vary from "environmental scarcity", through economic decline (gradual and slow or alternatively an abrupt shock) to the persistence of low incomes, poverty and, perhaps most distinctive, great socio-economic inequality. Although different in important ways from one another, all these in their own way have been claimed to favour political instability and possibly lead to violent conflict. To cite one example, Collier *et al.* (2003: 53) say the "key root cause of conflict is the failure of economic development".[5] If it is inequality that most increases vulnerability to violent conflict, then it may not be so crucial whether the most relevant inequalities are vertical (elite-mass) or horizontal between groups. Either one may be capable of generating serious discontent, but they become most dangerous when the two sets of cleavage coincide. Aside from distributive considerations, grievance can arise from the disappointment of material expectations or from dashed aspirations even when the economic performance has not been disastrous.

Sixth, there is the argument that unstable neighbours and insecure borders increase the hazard of importing conflict involuntarily - civil war is a regional "public bad" (Sambanis 2001). An additional threat exists if a country is deliberately targeted by its neighbours in response to their own sense of insecurity. Finally, there is evidence that societies with a history of civil war or wars of liberation are statistically more likely to descend into conflict again. Only in part may this owe to the damage conflict causes to the economy and state; for "conflict actors" may acquire a vested interest in perpetuating conflict, leading to a vicious circle of civil war.[6]

All in all, the theories are so different as to make it improbable that any one country will meet all the various conditions spelled out in the explanations. Indeed, a detailed exploration of Zambia's experience is worthwhile if only in order to confirm that violent conflict has perhaps been "over-determined". But at the same time we should not ignore that countries are dynamic even in the presence of continuities from one generation to another. The valuable idea of "path dependence" maintains that legacies

or inheritances from the past can significantly shape the present and future prospects (with or without a lag). But that does not exclude the possibility of there being temporal differences. Thus Zambia's three republican eras do not constitute a static experience. It is quite feasible that while one set of reasons explains the absence of conflict in one particular period a different set of reasons might work best for another period when the country faced a different mix of vulnerabilities to conflict. In other words, the business of explaining is situational. Indeed it will be argued below that an explanation that is both multilayered and dynamic, that is to say changing combinations of reasons, helps make sense of Zambia's experience, even though over time certain common or core factors do stand out more than others.

Zambia into the First Republic

Legacies from the Past

Unlike many countries in the region Zambia attained independence without extensive or protracted violent struggle. Some of the white residents openly supported black aspirations. Peaceful political competition between parties became established well in advance and eventually included electoral competition between black Africans ultimately pursuing the same nationalist end. Although Kenneth Kaunda's UNIP came to dominate the political landscape after the founding members broke away from Harry Nkumbula's African National Congress (ANC), ANC retained a significant presence after independence by virtue of its power base in Southern Province and a minority of seats in the National Assembly. It provided a focus for political opposition. A scenario whereby the ANC could pose a strong challenge for power forming electoral alliances with break-away groups from UNIP became increasingly plausible in the First Republic.

The absence of violent confrontation among UNIP and ANC during the struggle for independence owed in no small measure to their shared opposition to the incorporation of Northern Rhodesia into the Central African Federation (1953-63). The Federation was resented by all: it meant domination by the racist administration in Southern Rhodesia. It was disagreements over how to lever disengagement from the Federation and gain self-rule that separated the parties - differences not of ideology or of affiliation to some external superpower, but over tactics and the

respective party leaders' competence to lead. Furthermore, Kaunda's leadership of the independence struggle committed his followers to 'non violent positive action' (which was written into UNIP's constitution). 'Through tremendous efforts but rather successfully' Kaunda deterred supporters from using violent methods; and with that 'major trauma of the Zambian nationalist dream' (Binsbergen 1976:103) as a warning, Kaunda used the Lenshina uprising at public rallies to urge general avoidance of sectarianism and other threats to unity and stability. Nothing like the Lumpa movement, which was backed by some settlers opposed to independence and had seemed bent on creating a state within a state, reoccurred after the church was officially banned in 1964. In this the cultivation of a productive symbiosis between the new state of Zambia and the established Christian churches served to enhance the state's legitimacy, but social trends were helpful too (Binsbergen 1976: 130). The rural peasantry who had joined the Lumpa movement were increasingly brought into contact with the modernising influences of urbanisation and UNIP's nation-building straytegies, which made movement unlikely to persist especially after the death of its founder, 'holy woman' Alice Lenshina.

However, although a unique phenomenon the movement and more specifically the violence immediately before independence had a lasting significance in its reinforcement of Kaunda's commitment to non-violence, rooted in his own lifelong Christian beliefs. Later on, in *Kaunda on Violence* (1980) he reflected on how 'much harder than winning debates at conferences was the business of schooling our ordinary members in the rules of non-violence' (1980: 55). For although once in power Kaunda modified his pacifism and went on to defend the armed struggle for black liberation in Rhodesia, his abiding conviction of the wisdom of preventing non-violent protest turn violent, by making concessions, was to serve Zambia well – at the closure of the Second Republic.

Social Composition and State-Society Fit
Zambia is a country of 73 officially recognised ethnic groups and 17 different languages, of which seven (plus English) have the status of national language. Although in pre-colonial times there was considerably greater parity among the different ethno-linguistic groups, by 1990 around 40 per cent of the population had come to use Bemba as first or second language, 30 per cent employed Nyanja, 12 per

cent Tonga and 10 per cent Lozi (Posner 2003: 129). At no point has one group held an absolute majority. This demographic profile probably means Zambia never was a strong candidate for extensive inter-communal violence. There are several points worth making here.

First, the presence of ethno-linguistic diversity does not itself mean that a new post-colonial state will be badly aligned with previously existing political systems – something that could be a far more significant determinant of stability. Applying the concept of horizontal legitimacy, that is to say consensus about the definition of the community over which rule is exercised, Englebert (2000) calculated that Zambia occupies a position around mid-way, on a scale between 0 (where a post-colonial state is highly incongruent from a territorial point of view) and a maximum of 1 (high ethnic identification). He calculated that at least 15 African states were less favourably situated than Zambia. Other states were more favourably situated. However the degree to which this alone explains Zambia's peace is questionable, for although more arbitrary states like DRC and Somalia have known much violence so have Uganda, Mozambique and Rwanda whose horizontal legitimacy exceeds that of Zambia. Nigeria with a score closest to Zambia has experienced civil war, military coups and significant recent violence between religious communities. Moreover ethnic plurality does not necessarily mean society will be deeply or sharply divided, especially if there are several ethnic "markers" (language, race, territory) competing among themselves. Indeed there is aggregate data to show that that ethnic diversity does not even have significant consequences for a society's ability to sustain democracy (Fish and Brooks 2004). And recent research suggests that religious divisions are more important than language divisions in explaining ethnic conflicts (Reynal-Querol 2002). Zambia has an overwhelmingly Christian background, even though not one but several Christian churches have a vibrant presence in the country today.

Second, if we accept – as most analysts argue – that ethnic identity is as much (or more) socially constructed and malleable than it is some primordial thing, then both the likelihood of it being a significant factor in politics and its political effects depend on political agency. The key question becomes do the politicians instrumentalise identity as a central part of their mobilisation strategies, and do they couch overt

10

appeals in exclusionary terms? From the start President Kaunda set out to build "one Zambia, one nation": this created a very notable legacy. The country's Asian and white residents were not victimised. Kaunda was alert to the dangers that ethnic cleavages can give rise to and was keen to discourage rival politicians from making divisive ethnic appeals. Following Molteno's (1974: 100) analysis, compared to ethno-politics pure and simple, sectionalism arising from provincial competition for resources provides a more accurate lens through which to view the political contestation in the first Republic. 'Sectionalism' arises in the first place and primarily from competition for power among leaders; sectional interests are essentially interest groups competing for resources. It should not be misread as deep-seated 'tribal' divisions let alone portrayed as the stirrings of tribal hatred – something that Zambia has always been spared.

Third, despite "a multitude of explanations, which are segmented along the primordialist-instrumentalist fault-line, there are few solidly specified models suggesting clearly how ethnic enmity is the real cause of violence and not, as is very often the case, its by-product" (de Soysa 2002: 402; see also Fearon and Laitin 1996, and Collier, Elbadawi and Sambanis 2000). Ethnic heterogenity as such does not cause violent conflict. There is more evidence to suggest that civil war is most likely where there are two sharply polarized and internally cohesive groups, with the politically dominant group refusing to share power, than in more highly fractionalised societies like Zambia.[7] And UNIP from the liberation struggle onwards tried hard to be a national organisation that drew members at all levels from every part of Zambia, even though in Southern Province it could not entirely displace the ANC. Both UNIP before the 1990s and then Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) in the 1990s were successful in polling support in every province and from across the entire ethnic spectrum. In a multi-ethnic country like Zambia this approach to coalition-building among ethno-regional groups is entirely rational for political parties that want to share in power at the centre. Those politicians who seek to capitalise on a purely local political base by standing in opposition to the party leadership before an election do so not in order to divide communities but for the bargaining power it will bring when they offer to go over to the dominant side.

In fact Scarritt and Mozaffar show in Zambia that apart from a few instances where small new (and ultimately unsuccessful) parties presented a more narrowly-based ethnic identity, pluralistic multi-ethnic or non-ethnic parties are the dominant organisational form.[8] Of course their finding is contingent on how they define ethnic or potential ethnic party - one drawing over 75 per cent of its support from a single group - and historically speaking many non-Bembas especially have tended to view political life at the centre in part through an ethnic lens. The attention paid to the ethnic and regional composition of cabinet appointments is an example. Nevertheless party competition in Zambia has not been just a simile for ethnic contest, in either the First or the Third Republic. Horowitz (1993: 28) said the "extent to which military rule in Africa is a function of the ethnic failures of electoral politics can hardly be overestimated". In Zambia neither the ethnic impact nor the ethnic consequences of its electoral politics have been so dire as to produce, let alone justify, military rule.

Economic Performance

Zambia has not fallen prey to the 'resource curse' notwithstanding the fact that mining most notably for copper has regularly provided over three quarters of its essential foreign currency earnings. (In recent years minings's contribution to government revenue has gone into steep decline, with the state-owned industry becoming a net drain on the public finances by the late 1990s). Zambia's experience is not unique of course, for unlike say Sierra Leone Botswana too has managed to combine high-value non-renewable riches (diamonds) with enduring civil peace. The use to which natural resource wealth is put offers an explanation.

Zambia in its first decade of independence enjoyed impressive social and economic progress. Public spending averaged around twenty per cent annual increase between 1965 and 1970 (at 1970 prices), funding general educational and health care improvements and creating new employment opportunities. Over half of all new recorded wage employment occurred in the public sector. There were very large real wage rises. The extended family meant a portion of the benefits gained in the expanding formal sector of a growing urban economy were passed on to the rural areas. The Copperbelt – the main productive source of the income – is not on the periphery of Zambian territory: secessionist dreams of the kind found in some other parts of post-colonial Africa (Cabinda in Angola and Biafra in Nigeria, for example)

would never have been practical. The very physical nature of copper mining's product and the extensive employment-intensive infrastructure that it sustained means the industry is not vulnerable to seizure by bandits, unlike Sierra Leone's so-called "conflict diamonds". In sum, neither greed and resource-based opportunism nor widespread popular grievance – two opposing theorisations of the violent conflict found elsewhere in Africa- are applicable to Zambia at this time. Also, there was (and still is) no serious land hunger. Zambia, an under-populated country of around 10 million people does not know "environmental scarcity" in that sense, although fuel and seasonal water shortages are a regular feature in some areas.

To summarise, the circumstances of Zambia's struggle for independence and immediate aftermath differed greatly from those in some other countries including Zimbabwe and Angola where the nationalist struggles were violent and divisive for the black majority. Zambia's First Republic was a period of social and economic progress and considerable optimism. Zambia appeared to enjoy benign leadership committed to non-violent political competition carried out within a plural political framework bequeathed by a negotiated transition to independence. The political institutionalisation made possible by Kaunda's commitment to UNIP as a strong national party kept pace with, or even ran ahead, of the increase in political participation. This meant the dominant party could structure and manage the demands arising out of social mobilisation and modernisation, so giving Zambia a firm platform to avoid the kind of turmoil that Huntington (1968) believed was fostered whenever political institutionalisation lagged behind social modernisation. The political leadership made extensive symbolic and material investment in political strategies of nation building, which ranged from resourcing such institutions alongside UNIP as a youth movement and a women's movement to the design of the school curricula and managing harmonious relations with traditional chiefs and religious leaders. The country was never an obvious candidate for extensive inter-communal violence grounded on ethnic or religious differences.

Regional Context
Although in Kaunda's words (1980: 158) Zambia was 'truly a war baby, born to the sound of gunfire on her northern, western and eastern frontiers', it was to the south that it found itself in the position of 'front-line state' - against white-ruled Southern

Rhodesia and apartheid South Africa. However, rather than conspiring to cause internal problems inside Zambia this external situation proved on balance to be an integrating force. Certainly there was some South African complicity in the Mushala uprising; and in 1978 the Rhodesia airforce bombed refugee camps in Zambia. And Zambia's economy suffered greatly following white minority-ruled Southern Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965, which precipitated United Nations' backed sanctions right up to Zimbabwean independence in 1980. Vital rail and road connections pass through Zimbabwe from Zambia to the sea. Also for many years after, Zambia has been host to refugees fleeing zones of conflict across its borders, the numbers reaching as many as 200,000 in the 1990s due to fighting in neighbouring Angola and DRC. The existence of ethnic ties cutting across borders meant Zambia could have become embroiled in its neighbour's affairs.

Yet throughout its history, a conviction that the country is too weak militarily to risk external war together with skilful management of foreign affairs and diplomatic relations even with apartheid South Africa, have insulated Zambia from destructive involvement in the bitter divisions nearby. Indeed, far from social divisions in Zambia being accentuated by the insecurities of the wider region, the country's own "front line" situation probably strengthened Kaunda's authority at home and serve to unify the country. The new state was able to make demands of its people on grounds of national security that in other countries or in different times might have led to a more determined, even violent response. Later, in the Third Republic President Chiluba showed similar determination that Zambia's political opening to multiparty competition in 1991 should not give former 'comrades' in neighbouring states who might feel threatened a pretext for meddling in Zambia's internal affairs. He did this by seeking to persuade fellow Africans that it was the responsibility of the Organisation of African Unity to encourage the democratisation of states elsewhere in the region (Chiluba 1995: 115). Subsequently he drew plaudits in Europe for trying (without much success) to mediate the military conflict involving forces from several countries including Uganda and Zimbabwe in the DRC.

The First Republic was brought to an end following growing concern by Kaunda that political competition could aggravate ethnic divisions in the country. The introduction of the Second Republic abolished plural politics in the name of harmony. The ANC

used the courts to register its objection, before conceding politically. Kaunda's critics maintain he was motivated more by a desire to retain power in the face of signs that UNIP could be about to lose its dominance. Arguably the breakdown of the First Republic in 1970-72 was a time when repression - or suppressed ethnopolitical and sectional conflict - was at its height. We cannot know the probable course of events if the Second Republic had not been established at this point. But the fact that the increase of political violence that Kaunda claimed would happen otherwise did not in fact materialise perhaps suggests that the initiative was timely; in contrast to some African states it was not the product of a despotic leadership bent on exploiting the country for personal gain. Even so, in time the Second Republic itself increasingly came to look vulnerable to a different set of forces likely to promote disorder and, possibly, violent conflict.

The Second Republic

The idea of having one, uncontested leader as a stabilising force may help explain the relative peace of Zambia's one-party state. A comparable situation existed in Tanzania; President Nyerere and Kaunda drew mutual reinforcement for the legitimacy of their role. Yet there were moments when, if not the stability of the leadership then public support for the direction it gave appeared to come into question. Apart from the coup plots already mentioned, there were political strikes by key workers on the Copperbelt protesting against the 1980 Local Administration Act that threatened local government autonomy. More general unrest – fuelled by economic circumstances - mounted as the years wore on. But general elections were held at regular intervals, and many voters appeared not to see them as a meaningless charade but instead seized the opportunity to remove leading politicians. The opportunity to participate in this way, and vent political grievance by exercising choice, provided a valuable element of continuity in political practice notwithstanding the obvious constraints of a one-party state.

At the same time the Second Republic can be characterised as "soft repression". Power was centralised – the opposite of the warlordism that tore Somalia apart. Formally a state of emergency existed from colonial times up to the very end of the Second Republic. (It was reintroduced, temporarily, in 1993, following an alleged plot by a few disgruntled opposition figures to foment civil disobedience, and again in

1997 after an attempted coup by a handful of junior officers). Occasionally critics of the regime would be held in detention and, on their release co-opted in public service; for others, the risk of being denied opportunities for personal economic advancement was enough to guarantee their political passivity, avoiding resort to more heavy-handed threats or punishments. Techniques like having not one but several intelligence and military organisations part of whose purpose was to maintain surveillance of one another, helped secure civilian rule. In any case military men were appointed to senior positions in government and the army was relatively well provided for in a country without major external threats or international commitments. No less important the government continued for as long as possible its welfarist policies, which underpinned social order even though they ultimately proved financially and economically ruinous. For much of the period the absence of irresistible pressure from the international financial institutions to rigorously pursue orthodox fiscal and monetary policies was very accommodating too: by not forcing more austere measures on the government tit perhaps made its own small contribution to preserving the peace.

The important point here is that Zambia is one of those countries where the informal institutions of neo-patrimonialism and clientelism provide a kind of glue that helps ensure cohesion between ethno-regional elites, and maintains links between political elites and ordinary people. These institutions are "the cement by which ethnic identities are amalgamated within the boundaries of a more inclusive political system" (Lemarchand 1972: 70; see also Rothchild and Foley 1988, and Chabal and Daloz 1999). A necessary condition for this to work effectively is that the arrangements are sufficiently inclusive to prevent the emergence of "ethnoclass conflict" – that is where ethnic stratification and class divisions coincide. Another necessary condition is that there is enough patronage to go round.

In Zambia that condition seemed to be met to one degree or another for a large part of the 1970s and 1980s. Kaunda, a master of the ethnic and provincial arithmetic when making appointments, endeavoured to maintain loyalties across the political spectrum both through formal policies that dispensed public goods like spending on education and informal neo-patrimonial interventions, all managed within the inclusionary structures of the single party. Eventually the government's ability to finance all this

became increasingly strained, not only because it was synonymous with economic mismanagement but because of adverse movements in the world copper price after 1975. Nevertheless for many years the urban population continued to experience the benefits of subsidised maize (the nation's staple), peasant farmers however remote from the line of rail enjoyed guaranteed sales, and industrial workers were kept largely quiescent through industrial protectionist policies and concessions to their wage demands. This political economy approach to maintaining political stability proved largely effective until the mid-1980s. And although socio-economic inequalities (especially urban-rural) existed, policy towards managing the country's social and economic affairs was not ethnicised in ways that were highly discriminatory.

In the second half of the 1980s, however, cumulative economic discontents grew more serious, and by 1990 the growing signs of active protest were unmistakable. Kaunda's agreement eventually, albeit reluctantly, to allow the return of political pluralism meant that Zambia enjoyed a peaceful transition back to multiparty politics. In April 1990 Kaunda agreed to hold a referendum on return to multi-partyism. Following large pro-democracy rallies staged by the MMD in September, Kaunda decided to abandon the referendum and recommend changing the constitution. These developments are strongly evocative of Kaunda's reflection some years before (1980: 54) that 'any ruling power which is wise enough to make sufficient concessions to vindicate non-violent opposition, would probably be wise enough in the first place to read the signs of the times and change things'. The political concessions were certainly prudent, although it seems Kaunda did not anticipate losing the presidency.

Not just the way the process of political change was managed but its direction conformed to the widely-held view that the more closely a polity resembles stable liberal democracy the less likely there will be domestic collective violence. For example according to Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000: 246) "the best - and - fastest strategy to reduce the incidence of civil war in Africa is to institute democratic reforms that effectively manage the socio-cultural diversity of African societies". And for Sandbrook (2002: 151) although "democracy is not a panacea for deadly conflict, particular circumstances make it a gamble worth taking", because for instance democratic countries do not fall foul of complex humanitarian emergencies.[9] The

17

probability theory of a democratic civil peace presents a counterpart to the well-known proposition in international relations theory that democracies do not go to war with one another ("democratic peace thesis"). The reasoning in the two cases is similar: in theory democracies encourage negotiation and compromise, bargaining and exchange, even if the reality (both in inter-state relations and in the internal politics of a contemporary democracy like Zambia) does not always exemplify these traits in full. A further theory claims democracies are less prone to internal conflict because they are usually more stable than non-democracies (in high-income societies, anyway). Yet more complex reasoning suggests that in the long run democracies provide a more reliable political environment for economic development which in turn offers the best surety for peace. Arguably none of these grounds for choosing democracy were what impressed Kaunda at the time so much as a conviction that the stability Zambia had enjoyed to date could be put at risk by resisting the escalating demands for political reform. His senior military advisers probably advised as much. Also, since the fall of the Berlin wall major international donors were signalling their desire to see democratic political reform in many countries previously considered immune from external pressure.

So in Zambia political transition was carried out consensually, amid negotiations between Kaunda and MMD over the details of constitutional change and with respected church representatives mediating the disputes. At that time MMD too could be said to offer a unifying force, as all varieties of opposition to the status quo coalesced behind its leadership, so making a smooth political transition possible and a change of government in the ensuing elections that much more likely. Yet it is worth noting here that as a general rule democratisation offers no easy solution. For although established democracies with strong institutions, stable and inclusionary instruments of governance, and the rule of law neither invite nor provoke domestic conflict and they normally resolve conflict peacefully, in contrast polities in transition appear to be uniquely vulnerable, for two reasons. First, although conflict-suppression and an absence of conflict do not amount to the same thing, there is evidence to suggest that strong autocracies share with established democracies a low probability of civil war. In contrast, weak autocracies and intermediate regimes or semi-democracies are more vulnerable in this regard. This is because although political and civil liberties are not yet sufficient for people to feel they can express their grievances

and gain satisfaction through the established political channels alone, they are not cowed into submission: the cost of collective action is not prohibitive (Muller 1985: 48). Thus the relationship between regime types and violent conflict is said to resemble an inverted u-curve (Hegre, Ellingsen, Gates and Gleditsch 2001). Second, the very process of political change – even "progressive" change intended to liberalise formerly authoritarian regimes - may be no less hazardous because of the uncertainties it can create. Democratic reform is "a risky strategy as it unleashes tensions that may aggravate the underlying crises"(Sandbrook 2002: 171; see also Hegre *et al.* 2001). In Zambia the peaceful nature of the political transition and subsequent change of government suggest that a shared commitment to managing difference and resolving conflict by non-violent means was already an embedded feature of the political culture. But that does not mean the peace is guaranteed indefinitely, especially if a new democracy fails to follow an appropriate institutional design (such as more rather than less inclusionary forms) and/or fails to meet the basic material needs of its people. The establishment of the Third Republic, then, introduces the possibility of yet new challenges to peace

The Third Republic
Since 1991 Zambia's ability to sustain something like a democratic civil peace might seem just as remarkable as its earlier capacity for avoiding violence in a much troubled region. For one thing political order started to disintegrate in DRC and in Zimbabwe; further afield, in Côte d'Ivoire in 1999 democratic progress was reversed by a military coup, and even now the country has not regained its former peace. For another thing, Zambia is almost unique among developing countries that have *not* experienced severe conflict in the scale of its continuing economic decline and increase of poverty during the last two decades. Whereas for instance peaceful Botswana enjoyed average annual increase in per capita Gross National Product of over 7 per cent after 1965 and, from 1980 annual increases in private consumption per capita of 3 per cent, Zambia's record has been minus 2 per cent and minus 3.6 per cent respectively. Of the other relatively peaceful states in the region neither the economic performance of Tanzania or Malawi can compare with Zambia's dramatic decline. The percentage of Zambians now said to live on less than a dollar a day (over 70 per cent) and on less than two dollars a day (over 90 per cent) are very high even for southern Africa - the latter figure being half as high again as in Botswana and in

Tanzania.[10] In Zambia average life expectancy has fallen far, from 50 years in 1980 to under 40 years now. Public welfare policies in the 1990s have been austere, constrained by the international financial institutions and the policy of cash budgeting introduced in 1993. Education and health have typically been allocated only around 2-3 per cent of Gross National Product per annum for most of the 1990s.

Furthermore, in Zambia inequality too is exceptionally high: with a Gini index figure of over 52, only around fifteen countries currently have higher recorded figures. The richest 10 per cent of the population enjoy 41 per cent of income or consumption (compared with 34 per cent in 1991). The lowest 20 per cent account for just 3.3 per cent of income or consumption (down from 5.6 per cent in 1991) and the lowest 10 per cent for only 1.1 per cent of income or consumption.[11] So, with fewer resources cascading down through patronage networks, visible signs of growing inequality and increasing poverty, and declining formal sector employment (to just a few hundred thousand, with youth unemployment in particular being high), certain conflict theories would predict growing unrest. How has Zambia managed so far to escape that and violent consequences? What makes this question even more pertinent is that the country's democratic reforms also faltered in the course of the 1990s, such that by mid-decade commentators were speculating that a return to semi-authoritarian rule was imminent (for example Joseph 1998: 6). Notable symptoms were the one-party dominance exercised by MMD, concentration of power in the presidency and some intolerance of critical dissent. Aggregate data analysis finds a "high level of inequality and a regime structure that is neither democratic nor totalitarian appear to be the two potent ingredients of a recipe for political instability" (Muller 1985:60).

A Sort of Democratic Domestic Peace
Notwithstanding the existence of general theories that specify one or more of extensive poverty, inequality, and liberal democratic shortcomings as conditions favourable to violent conflict these are not sufficient conditions even when taken in combination. And when they do incline towards political instability, the result is not necessarily great violence. Much depends on local context and the presence or absence of other conflict-inducing factors. To understand Zambia's recent experience, then, it is worth revisiting some familiar themes.

Take ethnopolitics. Zambia's politicians continue to factor ethnic and provincial considerations into their strategies for mobilising support at local levels; and it is true that in the December 2001 elections the main parties polled most strongly in their leader's home province. Yet the language of "tribalism" still features mostly as *negative* currency in national political debates - an accusatory tactic aimed at delegitimating opponents' campaigns and putting them on the defensive. Naturally such accusations help politicians mobilise their own ethnically-based political support against rivals they portray as tribal, and doubtless that is precisely the intention. But a shared awareness of the nature of the game that is being played together with the condemnatory message contained within the rhetoric limits its ability to do serious damage to inter-communal relations, especially in a country where there has been much inter-marriage between groups and other ethnic mixing. "Tribal balancing", in contrast, is perceived in a positive light, even though the logic of it actually requires ethnicity to be factored into political calculations. Thus because Chiluba was not as careful over the ethnic arithmetic as Kaunda when making cabinet appointments, traditional suspicions of favouritism towards Bembas came once more to the surface. The predominant contribution that Luapula and Northern Province voters made to the MMD's ability to retain power in December 2001 now helps keep that alive.

However, perceptions that ethnicity is divisive are blurred perhaps more than ever by the almost universal sharing in the misfortunes of economic decline, which has even brought a narrowing of the former urban-rural differential. Susceptibility to HIV/AIDS too is no respecter of ethnic identity: around 25 per cent of the population are reckoned to be at risk. Such shared experience can be integrative. There is a pervasive sense too of resignation about Zambia's dependence on foreign donors, who by 2000 accounted for around a quarter of the Gross Domestic Product, were financing all of the government's capital spending, and whose willingness to relieve foreign debt of over $7billion is deemed essential. It is easy for political debate in Zambia to hold the World Bank and International Monetary Fund responsible for the paucity of economic and social policy options, thereby channelling grievance away from the elected representatives even though their own commitment to promoting pro-poor solutions is questionable. So although economically-motivated crime including violent robbery is now prevalent, there has been no increase of political violence directed against the state.

Indeed, the relevance of the state in its economic aspect is for many Zambians hard to detect. It hardly seems worth fighting over. Non-governmental organisations funded by the donors endeavour to substitute the provision of essential services like health and education in rural areas, and as with the adverse effects of cash budgeting and the overall financial constraints there is no obvious discrimination along ethnic lines. Ideological class-based opposition to the government among the political elite remains non-existent. And, given the decline of the mining industry - to the point where only large-scale investment by private international investors could possibly rescue it (even then the prospects are uncertain) - the economic opportunism captured by Collier's "greed" theory of rebellion continues to lack any purchase in contemporary Zambia.

This leaves the impact of the country's political institutional arrangements to account for. Freedom House's most recent rating of Zambia is 4 for political rights and civil liberties, on a descending scale of 1 to 7 (Karatnycky 2004: 91). That means Zambia is judged only 'partly free'. The December 2001 elections were deemed unsatisfactory by several observer organisations including Zambia's main civil society representatives, because of the appearance of irregularities whose significance was heightened by the closeness of the declared result (see Burnell 2002). However even the challenge this poses to peace should not be overestimated.

First, there is Zambia's unbroken tradition of holding general elections without resort to "electoral violence'' aimed at prejudicing the outcome or overturning the declared result, dating back from before 1964. This is a consciously 'lived' tradition. In the Third Republic so far general elections have been held in 1991, 1996 and December 2001 and local elections in 1992, 1998 and 2001. Parliamentary by-elections have been a regular occurrence. Mphaisha's (2000: 145) judgment that "popular confidence in the multiparty system remained" even after the controversies surrounding the 1996 elections (when UNIP declined to contest the presidency because changes to the constitution made Kaunda ineligible) was born out when in 2001. Turnout reached almost 70 per cent (of registered voters), who stripped the MMD of its majority in parliament. Historically Zambia has inclined towards a predominant party system (Burnell 2001) but the more competitive element that emerged in 2001 could yet be

here to stay. It is notable that although President Mwanawas has sought both to co-opt and divide political opponents, the parliamentary opposition remains robust and civil society is vigilant not least because of dissatisfaction over his reluctance to speed constitutional changes that might endanger his re-election in 2006. But in some respects Mwanawasa's presidency compares favourably with the more autocratic reputation of his predecessor, which connects in part with the insecurity that comes from having gained only a very narrow victory supported by a minority of voters in an election whose result is still subject to legal challenge. No less important, the independent media is more professional and more firmly entrenched now than at any previous time in the country's history. In seeking to resolve the many disputes with the executive and among themselves Zambia's politicians continue the tradition of making resort to the courts in preference for more populist forms of direct action. Notwithstanding some doubts about the political autonomy of the judiciary, this suggests – and by constant reinforcement adds to – their commitment to the rule of law.

The overall picture then is of a political system that is basically stable, with public demand being for more, not less, democracy. Evidence from Afrobarometer surveys of public opinion indicate that close to three quarters of Zambians prefer democracy to the alternatives, and only 10 per cent believe the current system has *major* problems (Bratton 2004b). In terms of the probability of democratic consolidation Bratton places Zambia second (after Botswana) among some twelve 'Anglophone' African states covered in his survey. Zambian levels of popular support for and the perceived extent of democracy are not very far apart, which in general terms bodes well for stability. But perhaps crucially the demand is greater than supply rather than the other way round, as most recently a growing number of Zambians do see major problems with the country's Zambia's democracy. Bratton attributes that to the widespread perception of electoral irregularities and failure to achieve an alternation in power in 2001 (Bratton 2004a). As such it could be temporary phenomenon, which will recede as political debate intensifies in anticipation of the 2006 elections and a further chance to change the government. More significant over the longer run could be Bratton's larger finding that the demand for democracy appears to benefit from a post-colonial legacy of electoral competition even where, as in Zambia's Second Republic, this occurred within a *de jure* one-party context (Bratton 2004b).

Finally there is the international context. Whereas during the Cold War superpower intervention provoked conflict in Africa, using states as surrogates for imperial rivalries, since 1989 the established western liberal democracies have been virtually unopposed in demanding evidence of democratisation, human rights and "good governance". Although seemingly powerless to prevent conflict breaking out in places like Liberia, the donors retain a significant capacity to influence the prospects for peace in Zambia. There, political stability and espousal of democracy are well understood to be requisites not just for the donors' financial lifeline but if the country is to attract the private international capital investment that the economy so desperately needs. In so far as continued foreign assistance helps fund the politics of patronage, which in turn facilitates some links between ruling elites and ordinary people, there are powerful incentives to continue to co-operate with the international institutions and their political demands.

Indeed, it was international pressure along with the strong opposition of Zambian civil society, which joined forces with leading members of the political opposition, that came before Chiluba's decision in mid-2001 to abandon plans to change the constitution in support of a third term. For a short time in 2001 it looked as though the third term bid might be a catalyst for violent protest and a physical response by Chiluba's supporters and the authorities. But Chiluba like Kaunda before him proved to be no example of that category of political leaders that David (1997: 565) says are sufficiently evil to provoke large-scale bloodshed if judged conducive to their retaining power. Although Chiluba currently faces prosecution on corruption-related charges, even under his presidency the 'criminalisation of politics' did not embrace the violent methods seen in some other parts of Africa, where Allen (1999) connected it to increasing political violence and impending state implosion as spoils politics entered its terminal phase. On the contrary, Mwanawasa has achieved some popularity by targeting corruption and promising that the culprits will brought to account.

Future Outlook

While Mozambique is now enjoying 'a peace dividend' and some other countries show signs of settling down following war's end in Angola and military

disengagement from the DRC, perhaps ironically Zambia's continuing free from violent conflict should not be considered inevitable. In Africa generally rcent years have seen a creeping "crisis of patrimonialism" (Allen 1999). If material resources shrink to the point that "codes of reciprocity" within the neo-patrimonial system can no longer be preserved and "big men" cheat remorselessly on their followers, then writers like Azam (2001) and Le Billon (2003) expect the "glue" connecting elites and their clients to weaken. As Lichbach (1989: 461), Cramer (2003) and others have argued, it is not inequality as such but how inequality is sustained - the view people have towards it and the structures permitting it - that shape violent conflict. Even now the popular view in Zambia is that most government officials and politicians are mainly concerned with enriching themselves.[12] Negative perceptions of the vertical divisions in Zambian society could yet sharpen even as the political economy responsible for the country's poverty minimises the salience of horizontal differences between ethnic groups.

Conflict theories that cite economic decline, or stagnant low average incomes, or the social frustrations produced by relative deprivation and growing resentment at the predatory behaviour of a privileged few all might seem to suggest that time could be running out. Zambia's profile today fits the high-risk category of countries facing a "Russian roulette of conflict risk. Even countries that have had long periods of peace do not seem to be safe" (Colliet *et al.* 2003: xvi)[13] from descent into a self-perpetuating and vicious circle of failed development, instability, violent conflict and yet more development failure. The present modest quality of Zambia's democracy does not help either. And there is a consensus in the democratisation literature that the biggest single threat to democratic consolidation is failure to improve very poor socio-economic conditions together with the persistence or increase of great inequalities. However none of this *necessarily* points to the probability of significant political violence any more than it means high levels of economic development are essential for stable democracy. Moreover the Third Republic has demonstrated already a capacity to weather incidents of the kind that sometimes precipitate crises elsewhere, for example large increases in the price of basic necessities and deep cuts in the armed forces' budget (in Zambia to under 2 per cent of Gross Domestic Product). Nevertheless, so long as socio-economic conditions remain very challenging efforts to strengthen liberal democracy could well offer a sounder political strategy for peace

than would some alternative of putting democratisation into reverse. Zambians have only to look across the border to Zimbabwe to note the unhappy consequences that can follow from allowing democratic credentials to decay. External comparisons like that, while regrettable for the people of Zimbabwe make Zambians more likely to cherish and preserve their own lengthy more conflict-free tradition.

Conclusion

Asking why Zambia has not experienced more violent conflict than has been the case actually poses several different questions for different times in the country's history. This is because the predisposing conditions and the potential conflict agents that might lead us to expect to see more political violence have varied over time. Thus a dynamic explanation is required. Similarly, just as a comprehensive explanation of violent conflict at any one point in time may refer to multiple causality, so the same is true of the absence of such conflict. However, while the theoretical literature on conflict is so rich that there is a temptation to make accounts appear over-determined, so the mirror image – over-determination of conflict's absence in a country like Zambia – should be avoided too. In turn that means there is a fine path to steer between harbouring complacent predictions about Zambia's future and the more pessimistic outlook that a continuation of its depressed socio-economic condition and liberal democratic shortcomings might seem to warrant. More profitable than speculating about the future, then, is a conclusion that summarises and distils Zambia's past. No single explanation of Zambia's record will suffice – something that in itself might be thought to justify a reasonable degree of optimism for the years ahead - but some components are more notable than others.

In the First Republic by and large Zambians had a positive experience of economic and social progress, in a hostile regional environment that focused minds on the need to build national unity. Zambians could be proud of its political leadership at that time, not least because independence had been gained by peaceful political means: this combined with a promising economic outlook was unusual though not unique in southern Africa. Subsequently Kaunda's alarm over growing group tensions orchestrated by rivals competing for power led to the prohibition of multiparty competition and an increasing concentration of political power. We cannot know if Zambia would have slid towards civil war without this stratagem, but the signs of

tension did then reduce – before they had developed to anything like the proportions that in some Africa countries brought the military into power.

The Second Republic effectively contained conflict by regulating political competition within the arena of the single party, while continuing to encourage universal participation in a strong drive to build "one Zambia, one nation". That commitment was a positive initiative for peace, although the Zambian state also appears to have had a better chance of building horizontal legitimacy than some other African states owing to the territorial relationship with its pre-colonial ethnic landscape. Moreover during the Second Republic the state insulated the people's welfare for as long as possible from the full effects of the country's deteriorating financial and economic situation. Here, the informal arrangements of patronage and clientelism (partly funded by donors) have been an integrative force, up to the present day.

Even so, in the 1980s society's growing impatience with development failings began to threaten stability. Against that background the importance of Zambia's peaceful democratic transition in 1991 should not be underestimated, although again it would be unwise to assert that in its absence Zambia was destined for bloody revolution. That said, the introduction of the Third Republic did dissipate the agitation. 1993 saw only a minor aberration in the form of an alleged plot to provoke civil disobedience (the 'zero option plan') by a handful of UNIP activists, which manifestly lacked popular support. In the 1990s the modest record of democratic politics monitored by foreign donors who loaded the incentive structure against violent political initiatives, has helped engender a kind of democratic domestic peace. Admittedly the euphoria provided by the return of political pluralism was quick to wane. And although it was economic dissatisfaction that brought down the Second Republic, it could be argued that negligence over political shortcomings in Zambia's new democracy should be a major cause for concern now. But the evidence is that most Zambians today want to see further improvements in the legitimacy and accountability of their rulers and have no nostalgia for more authoritarian formula of the kind that for a time seemed adequate in the past. Democratic consolidation could put behind the insecurities that are often associated with weak states in political transition. In contrast, fixing the

economy can only be a long-term project, and is not within Zambia's capacity to control.

However, it cannot be denied that the Third Republican era *has* seen an increase of poverty, inequality, and (most notably during Chiluba's second term) high-level corruption. And ultimately, long-established observers of African politics like Rotberg (2002) reckon that failure to deliver such positive political goods as education and health is a sure sign of impending state failure. Such failure in itself is said to be an almost certain recipe for violence, which in worst case scenarios cascades into all-out internal war. In the terminology of Collier *et al.*, then, Zambia could now appear to be "living dangerously": "in the long run poor but peaceful is not an option" (Collier *et al.* 2003: 108). At the same time "Clearly, the belief that democracy or development in themselves can guarantee peace and stability is erroneous" (Stewart and O'Sullivan 1999: 379). Neither of these contrasting insights by themselves contain all the information needed to weigh up Zambia's future or, even, make sense of its past. For although this paper has emphasised a number of primary arguments to explain Zambia's relative peacefulness at different times - as befits the changing nature of it vulnerabilities – there has been one constant force beneficial to peace dating even from the years before independence. This is Zambians' socialisation into a culture whose character is well represented by Kaunda's stricture never to 'disinfect violence' (Kaunda 1980: 97).

As a nationalist leader Kaunda foreswore violent action; as President of the Republic he authorised the use of violence only sparingly, and established a range of institutions for conflict management and prevention. When sound judgment most mattered towards the end of the Second Republic, he resolved against allowing anti-regime protest to escalate further. As defeated presidential candidate in 1991 he relinquished office graciously. Although unhappy about negative social and political developments in the country since then, his role as founder of the Kenneth Kaunda Peace Foundation (whose aim is help end conflict in Africa) offers a continuing reminder to fellow citizens of the value of their distinct tradition of peace. Kaunda's personal standing in Zambia today is high. As well as being a contrast with many other deposed or defeated leaders that suggests his animus against political violence strikes a form chord throughout society. Contemporary public discourse in Zambia as

reflected in the press makes considerable play of the importance of preserving a political atmosphere that is conducive to peace. That and the popular support for democracy which opinion surveys show the great majority shares are entirely complementary and mutually reinforcing. If these features are deeply embedded in Zambian political culture – and there is no compelling reason to believe they are not - then that provides as strong a clue as any to the country's freedom from internal war. There may be no surer guarantee of lasting peace.

Zambia's past bears out that even ethnic diversity and social inequality put together are not sufficient to impel violent conflict, notwithstanding unsatisfactory development performance. It adds weight to the proposition that important determinants lie elsewhere, in the political culture and political institutions. In the mix of influences adverse to conflict an increase of political and civil liberties since the 1980s offers something of a counterweight to the deteriorating socio-economic conditions – contrasting markedly with earlier years when relatively favourable welfare conditions helped offset the restrictions imposed on both political and civil society. In this context Zambia's place in relation to the general theoretical proposition that an inverted u-curve plots conflict against types of regime could be highly significant. Put differently, the political trend from 1990 has been along the democracy-leaning side of the continuum that runs all the way from autocracy through intermediate regime types towards stable liberal democracy. As comparative political analysis claims that societies moving from autocracy towards some intermediate regime generally find it harder to maintain domestic peace, so Zambia draws benefit today from the fact that no period in its past was characterised by exclusionary politics, hard despotism or brutal dictatorship. And just as a past history of violent conflict appears to make some countries more prone to experience violence again, so the persistence of peace can be the sequel to a solid past record of avoiding conflict. There is no tradition of a "conflict culture" in Zambia. That is what now most clearly gives the country an advantage, along with some others such as Tanzania that have had a broadly similar historical trajectory, over neighbours like Angola and DRC, Zimbabwe and even Mozambique. Path-dependence is too grand and contentious a theoretical claim on which to end this account. But Zambia does seem to present an example of a country that has demonstrated a resilient and consensual

political will to respect the relatively peaceful legacy that it inherits from its evolving past.

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Notes

1. For example the following special issues: *Journal of International Development*, 15:4 (2003), *Journal of Peace Research*, 39:4 (2002), *Journal of Conflict Research*, 46:1 (2002), *Journal of African Economies*, 9:3 (2000). Also the two volume collection edited by E.W.Nafziger, F. Stewart and R. Väyrynen (2000).

2. Goldsmith (2001: 129-30) reports deaths from political violence 1981-98 as: Angola 750,000; DRCongo 11,000; Lesotho, 1,000; Mozambique 50,000; Namibia 25,000; South Africa 20,000; Zimbabwe 3,000. No figures are returned for Botswana, Malawi, Swaziland, Tanzania, and Zambia.

3. Afronet (2002) profiles eight suspicious deaths – possibly extra-judicial killings – where the state had some interest, between January 1994 and July 2001, including prominent lawyers, a former Finance Minister, and Wezi Kaunda, son of Zambia's first president and likely candidate to lead the opposition United National Independence Party.

4. In an index of socio-political instability measuring more or less violent phenomena of political unrest, Alesina and Perotti (1996: 1211) score Zambia for 1960-85 a creditable minus 3.46, compared with for instance Sierra Leone at plus 9.11 and Sudan plus 15.09. UK was minus 7.63.

5. Colliet *et al*. (2003: 53). In their econometric analysis of humanitarian emergencies Nafziger and Auvinen (2002) confirm the importance of economic stagnation, poverty and inequality; Hauge and Ellingsen's (1998: 314) data analysis concludes "the level of economic development has the strongest effect on the incidence of domestic armed conflict as well as a relatively strong impact on the severity".

6 . Collier *et al.* (2003: 83) estimate that the typical country reaching the end of a civil war faces around a 44 per cent risk of returning to conflict within five years.

7. Collier and Hoeffler (1998: 572) found polarised societies have around a 50 per cent higher probability of civil war than either homogenous or highly fractionalised societies.

8. " multiethnic parties have predominated in Zambia since before independence and continue to do so…" Scarritt and Mozaffar (forthcoming, ms. 24).The exceptions were the United Party, formed in 1966 and then banned, the United Progressive Party (1971) and Agenda for Zambia (formed 1995), which in the 2001 general election failed to win any parliamentary seats even in its home province, Western Province, where it polled just 1.34 per cent of votes cast.

9. See Sandbrook (2002: 269). The United Nations Development Programme's *Human Development Report 2002* also argued the superior merits of democracy for managing conflict in non-violent ways.

10 . Data in this paragraph from World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2000.*

11 . Data from World Bank's *World Development Report* various years.

12. This view was held by 73 per cent of survey respondents reported in Bratton (1999: 559).

13. In terms of Collier's earlier writings the seemingly beneficial implications of the declining importance to Zambia's of its minerals exports is offset by a continuing inability to diversify away from primary commodities for example the growing export of estate-produced agricultural products.