

Preface

This glossary is meant to assist people interested in Namibian politics and administration at national and sub-national level, as well as in electoral and traditional matters. It also explains core concepts as contained in the Namibian Constitution.

The publication can play a supplementary role in civic and voter education and thereby strengthening the understanding of political and administrative processes in Namibia. It is meant to be a contribution to citizens' enlightenment and the democratization process in Namibia.

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Act

A law passed by a legislative body.

Accountability

Those whose exercise political powers are regarded as stewards who are expected to show that they are discharging their duties properly. Governments are answerable for their policies and actions to the National Assembly and public opinion on a continuing basis and to the electorate periodically through elections.

Activity

The performance of an assigned task.

Administration

The act of administering. It is the art or practice of implementing policy or decisions in government, business or public affairs.

Affirmation

A solemn declaration in place of an oath.

Affirmative Action

A policy by government or private business of deliberately giving preferential treatment to disadvantaged groups in society which have suffered from racial, sexual, economic or other forms of discrimination. Affirmative action is also referred to as reverse/positive discrimination or retroactive advancement.

Alliance

A formal or informal undertaking by two or more governments, parties or organisations to cooperate for some common but limited purpose such as an election or defence but without losing their individual identities. Thus, alliances may be between otherwise incompatible groups.

Amendment of Act

A revision or change made in a law.

In Namibia, the Constitution as the supreme law can be change only if such change is approved either by:

- two-thirds of the members of the National Assembly and two-thirds of the members of the National Council

OR

- two-thirds of the National Assembly and two-thirds of the registered voters of Namibia who show their opinion during a referendum.

No one is allowed to make a change to the Constitution that takes away any of the fundamental rights or freedoms.

Amnesty

A pardon for past offences, after having been prosecuted and found guilty.

Apartheid

The racial, oppressive, discriminating and human rights ignoring policy instituted by the South African government in 1948.

Appropriations

Estimates of revenue, expenditure and income for the prospective financial year sent to the National Assembly by the Minister of Finance for consideration.

Approved Townships

An approved township as defined in Section 1 of the Townships and Division of Land Ordinance, 1963 (Ordinance 11 of 1963).

Assistances of Voter

Assisting a voter who is incapacitated by blindness, illiteracy or other physical disability from voting, requesting in person the presiding officer, polling

officer, family member or relative to record his/her vote on his or her behalf.

Association

An organised body of people with a common interest or object (e.g. rate payer association).

Audit Trail (Elections)

Machinery for controlling the receipt, storage, distribution, use and accounting for election materials, including ballot boxes and ballot papers.

Authority

A right, based on law or tradition, to give orders or take decisions. Those affected by the orders or decisions accept the orders or decisions as legitimate even when they disagree with them.

Obedience to (legitimate) authority can be contrasted with submission to power, which relies ultimately on coercion.

Autocracy

Government by a single absolute ruler who insists on his/her own way and will not defer power to others.

Autonomy

Self-government, a self-governing political community (e.g. Local Authority).

Ballot Box

A receptacle for the reception of ballots cast at a polling station.

Ballot Paper

A piece of paper which contains the name and photo of a person who seeks election, the name, abbreviation and symbol of the party, organisation or association he/she represents. If an independent candidate, such paper will only reflect the name of the person and that he/she is independent. If voting for a party, organisation or association, such paper will contain the name of the party,

its abbreviation, symbol and the photo of the leader of a party or organisation or association.

The voter indicates on the ballot paper his or her preference (vote) in an election. The marked ballot papers are placed in a sealed ballot box.

Belief

The conviction that something exists or is true.

Bicameralism

The existence of two legislative chambers or houses of parliament chosen on different bases and with different powers (e.g. National Assembly, National Council).

Bilateral Talks

Consultations or negotiations between two parties in a multiparty system.

Bill

The draft of a law before becoming an act.

Bill Board

A poster side. A wall of planks or other material for the display of advertisements, announcements, posters and other information material.

Bill of Rights

A statement of fundamental human rights intended to protect individuals (and sometimes groups of individuals) against abuses by governments, political parties, other organizations or individuals. A Bill of Rights is usually entrenched in the constitution of a state.

Bottom Line

Non-negotiable (minimum) demands on which a negotiator is not prepared to compromise. Adapted from the world of business where the term refers to the profits available to shareholders after the deduction of all costs.

Budget

The annual estimate of revenue and expenditure for governing a country, fixing the level of taxation until the next budget. A written statement of money, where it is drawn from, its amount, how it is to be spent.

Bureaucracy

The term is used both to designate the tasks and procedures of administration, also as a collective word for a body of administrative officials. It sometimes indicates inefficiency and an improper exercise of power on the part of officials. Often negatively used in the context of “red tape”.

By-Election

Election held when a vacancy has been caused by a death, resignation or other reasons as stipulated in the Constitution, Regional Council Act or Local Authority Act.

Cabinet

A committee of senior politicians (known as ministers) who along with the President are responsible for directing the policies of the country under the Namibian Assembly. In theory, ministers are collectively responsible (accountable) to Parliament for government policy and individually responsible for the policies of their own ministries.

Calendar Month

The period of time beginning on the first day of any month, and ending on the last day of month.

Candidate

A legally qualified person who is duly nominated as a candidate for an election. A candidate normally represents a registered political party, though provision is made for independent candidates to stand for election.

Candidate List

A list of candidates as prescribed by the Electoral Commission Act (Act No 24 of 1992) for the election of National Assembly members and Local Authority Councillors.

Capitalism

A economic system in which the means of productions, distribution and exchange are privately owned and operated for private profit.

Casting Vote

A final vote cast (e.g. by chairman) to decide a question over which voting is equally divided.

Casual Worker

A person who occupies a post where, in terms of the Labour Act work is done on three or fewer days a week.

Chief

The supreme traditional leader of a traditional community designation in accordance with Section 4(i) (a) of the Traditional Authority Act (Act No 25 of 2000).

Chief Executive Officer

A person appointed by the Local Authority Council as its chief executive officer including any staff members delegated to act in his/her stead.

Chief's Council/Traditional Council

Every traditional community with a chief forms a Chief's Council of which the Chief is the head. Every traditional community with a head, but not a chief, forms a Traditional Council presided by the head of the traditional community. Additional members can be appointed to serve on such councils (e.g. senior councillors/headmen, councillors/headmen). Such councils are responsible for the day-to-day administration of the traditional authority of the traditional community in respect of which it has been established.

Chief Regional Officer

The chief executive officer of a Regional Council heading the administration of such council.

Citizen

An inhabitant of a city or town, a member of a country, native or naturalized, having right and owing allegiance to a nation or state and entitled to its protection with attendant rights, responsibilities and privileges all of which can limit the government.

In Namibia the following people qualify as citizens:

- Any person born in Namibia
- Any person with a father or mother who is a Namibian citizen.
- Any person who has a Namibian husband or wife and has lived in Namibia for at least two years since the marriage.
- Any person who has lived in Namibia for at least five years and applies for citizenship.

Citizenship

The state of being a citizen of a state.

Citizen Participation

Citizens in a democracy are expected to express their opinion, participate in democratic processes and at least to exercise their right to vote. Elections are the principle and most immediate check on the leaders by the people. Participants, subjects, and parochial orientations are all important to the democratic process.

Civic Association

Community-based organisation formed by members of a community to cope with issues of immediate concern to members such as electricity, housing, rents, water, poverty and social welfare. This movement of grassroots activism is political in a general sense, but not necessarily party political.

Civic Education

Civic education in a democracy is education in self-government. Civic education in a constitutional democracy is meant to activate democracy, encourage citizens to take on responsibility, to exercise rights and to partake in politics consistent with the public good and the protection of individual rights.

Civil Law

Distinguished from criminal law: pertaining to the private relations between members of a community, and to the legal proceedings employed in settling them.

Civilian Rule

A government ruled by civilians according to the principles of civil law.

Civil Society

Institutions and behavioural practices of society that are essentially outside the formal political structures and independent of the state such as churches, cooperatives, the economy, the media, political parties, trade unions, popular movements and family patterns (e.g. extended family).

A civil society is a group of citizens who, with the combinations of government and its agencies, non-governmental organizations and other private sector institutions, create and maintain a political community of related, interdependent individuals.

Coalition Government

A government composed of more than one political party. It is usually formed when a party cannot command majority support in parliament or when the country faces a constitutional or security crisis which overrides party political differences.

Coat of Arms

A number of distinctive heraldic devices used on a shield.

Code of Conduct

A set of rules governing a particular activity such as administration, elections, political marches, political behaviour, broadcasting, rallies, propaganda, etc.

Collective (or group) Rights

In addition to individual human rights there are rights that are widely claimed by communities or groups of individuals, as an extension of the right of freedoms of associations. A “group” may be religious, linguistic or an ethnic minority, or disabled persons, trade unionists, homosexuals or pensioners. All these may at some point organize to make political demands on the government based on alleged collective rights. The most extreme claim, currently advanced by many minorities throughout the world, is the right to self government and often concurrently independence.

Colonialism

The rule of an area and its people, by an external sovereignty that results from a policy of imperialism. It refers to the economic, political and social policies by which colonies were governed and exploited by an external (e.g. imperial) power.

Commencement and Closing of Polls

Period from 07H00 to 21H00 on the polling day.

Commissioner (Election)

A member of the Electoral Commission.

Common Law

The unwritten law of custom.

Communal Area

The geographic area habitually inhabited by a specific traditional community, excluding any Local Authority area as defined in Section 1 of the Local Authorities Act (Act No 23 of 1992).

Community Based Organisation (CBO)

Local voluntary organisation involved in community upliftment.

Community Trust Fund

A fund to be held in trust for the members of a traditional community, and to which such members contribute for the purpose of: (i) financing projects in that community which promote and uplift the culture, preserve cultural sites, works of art and literary works of that community; (ii) meeting the administrative costs of running the office of the traditional authority; (iii) meeting the costs of performing any of the functions and duties of a traditional authority; (iv) meeting any other costs that the traditional community may agree upon.

Concept

In general usage, it mainly means notion or idea.

Conditions of Services

The Personnel rules in Annexure “A” Gazette No. 340 of 1995, as amended, or any other agreement containing Conditions of Service of employees of the council which existed before commencement of that conditions of service and which are replaced by these Conditions of Service.

Confederation

A system of government in which the central government is subordinate to regional governments. The central government exercises only those powers delegated to it by autonomous regional governments. The latter are constitutional competent to override the actions of the central government and to alter, reduce or withdraw any of its powers. A confederation is a more decentralized form of government than under federalism.

Consensus

Although consensus simply means agreement, in politics and policy making its meaning has become unanimity in decision making, with every party (however insignificant) in a position ultimately to exercise a veto. In practice this puts negotiators under pressure to seek concord of opinion or compromises which,

while not necessarily satisfying all the conflicting interests in every respect, is considered preferable to no agreement at all.

Continuous Registration

The process of registration of voters in between elections who have not registered during any subsequent election or supplementary registration or have in the meantime qualified to be registered.

Continuous Services

The period from the date of assumption of duty up to and including the date of termination of service with the council (regional/local) and includes any periods of properly authorized absence.

Constituency

The geographic areas into which a state is divided for the purpose of returning a representative to the Regional Council or Local Authority at an election in accordance with the Constitution and/or Electoral Law.

Constituent Assembly

A body of legislators, normally elected, empowered to draft a constitution and in most cases adopt it into law. In Namibia the Constituent Assembly was transformed into the National Assembly (1990).

Constitution

In a fundamental or “organic” law, a basic legal framework that establishes the government of a state. It is a set of fundamental rules that state how a country should be governed. In particular it:

- Established the powers and responsibilities of the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government;
- Allocates powers among the different levels of government, central, regional and local;
- Enumerates the rights of citizens in relationship to each other and to the governments, often in a bill of rights; and a special entrenched procedure, for amending the constitution.

The term “constitution” may also refer to the actual rules (written or unwritten) by which the political game is played in practice.

In a democracy, the unwritten rules are frequently as important or even more important than the rules inscribed in the written constitution.

Corrupt Practice / Unethical Conduct

Any irregular and/or offence which are declared to be corrupt practice under any law. Corrupt behaviour and unethical conduct include bribery, fraud, patronage, nepotism, self-enrichment at the cost of public goods, conflict of interest, misuse of public resources for private gain, influence peddling, favouritism to family and friends, moonlighting, division of loyalty, destructive office behaviour, insubordination, sexual harassment, improper handling of government property, breach of secrecy, leaking of unauthorised information, false claims and budgeting, tax evasion, own-in-voicing, falsification of documents, collusion, obtaining goods by false pretenses, extortion, and blackmailing.

Costs

Charges and expenses.

Council of Traditional Leaders

An advisory body of recognized traditional leaders to advise the President on the control and utilization of communal land and on all such other matters as may be referred to it by the President for advice.

Counting Agent

A representative appointed by a political party / association / organization to act as counting agent during elections.

Counting Officer

A person appointed by the Electoral Commission to assist the presiding officer or returning officer in the counting of votes and in determining the results of the poll in any election.

Coupe d' Etat

A sudden violent overthrow of a government, usually by the military. Unlike a revolution, a coup d'etat typically involves only a change in the ruling group, without necessarily altering the social structure or political order.

Creed

Set of beliefs or opinions.

Culture

The social and religious structures and intellectual and artistic manifestations, etc. that characterize a society.

Custom

The term refers to established modes of thought and action.

Customary Law

Law which is based on generally accepted practices or habits and conventions. Also norms, rules of procedure, traditions and usages of a traditional community in so far as they do not conflict with the Namibian Constitution or with any other written law applicable in Namibia.

Customary Law is often not codified but orally transmitted .

Decentralisation

The delegation or devolution of any function from a line ministry to a Regional Council or to a Local Authority Council.

Decentralisation Enabling Act (Act No. 33 of 2000)

Deals with the decentralisation of functions to Regional Council and Local Authority Councils.

Decentralisation of Powers

Decentralised powers refer to those which have been devolved in order to

allow a Regional Council and a Local Authority to act according to its own discretion within certain prescribed limits – and to do so through officials appointed by itself. It entails some form of political devolution – weakening the degree of political control exerted by higher tier bodies.

Declaration of Intent

An undertaking to pursue a specific course of action.

Deconcentration of Powers

Deconcentrated powers refer to those wielded by the central government through Regional and Local Authorities who act as administrative agencies on the former's behalf. Functions are performed by officials who are appointed by, responsible to, and controlled by the central government.

Delegation

The transfer by the Minister, by means of decentralisation of a function from a line ministry to a Regional Council or Local Authority Council in order to empower and enable a Regional Council or Local Authority Council to which the functions has been decentralised, to perform the function as an agent on behalf and in the name of the line ministry.

De-linking

Separation of government affairs from those of the ruling party during the transition from a one-party to a multi-party system of government.

Delimitation

The process of drawing regional and constituency boundaries in Namibia. Such task is assigned to an independent Delimitation Commission periodically appointed by the President.

The First Delimitation Commission in Namibia was appointed in 1990 subdividing Namibia into 13 regions and 95 constituencies (2001: 102 constituencies).

Delimitation Commission

A commission appointed by the President for the purposes of changes to boundaries of regions or creation of new regions, or division or re-division of regions into constituencies.

Democracy

The concept is of Greek origin, demos, meaning the people, and kratos meaning rule. The most widely held definition of democracy is that of US President Abraham Lincoln: “Government of the people by the people, for the people” with the emphasis on “by the people”. Added to this to this, should be with the people. An important element of democracy, besides the legal foundation of it, is legitimacy, reflecting the moral or ethic basis of democracy. Democracy involves participation and improvement of people’s life, decentralisation and devolution of power, and a culture of tolerance. Representativeness, transparency and accountability are particular hallmarks of democracy. Liberty, freedom, quality and justice are central concerns of democracy.

Democracy is about the exercise of human rights. It is not just a matter of defending human rights, but ultimately expanding human freedom and potential. The fruits of democracy are as important as the forms.

Democratic Culture

The operative principles of a democratic culture can be summarised as follows:

- Equality of political rights, especially one-person-one-vote.
- Majority voting, subject to appropriate qualifications.
- Political participation through regular elections and provisions for the accountability of elected representatives to the electorate.
- Political freedom, in particular freedom of expression, association and legitimate dissent. Differences of opinion are not suppressed but positively cultivated. Although conflicts are inevitable, they are accommodated through a process of rational debate in a culture of tolerance.

Demotion

The Regional or Local Authority Council places a staff member in another post in the said council's services of which the maximum of the salary scale is lower than that of the post occupied by him/her before such demotion.

d'Hondt Method

The highest – average rule; seats are assigned one at a time to the party with the highest total. The formula operates on the basis that the number of votes won by each party is divided by the number of seats held by the party, plus one. The first seat is awarded to the party with the highest number of votes; since no seats have been allocated, the initial denomination is one. When a party wins a seat, its formular denomination is increased by one.

Deputy Mayor

A deputy mayor of a municipality or town elected in terms of Section 11 of the Local Authority Act (Act No 23 of 1992).

De-registration

The cancellation of registration of a political party before polls or while the poll is taking place after a candidate has been nominated in a constituency, and after which all proceedings relating to such election shall continue as if such candidate was nominated as an independent candidate.

Derogation

Lessening or impairing of power, authority, rights, etc.

Determination of Election Results

When all votes in all polling stations in a constituency have been counted in respect of any candidate of party/organisation/association in any election and the number of votes recorded for any candidate or party/ association/ organisation has been determined in the constituency, the returning officer will transmit the outcome of the election to the Chairperson of the Electoral Commission in the case of the presidential elections and in all other elections to the Director of Elections for public announcement.

Devolution

A system of government in which sub-national units are subordinate to the central government. Sub-national units exercise only those powers delegated to it by the central government which is constitutionally competent to override the actions of sub-national units and to alter, reduce or withdraw any of their powers.

Applied it means: The transfer by the Minister, by means of decentralisation of a function from a line ministry to a Regional Council or Local Authority Council in order to empower and enable the Regional Council or Local Authority Council to which the function has been decentralised, to perform the function for its own profit or loss.

Dictator

An autocrat, an absolute ruler. In its worst form, a tyrant ignoring democratic rules and practices.

Dictatorship

A form of government in which power is held by a dictator without effective constitutional checks and balances.

Dictatorship of the proletariat

Domination by the proletariat, the stage of Marxist revolution after the destruction of capitalism, leading to the establishment of the communist classless society.

Dignity

Worth, esteem, excellence. High office or rank. Treated with respect.

Diplomacy

The practice of conducting relations between states through official representatives. Diplomacy may involve the entire foreign relations process, policy formulation as well as execution. Diplomacy includes the operational techniques whereby a state pursues its interests beyond its jurisdiction.

Diplomatic Relations

Activity/relations between states (bilateral and multilateral) through official representatives and communications (verbal and written). Diplomatic activity is mostly conducted through the normal diplomatic channels of the foreign ministry and the accredited diplomatic missions in the host country.

Direct Voting System

Voting system whereby candidates are directly elected by electorates under the winner-takes-all electoral system.

Directorate of Elections

A division of the Electoral Commission established under the Electoral Amendment Act No 30 of 1998.

Discrimination

Meting out unfavourable and unfair treatment.

Disfranchise/Disenfranchise

To deprive a person of the right to vote. Disenfranchised persons are legally disqualified from voting as result of a criminal record, mental incapacity etc . or illegally, denied the right to vote.

Division (or Distribution) of Powers

The process of allocating government powers between the central and subnational government institutions. Some powers may be “concurrent” that is shared by the different levels of government.

Duration of Nomination Session

The time set aside for the submission of the nomination of candidates being from 09H00 – 11H00 on a specific date and day.

Ecology

The set of relationships between an organism (a living being or entity) and its environment.

Economy

Part of a system that deals with man's material needs.

Election

Any election of the President, members of the National Assembly, a Governor of a region, and any member of a Regional Council or Local Authority Council.

Election Administration

The role of the individual or body (Directorate of Elections) responsible for the managing and administration of an election. The term is also used to embrace the activities and the role of the individual or body, and those of the electoral staff as the case may be, where the contest so denotes.

Election Agent

Appointed by a political party/organization/association as their representative and observer at a polling station.

Election Application

An application to the High Court complaining of an undue return or an undue election of any person to the office of the President or as any member of the National Assembly, or a Governor, or a Regional Council or Local Authority Council by reason of want of qualification, disqualification, corrupt and illegal practice, irregularity or by reason of any other cause whatsoever.

Election Development Programme

The formulation of the election tasks and activities in accordance with a plan and schedule in order to enable free, fair and transparent elections to be held within a stipulated period.

Election Dispute

Questioning, protesting, arguing, contesting and quarrelling any action by the Electoral Commission/Directorate of Elections, including the outcome of an election (see election irregularity, election application).

Election Expenses

Expenses incurred, whether before, during or after an election on account of or in respect to, the conduct or management of the election.

Election Irregularity

Acts of inadvertence by elections officers, for example, a failure by an election officers to stamp a ballot paper with the official mark before handing it over to the voter.

Deliberate attempt by an election official to influence a voter in the choice of a candidate or party.

Election Manipulation

Deliberate attempts, with the connivance of the government authorities, the electoral management or staff, to improperly influence the registration, polling and/or counting processes of an election.

Election Officer

In Namibia: electoral commissioner, director of elections, every returning officer, officials in the directorate of elections, regional co-ordinator, presiding officer, counting officer, polling officer, supervisor of registration, registration officer, interpreter and security officer.

Election Petition

A legal process by which electors or a candidate may raise questions pertaining to the conduct or result of an election, stating specific reasons on which the complaint is based.

Election Result

Publicly announced and published scores, winners and losers of an election.

Electors

Someone who has the right to vote when electing candidates to a law making and executing body. (National Assembly, Regional Council, Local Authority).

Electoral

Any person who is registered as an elector in a voters' register.

Electoral Act

An Act of Parliament, detailing the legal rules for the conduct of elections. In Namibia it makes provision for the election of the President of Namibia, the National Assembly, the Governor, Regional Councils, Local Authorities, the establishment of an independent Electoral Commission, the registration of voters and political parties, the nomination of candidates, the conduct of elections, elections offences, etc. (See Electoral Act No 24 of 1992).

Electoral Commission

An independent commission with (usually) exclusive authority to directly supervise and control elections in a fair and impartial manner. The credibility of the commission depends on the competence and impartiality of members appointed.

Electoral Commissioner

A member of the Electoral Commission appointed in terms of section of the Electoral Amendment Act No. 30 of 1998.

Electoral Quota

The number obtained by dividing the total of the electorate of all constituencies by the number of constituencies into which the state is divided. The number of votes may differ from constituency to constituency.

Electoral Roll

A voters register which contains the names and other particulars of concerned voters on national, regional and local level.

Electoral System

The method used to translate votes received by a candidate or political party into an allocation of seats in parliament, that is a decision as to who has won the election. There are many possible systems and variations of systems. In

Namibia both the first-past-the post system and the proportional representation (list) system are applied.

Elite

A functional group in a social system which claims leadership, status and qualities.

Emergency, State of

If a situation threatens the life of the Namibian nation or the existence of the government, the President and the National Assembly can declare a state of emergency. During the state of emergency, people can be detained without trial, but the Namibian Constitution provides many special protections for people who are detained. The President is allowed to take away some of the fundamental rights and freedoms during a state of emergency, but there are some rights that can never be taken away – such as freedom of speech and thought, the right to life and human dignity, the right to consult a lawyer, and the right to go to a court for assistance.

Employee

At Regional and Local Authority level a person who occupies the post on the establishment of the council, and who is receiving any remuneration.

Employment

The state of being employed. Work as an activity, as a livelihood, vocation, profession or occupation on a temporary or permanent basis.

Entrenched Clause

Clauses in the constitution which are considered so important that they can only be amended by a special voting majority (such as a two-thirds vote in parliament).

Equality

The state or an instance of being equal in number, amount, rank, status, meaning, etc.

Ethics

Ethics deals with values, a set of morals, rules and standards relating to human behaviour, particularly pertaining to the rightness or wrongness of certain actions, and the goodness or badness of the motives and ends of such actions. Ethics relates to morality of behaviour with what is morally defensible. It is concerned with both individual and collective morality.

Ethnicity

A perception of shared identity traditionally based on race. It may also reflect differences in culture, history, language, or religion. Ethnicity that is rooted in a belief in a common ancestry is commonly termed tribalism. Ethnicity can be a positive value when it finds expression in pride in and respect for the rich diversity of peoples comprising a nation. It is divisive when it results in rivalries and fears of domination. It can be especially subversive when national loyalties are not well-developed. In Namibia, ethnicity carried a particularly emotional and racial connotation because of its appropriation as the core concept of apartheid.

Ethnic politics is a global reality. Much as many people might like to wish it away, it cannot be ignored, if only because of the ease with which it can be exploited by ambitious politicians. Two strategies have been devised to cope with ethnicity's potential negative consequences. The first is to promote genuine national enterprises and symbols through a programme of nation-building. The second is to contain the growth of ethnic claims by conceding the more reasonable demands. Either strategy can inflame rather than defuse ethnic animosities unless handled with skill and understanding.

Ethnic group

Membership of a distinct people or population group possessing their own customary ways or culture.

Ethos

The spirit of a people, a civilization or a system, as expressed in its culture, institutions, ways of thought, philosophy and religion.

Executive

Traditionally the executive is that branch of the government responsible for formulating policies and implementing decisions rather than making law. There are two broad types of executives: the presidential model (as in the United States) and the cabinet system (as in Britain). Sometimes, the term “executive” embraces both the elected leaders and the non-elected civil service.

Ex Officio

A Latin term which means by virtue of the office held. Example: In Namibia the Director of Elections is ex officio member of the Electoral Commission. An ex officio member of a body is generally without voting rights.

Exit Poll

Canvassing of voters who have cast their votes, chosen at random or from a sample group in order to discover trends of public opinion.

Fair Trial

An objective trial according to determined rules. An unprejudiced judicial examination.

Favouritism

The showing of a special liking for one person or few individuals in a group by acts of partiality where impartiality is called for.

Federal State

A state in which a number of co-ordinated sub-state entities (e.g. provinces, regions) unite for certain common purposes while these entities can retain some autonomous powers. In a federal state the powers of the central or federal authority are limited by certain powers secured to its federal sub-units. The Constitution determines which powers are distributed to whom and to what level of government.

Federalism

A political system in which the central and regional governments are each “sovereign” that is, supreme, within their own limited spheres of constitutional competence. Neither level of government can legislate in the sphere of competence of the other level. To ensure this, the list of powers allocated to each of government is entrenched in the Constitution, and cannot be changed except by a special (usually difficult) procedure of constitutional amendment. Whatever the constitutional division of powers between the levels of government (and the division need not be equal), it is invariably the subject of conflicting interpretations, especially over the allocation of financial powers. Such conflicts are normally settled through recourse to the courts. Federalism is most commonly found in states which are large in size or population, or in states with linguistically, ethnically or religiously diverse populations.

Feudalism

A system of economic, political and social organization which is based on a dependent relationship between owner (e.g. of land) and subjects.

First-Past-The-Post system (or Plurality or Westminster System)

An electoral system in which the candidate with the largest number of votes in each constituency is declared elected.

If there are more than two candidates, the winner may succeed in being elected with the less than a majority of votes, that is only a plurality of votes. The terms “first-past-the-post” is adapted from horse-racing.

Floating Voters

People thought to be open to political persuasion.

Foreigner

Someone whose nationality is other than one’s own.

Foreign Relations

The conduct of affair between sovereign states and international organizations.

Franchise

The right to vote.

Free and Fair Elections

An election for which every qualified person has a reasonable opportunity to register as a voter and during which every registered voter is allowed to vote. Voting must be possible within reasonable distance from a voter's residence and in complete secrecy. The campaign is open to each candidate and political party, each of which has a relatively even access to the media. The management is impartial and efficient and ensures that the election results take effect according to law. Elections must be conducted at regular intervals. There must be universal adult suffrage (18 years), meaningful choices (parties), duly nominated candidates, freedom to put forward and nominate candidates of own choice (no to be dictated from above by the central party leadership), freedom to discuss choices (candidates) openly, freedom of expression, free reporting, transparency of the electoral process and an open contest.

In summary, an election is fair if the election campaign is conducted in an atmosphere that permits free political activity, and the administration of the electoral process is efficient, honest and transparent. An election is free if the voters clearly understand the process, and are able to exercise their democratic rights free of threat of intimidation and in the certain knowledge that the balloting is absolutely secret.

Freedom

- Enjoyment of personal liberty and civil rights such as:
- Freedom of speech, expression, thought, conscience
- Freedom to practice any religion
- Freedom to assemble peaceably
- Freedom of association
- Freedom of choice

Freedom of Press/Media

An important aspect of democracy is freedom of expression. A well-informed public is indispensable for intelligent popular participation. Freedom of press is the right of newspapers, the radio, internet and TV to publish the truth as they see it, free of improper interference by the government or other powerful interests in society. The best check on abuse of freedom of press is not press censorship, but a multitude of competing organs of opinion.

Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms

Fundamental human rights and freedoms are the rights that are the most important in a democratic society. They are inscribed in the Namibian Constitution and must be respected by all. The rights can be enforced by law.

The Namibian Constitution refers to the following rights and freedoms:

- The right to life and liberty
- Respect for human dignity
- No slavery and forced labour
- Equality and freedom from discrimination
- No arbitrary arrest and detention
- Fair trial
- Protection of privacy and family
- Children's rights
- The right to property
- Unhindered political activity
- Administrative justice
- Right to own culture, language, tradition and religion
- Right to education

- The right to strike, to move freely in Namibia, to live in any part of Namibia, to leave and return to Namibia, to do any kind of work.

General Elections

Comprises elections for the President, members of the National Assembly, Regional Council, Regional Governor and Local Authority Elections.

General Registration (Election)

For the purposes of any election, general registration of all prospective and entitled voters takes place at intervals of not more than ten years.

Generation Rights: First, Second and Third

First generation rights are those civil and political rights such as freedoms of expression, association, movement, etc, concerned with liberty. They are commonly inscribed in legally binding bills of rights. Second generation or security rights are social and economic rights to employment, education, housing, etc. As these are difficult to guarantee, especially in developing countries, instead of including them in a formal bill of rights, they are generally delegated to a Declaration of State Policy (or good intentions). Enforcement, then, is the responsibility of political structures rather than the courts. Third generation rights are the most controversial as they seek to protect social identity, peace, development and the environment. The conflict is particularly apparent when the pursuit of equality clashes with the cultural and religious rights of individuals (“the right to be different”).

Gerrymandering

Delimiting an electoral district in a distorted form for political purposes. The term came about as a result of the practice of Elbridge Gerry, Governor of Massachusetts (USA), in 1812.

Globalisation

A process in which an increased integration of economies take place, coupled by a (neo) liberalisation process of the economy as well as structural development programmes in the case of non-adapted economies. It is a process whereby cross-boundary exchange and interaction intensifies and increases. Globalisation intends to expand, densify and stabilise regional-global relation networks. World trade, foreign direct investment, communication (networking) and transport are directly affected by the globalisation process. Africa’s fear is that globalisation will further marginalise the continent in the international economy.

Governor

A Regional Councillor who is the political head of a Regional Council.

Government

The decision-making structure and process of the state. The term is used variously to designate the cabinet, the civil service or the whole constitutional system. The basic responsibility of a government is to maintain peace and to foster prosperity within a context of social justice and equity.

Habitat

Originally, a place or region inhabited by an animal or plant in the natural state. Also describing the environment and conditions the human being is living in.

High Court

The second highest body of justice in Namibia (next to the Supreme Court) presided by a judge president.

Human Rights

The democratic rights which the international community considers all persons can justifiably claim simply as human beings, regardless of age, citizenship, language, national origin, political beliefs, creed, race, religion or sex. What are human rights for one person are an obligation on others (including governments and political parties) to respect those rights. Human Rights have been codified in a host of legal documents including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the African ('Banjal') Charter on Human and People's Rights (1981). Many countries have incorporated some or all these rights into their national bills of rights.

Illegal Practice

Any offence which is declared to be an illegal practice under a particular law.

Immovable Property

Any land or any building on such land.

Immunity

Exemption from a tax, duty or jurisdiction. Freedom from danger of penalty.

Inalienable Rights

Rights that cannot be given or taken away.

Indelible Ink (Election)

Invisible ink that is used for marking a voter's hand or finger(s) and cannot be rubbed out, deleted or erased.

Indemnity

A legal exemption from prosecution for past actions that would otherwise be subject to prosecution.

Independent Candidate (Election)

A person not committed to an organised political party / organisation / association to stand as a candidate during an election for the President or a Regional Councillor subject to the provisions of the Electoral Act (Act No 24 of 1992).

Indirect Voting System

Candidates are elected on the basis of majority votes recorded in favour of a party under proportional representation.

Indigenous

Born or originating in the locality, e.g. indigenous cultural (ethnic) groups.

Insubordination

A state of not submitting to authority.

Integrity

Moral soundness, probity. The quality of a state being unimpaired.

Interest Group

A collection of individuals who band together and pursue common goals. Interest groups are a form of popular participation in politics. They provide a link between the people and government.

Unlike political parties which seek to govern, they merely hope to influence political policies. Those interest groups whose major activity is exerting political demands on government are often called pressure groups or political lobbies.

Intimidation

To inspire with fear, through the threat or use of violence, or other action, with a view to influencing the conduct of others such as political opponents.

Judiciary

The body of judges in a constitutional system. Collectively, they constitute the third branch of government in addition to the executive and legislative branches. To ensure their independence and impartiality, special provisions are generally made concerning their appointment and removal.

Judicial Review

The process by which courts decide whether an executive or legislative action is valid under the constitution. Thus, the courts could declare that a particular law conflicted with the bill of rights or in a federal state, encroached on the legislative competence of another level of government. In theory, judges, merely interpret the meaning of law, without expressing either approval or disapproval of its merits. In practice their legal judgements can have the effect of amending or even repealing a law.

Justice

Behaviour to one-self or to another which is strictly in accord with accepted ethnal law or as decreed by legal authority.

Law

Custom or practice recognised as binding by a community.

A rule of human conduct regulating the relationship and activities of people and to which compliance is obligatory. It is adopted by the legislative and

enforced by the judiciary and executive if necessary by force. Ideally, all laws should be just laws.

Lack of nomination

If no candidate is declared duly nominated during a nomination period and session the Electoral Commission shall terminate the election. All electoral proceedings will then start afresh.

Legality

In accordance with the law; to comply with the requirements, laid down norms and procedures of the law.

Legislature

The official law-making body in a political system, as opposed to institutions charged with applying the rules (executive) or with judging those alleged to have broken them (judiciary). In a democracy, the legislature is elected by the people, and is known as a parliament or house of assembly or by some similar name.

Legitimacy

The sense that those in authority have the moral right to rule over a defined territory and its population in accordance with the provisions of law, accepted rules and procedures. Legitimacy refers to the quality of a state to be legitimate. The principle way in which governments acquire legitimacy is through democratic elections. Governments can lose legitimacy as a result of maladministration and corruption, oppressive or discriminatory practices, failure to fulfill election promises, elite life-styles, nepotism, favouritism, etc.

Level Playing Field

Equitable opportunity for political parties contesting an election to put their points of view to the electorate.

List System

A system of proportional representation under which a voter chooses between party lists each containing as many names as there are representatives to be chosen. The number of candidates declared elected from each list is determined by the percentage cast for each list out of the total vote.

Local Authority Area

The municipal, town or village area declared under Section 3 of the Local Authority Act (Act no 23 of 1992) to be a municipality, town or village, as the case may be, or deemed to be so declared.

Local Authority Council

Any municipal, town or village council elected by registered voters during periodic elections.

Local Authority Voters' Register

The local authority voters' register for a local authority.

Local Government / Authority

A system of administration for smaller political units, such as cities, village and settlements. Local government is said to be "close to the people" since its powers are delegated by central (or regional) government, and typically involve matters such as health, education, water, electricity, sewerage, sanitation and environment, which are of immediate concern to ordinary people. A dynamic system of local government is widely regarded as essential to a genuine democracy.

Local Product

Something produced (e.g. grown or manufactured) locally.

Lobbying

The practice of attempting to influence government decision makers (by legitimate or illegitimate means) to act in ways favourable to the interests of the lobby group or the lobbyist's client.

Magistrate

A public juridical official heading a local court with criminal jurisdiction, and jurisdiction over various civil and administrative matters.

Majority Party (ies)

A party, which obtains a majority during an election, more seats than any other party or parties and thus qualifies for majority seats in Parliament.

Majority Rule

Majority rule has been long considered the essence of democracy. If democracy is “government by the people”, ideally all decisions should require the consent of all the people, or at least all political parties. As this would be a recipe for total paralysis, the principal majority rule (50 percent plus one) is widely adopted in democracies as a normal working compromise. The argument in its favour is that the opinion of the majority is more legitimate than the opinion of the minority. However, majority rule is rarely fully applied. On certain issues of fundamental importance such as constitutional amendment, it is common to require a qualified majority (for example, a two thirds majority). Some democratic systems require a concurrent majority, that is majority support of each of the principal contending parties. Majority rule works best when no significant group finds itself permanently in a minority, and when the majority does not oppress the minority.

Management Committee

The management committee of a Local or Regional Authority Council elected from amongst its members.

Manual voting

Marking of a ballot paper by hand whereby a voter votes for a party or candidate.

Martial Law

Code of law enforced in emergency by the military arm of a government as a protection from internal disturbance or external attack and superseding the civil law for the time of its enforcement.

Marginal Seats

When a sitting member has a small majority over one or more opponents in the previous election.

Mass Action

Organised political protest initiated on a national scale, or at least planned in accordance with a national strategy. While each demonstration has targeted a specific policy grievance, the underlying objective has been perceived as an attempt to dramatise the extent of a party's political support, and thus strengthen its bargaining hand in negotiations.

Mayor

The ceremonial head of a municipality or town elected by the Local Authority Council.

Member of Parliament (MP)

In Namibia a Member of Parliament is an elected or nominated member of the National Assembly or the National Council.

Merit Assessment

A system approved by the Regional or Local Authority Council according to which an employee's work performance is assessed.

Minister

A member of cabinet in charge of some high office of state, usually heading a ministry.

Minority Rights

In a democracy, minorities as well as majorities have rights. They are entitled to the equal protection of any bill of rights including the right to participate effectively in the political process. Moreover, a democratic government, though elected by the majority, serves as the government of all the people and is expected to govern in the national and not party interests. However, minorities often also claim special collective rights reflecting their distinctive interests and

beliefs. Even groups that are not numerical minorities, like women, who have experienced discrimination, may seek specific measures of redress. If the minority is sufficiently numerous or economically influential, or the justice of its demands are sufficiently compelling, it may succeed achieving its purpose.

Mixed Economy

An economic system blending capitalist and socialist elements and qualities. Objective: securing economic growth, prosperity and a life of human dignity for all.

Monitors

Individuals or organized groups of individuals mandated to monitor, investigate, report on, and frequently pronounce judgement on the actions of parties to a dispute in terms of commonly accepted or normally endorsed behaviour. The monitors may be from the international community or nationals of the country concerned. In both cases, they are required to be non-partisan. Their mandate may be to monitor:

- The term of a cease fire or peace treaty.
- The incidence of political violence; or
- Elections to ensure they are free and fair.

While monitors are not able or expected to enforce compliance with accepted standards of conduct, they do perform important functions as watchdogs, deterrents and legitimisers. Not only do they observe events but, by their mere presence, they can have a beneficial influence on the actions of the parties. They are also in a position to offer a credible independent opinion on the validity of conflicting claims of the parties. The terms “monitors” and “observers” are often wrongly used as interchangeable. The monitors play a more activist and interventionist role than in the case of the observer.

Moonlighting

The practice of having a second job in addition to one’s regular job.

Morality

Conduct or attitude judged from the moral standpoint.

Multi-Party State

A multi-party state is a country where the Constitution allows for more than one political party, all of which can freely operate, recruit members, and take part in elections. The party which gets most of the votes forms the government and rules until the next general elections.

Municipality

An existing approved township in an area which in the opinion of the Minister of Regional and Local Government and Housing can perform the functions of a municipality as stipulated in the Local Authority Act (Act no 23 of 1992).

Nation

Two broad usages of the concept are apparent: one essentially political, the other cultural. In its political connotation "nation" refers to the people inhabiting a state. This is the way it is commonly understood in Africa, and has found expression in political exclamations such as "One Namibia, One Nation." Nationhood in this sense, however, is often more an aspiration than a reality. Hence, the emphasis accorded nation-building as a counter to the persistence of more parochial loyalties. From a cultural perspective, a nation consists of a substantial body of people who share a perceived sense of communal identity based on such factors as common history, language, ethnicity and/or customs ('Volk').

A multinational state is one embracing more than one such national entity. A single nation may also straddle the boundaries of two or more states. A nation-state exists where the geographical boundaries of the nation and the state coincide. With so many artificial colonial boundaries inherited by African states, the concept nation-state has not yet achieved its full status in many African countries.

Nationalism

Devotion of one's nation. Advocacy of national unity.

National Anthem

A national song of praise.

Namibia National Anthem:

*Namibia Land of the Brave
Freedom fight we have won
Glory to their Bravery
Whose Blood Waters our Freedom*

*We give our Love and Loyalty
Together in Unity
Contrasting beautiful Namibia
Namibia our Country*

*Beloved Land of Savannahs
Hold high the Banner of Liberty*

Chorus:

*Namibia our Country,
Namibia Motherland we love Thee.*

National Assembly

The National Assembly in Namibia is the highest law making body. It consists of 72 members, elected every five years according to the proportional electoral (list) system. In addition, the President has the right to appoint 6 people who have special experience, skills or positions to the National Assembly but without voting skills.

National Council

The National Council in Namibia represents the second house of parliament. It scrutinises laws made by the National Assembly. The National Council has advisory, recommending and rejecting powers but has no law making power on its own. The National Council is composed of two Regional Council members of each of the thirteen regions. Such members are nominated by the Regional

Councils of such regions to serve on the National Council. Their membership lasts till the next Regional Council Elections.

National Defence

A national act of resisting an external attack or preparing to meet any anticipated attack. To defend a nation against any attack that could violate its sovereignty and independence.

National Planning Commission

A presidential commission entrusted with planning and determining the priorities and direction of national development.

National Seal

The official emblem, a heraldic device in a coat of arms, reflecting a recognized symbol.

National Voters' Register

The national voters' register for a constituency or polling district.

Naturalisation

To grant citizenship to a person (e.g. an immigrant)

Natural Resources

Natural resources of a country reflect what nature has provided and man can make use of (e.g. fertile soil, minerals, waterpower).

Negotiations

When people involved in a dispute talk to one another with a view to resolving their differences on a mutually acceptable basis through persuasion rather than coercion. Negotiations confined to the formal negotiating forum. They are also conducted publicly through the media, from party platforms and in international forums, and by mobilising public opinion through mass action, and in other ways. For negotiations to succeed, the parties must make compromises, though the concessions required of each side are rarely equal.

What determines the outcome (if any) is the balance of bargaining strength among the parties. This depends on a variety of factors, which may change over the course of the negotiations. The principal factors are:

- the professional negotiating skills of the participants;
- the pressure of time on the parties;
- success in foregoing alliances with the other participants;
- the alternatives to negotiations available to the parties;
- the abilities of the negotiators to carry their supporters with them;
- the attitude and involvement of the international community, and possibly
- the intrinsic merits of the rival arguments.

Nomination of Candidates

The public sitting determined on a specific date, at specific place, for a specific period during which the submission of the nomination of candidates takes place.

Nomination Day

The day appointed for the nomination of candidates and/or party lists.

Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)

National or international body or organization operating outside the sphere of politics to assist in the development, education, enlightenment and upliftment of the population of a country.

Nepotism

Showing favouritism in the advancement of relatives, especially appointing them to offices for reasons other than personal worth.

Oath

The involving of God as witness of the truth of a statement or the binding nature of a promise.

Observers (Elections)

Representatives of international or local organisations who are authorised to observe the preparation for and conduct of an election with a view to assisting in ensuring that the integrity of the electoral process is respected.

Official

Any elected or appointed official or staff members of any organ of the central, regional or local government, any official of a para-statal enterprise owned or managed or controlled by the State, or in which the State or the Government has substantial interest, or any office of the defence force, the police force or the prison service, but does not include a Judge of the Supreme Court or the High Court or, in so far as a complaint concerns the performance of a judicial function, any other judicial officer.

Official Language

The language decided upon by law (constitution) to be the only official mode of communication (oral and written) between the members of a state.

Official List (Elections)

The register of electors for any polling division or area certified as such by the electoral commission.

Official Mark (Elections)

A mark provided to a presiding officer to stamp the ballot paper before giving it to the voter.

Official Seal (Elections)

A seal provided to a presiding officer to use in sealing the ballot box and packet with election materials at the close of the poll.

Official Stamp

An official mark, set on goods or documents as proof that due has been paid or that other legal obligations have been fulfilled (e.g. stamp on ballot paper, voters' registration form).

Ombudsman

A person appointed by statal authority to investigate complaints concerning alleged or apparent instances of violations of constitutionally guaranteed freedoms and rights, abuse of power by public servants that manifests injustice, or corruption by such officials which would properly be regarded as unlawful, oppressive or unfair in a democratic society. An ombudsman also acts as mediator and peace-maker. Unsolved matters he/she can refer to judicial agencies for attention.

One-Party State

A one-party state is a country where the laws allow for only one party. In such a state it is unlawful to form or belong to any other party.

Opposition

Under parliamentary government the opposition comprises those parties in parliament that are not represented in cabinet. Their constitutional role is to question and criticize government policy, with a view to alerting and mobilising public opinion and hopefully persuading (since it cannot outvote) the government to change its policy. Ultimately, it is preparing itself to win the next election. The largest of the opposition parties is designated the position of an official opposition and commonly receives government funds and special privileges to enable it to “oppose” more effectively. The leader of the opposition normally appoints a shadow cabinet, with each member assigned responsibility for overseeing the activities of a particular government department, for example agriculture, education, etc. The opposition is most effective when it can offer the voters a credible alternative of policies and leaders.

Organisation

A group / association / society of people working together to some end (economic, social, political).

Outsourcing

To assign or allocate tasks/performances by government institutions to the private sector to perform the same on behalf of government institutions.

Parliament

A popularly elected legislature (in a democracy) with the constitutional responsibility of representing the views of the people, debating national issues, passing laws, and checking and controlling the cabinet. It is the supreme legislative body of many countries. Parliament may consist of two “houses” (e.g. upper house and lower house, National Assembly and Senate). A parliament exists under presidential as well as parliamentary systems of government. In Namibia, parliament comprises the National Assembly and the National Council.

Parliamentary Government

A system of government in which the cabinet is chosen by, sits in and is responsible to parliament. Under this system parliament is sovereign, that is supreme. It can make or repeal any laws it chooses.

Para-Statal Enterprises

Semi-state enterprises. Partly state, partly private. Responsible for its activities to a board comprised of representatives from the private and public sector.

Partnership

The state of being a partner or partners. One or more persons who are associated in a business or other joint venture and share together risks and gains.

Party

A group of people united by some common interest or for some common purpose and in support of a common cause.

Party Agent

See election agent.

Party Liaison Committee (Election)

A committee instituted by the Electoral Commission to establish harmonious cooperation between the Commission and political parties, associations and organisations participating in elections on electoral matters.

Party List

Under proportional representation each party is entitled to nominate as many candidates as there are seats to be filled in parliament or at Local Authority level. Accordingly it prepares a list of names in order of preference. Each party is then allocated a number of seats in proportion to its popular vote, with the names chosen in the order found on its party list. At Local Authority level the list must contain the legally prescribed minimum of female candidates.

Party Manifesto

A comprehensive statement of a political party's policies, intentions and promises, issued typically during an election campaign. It indicates how the party proposes to govern the country if elected to power.

Part-Time employee

An employee who is appointed to a part-time position.

Part-time Post

An approved post on the establishment when work is done only on certain days for a specified number of hours.

Patronage

The power of putting someone into an advantageous position or bestowing privileges to such person.

Pension Funds/Provident Funds

The retirement fund/pension fund/provident fund of which an staff members is or must become a member, in terms of his/her service contract.

People

A collective group of person. Members of a particular race, ethnicity or nation.

Permanent Medical Disability

The medical condition of a staff member who according to medical reports is not fit for the position he/she occupies.

Permanent Post

An approved post on the establishment with no time limit till retirement or other determined reason is attached to.

Phantom Voters

Voters whose names voters' appear on the voters' register but cannot be found at the address given.

Plebiscite

A vote of the entire electorate on a national issue (e.g. secession, constitutional change, war, form of state).

Plural Society

A term used to denote a society which consists of a variety of communities.

Policy

A selected, planned line of conduct in the light of which decisions are made and coordinations achieved.

Political Party

A formally organized group of people sharing common interests and policy preferences over a wide range of issues. Their declared purpose is to seek political power through representation in parliament and control of the government alone or in coalition with other parties. To participate in elections and secure the party's name, candidates and symbol on the ballot, it must be officially registered as a party with the election authorities. Political parties perform a vital role in democracies by:

- recruiting and training future political leaders;
- educating the electorate on current issues of public concern;
- formulating and presenting the people with alternative policy programmes; and , in the process
- seeking to reconcile conflicting interests within the party and the country.

Politics

The art and science of governing a state. It involves the allocation, distribution and control of power and authority.

Polling Area / District

A geographical unit in a constituency for which a polling station is provided.

Polling Booth

A polling place or a part of a polling place determined by a presiding officer to be a polling booth in accordance with a small enclosed compartment in a polling station where a voter can mark his or her ballot (paper) in complete secrecy. Only one person is allowed into the polling booth at any one time.

Polling Day

The day fixed for holding the poll at an election.

Polling Division

A geographical unit within a constituency for which a register of voters is prepared.

Polling Officer

Any polling official appointed by the Electoral Commission below the rank of the presiding officer at any polling station to facilitate the taking of the poll at a polling station.

Polling Period

The period for polling specified in the writ or election and includes any extension of that period granted pursuant to the electoral law.

Polling Place

A place appointed pursuant to an electoral law as a place where a poll shall be taken in a polling division or area, and may include one or more polling booths.

Polling Station

Premises secured for the taking of the vote of electors on polling day and to

which the whole or a portion of the register of electors for a polling division/area is allowed.

Power

The ability to induce others to do something that they would not otherwise choose to do. This may be achieved by persuasion, but normally there is an element of coercion, actual or potential. Coercion may take the form of financial penalties, labour strikes, withholding benefits, threats of physical violence, etc. Power is inherently political. It is as central to politics as money is to economics. In any society, power is distributed (unequally), among the political decision makers, ethnic groups, the business community, the security services, the media, trade unions, civil society and the people in general. In formerly oppressed societies it has become an issue how to redistribute power, on a democratic basis, that is, how to transfer power to the people.

Powers of Investigation

The authority to investigate complaints, issue subpoenas, questions, etc., relevant to the issue and matter under consideration.

Power-Sharing

A system in which two or more parties in a coalition government participate in the process of decision-making on the basis of consensus, typically with each party possessing a potential veto. Power-sharing may take on many forms. How it works in practice depends on:

- the number and importance of the powers shared,
- whether the powers are shared equally,
- whether the parties are prepared to exercise their veto, and
- the relative bargaining strength of the parties.

Power-sharing is a compromise arrangement. Whether the risk can be justified depends on whether the realistic alternatives are considered more advantageous or less.

Power of the People

A popular slogan conveying the universal principle that all people have a democratic right to participate effectively in decisions affecting their lives.

Preliminary List

Either, (a) an annual list of voters published on a stipulated date; or (b) an initial compilation of the voters' register before claims and objections are made.

Prescribed

A rule or specimen of a form laid down in regulations made under the provision of the law.

President

The President in Namibia is the Head of State and the Commander-in-Chief of the Namibia Defence Force. He/she is also in charge of the executive branch of the government.

Presidential System

A system of government marked by a separation of powers between the executive branch (the president) and the legislative branch (parliament) in contrast to the parliamentary system. The president is a "real president" with real political power rather than merely a ceremonial head of state.

Presiding Officer

A person appointed by the Electoral Commission in control of a polling station in a polling district in a constituency.

Pressure Group

A group of persons who cooperate in seeking to influence the policy or a particular body (e.g. legislative body) or of particular person (e.g. government leaders).

Prime Minister

The chief minister.

Privacy

Freedom from undesirable intrusions.

Privatisation

Tasks previously performed by government institutions allocated to the private sector on their own account.

Privileges

A benefit or advantage possessed (e.g. Member of Parliament).

Procedures

An act or manner of proceeding. A prescribed way of doing something. Rules of parliamentary practice. Particular course of action.

Promotion

The Regional or Local Authority Council places a staff member in another post in the council's service of which the maximum of the salary scale is higher than that of the post occupied by him/her prior to such placement.

Proportional Representation (PR) in Namibia

An electoral system under which the number of members a political party elected to parliament depends on the number of votes the party receives in the election. Instead of having single-member constituencies each electing one member (as in the first-past-the-post-system), under the proportional representation system each local authority, region or the whole country constitutes a single multi-member constituency.

Each party presents its party list of candidates (in order of preference) equal in number to the number of members to be elected in the country or at local authority level. Thus if a party wins half the vote in the election will be entitled to half the "seats", in parliament or in a Local Authority Council. In this case, those candidates whose names are on the top part of the party list will be elected to parliament or the Local Authority Council.

Provisional Voters' Register

The provisional national voters register or the provisional Local Authority voters' register open for public scrutiny.

Public good

Of or pertaining to the community as a whole.

Public Nuisances

Includes any action which is likely to injure the safety, health, peace or convenience of residents in a local authority area, including excessive noise caused by any means whatsoever, the firing of grass, the burning of rubbish and the carrying on of any activity which causes a stench of which is otherwise objectionable.

Public Opinion Poll

A technique for determining the collective views of people on a particular issue or issues, based on interviews with a small but representative sample of the population. The accuracy of the poll depends on how representative the sample of those interviewed is, and their willingness to answer honestly.

Public Place

Any square, garden, park, recreation ground, show ground, rest camp or other open or enclosed space intended for the use, enjoyment or benefit of residents in a local authority area.

Public Policy

Strategic use of resources to alleviate national problems or governmental concerns.

Public Service

Service of the state to the community. Serving a need of the public.

Public Service Commission

A public body overseeing the running of an efficient public service (e.g. appointment, termination of services, rules of behaviour, disciplinary action, training, grading, remuneration, etc. of public servants).

Qualified Person (Election)

Any person who is qualified to be registered as an elector (e.g. age, nationality, residence).

Questionnaire

A form of data collection instrument utilizing a common set of questions about a particular research area. It is normally used in the context of survey research (e.g. exit poll survey).

Quorum

A number of people, fixed by rule, that must be present to validate the proceeding of a committee, council, parliament, or any other body or institution.

Quota (Election)

An allocated number of votes per seat in the National Assembly or in the Local Authority Council (see also surplus vote).

Race

A distinct group of people, the members of which share inherited physical characteristics (e.g. build, skin colour, form of the hair) and transmit them. Loosely used it refers also to a political, linguist or nationalist group.

Racialism

Race hatred or race discrimination caused by the distinction of rules.

Rateable Property

Any immovable property situated within a local authority area, except government, Regional Council or Local Authority property, a place of worship, school or hostel if not maintained and managed for profit or gain, a library or museum maintained and managed by the State, a hospital, or any immovable property which has been exempted from the payment of rates.

Reconciliation

To bring together people who have been divided in the past in mutual respect to one another, to solve disagreements and differences and bring about unity (e.g. in Namibia the different population groups who have been divided in the past on grounds of ethnicity and race).

Reconciliation of Votes

Comparing the written authorization contained in ballot paper envelopes with the marked copies of the relevant voters register and the authorized ballot papers placed in a ballot box.

Recount

Either, (a) adding again the voters given for each candidate or party as recorded in the statement of the polls returned by the several presiding officers; or (b) examining and counting the used and counted, the unused, the rejected and spoilt ballot papers.

Red Tape

The rigid application or observance of rules and regulations in all their minute detail without regard for the end they were designed to achieve.

Referendum

A method of referring important decisions on public policy to the people directly rather than leaving them to the people's representative in parliament to decide. In a referendum, the people vote "Yes or No" on a proposal submitted to them. The significance of the vote depends on whether the verdict of the people is legally binding, or essentially advisory with parliament left to implement (and interpret) the will of the people.

Region

A subnational division of space, delimited in terms of one or more criteria. Regions are thus spatial areas within a given territorial entity, the state.

Factors relevant to the delimitation of regions can be demography, ecological considerations, geographical feature, economic considerations, resources, homogeneity, functional criteria, inter- and intradependency, administration, and historical factors.

Regional Co-ordinator

A person appointed by the Electoral Commission to coordinate the electoral organization and activities in a region.

Regional Council

In Namibia a Regional Council comprises a body of persons (councillors) elected on a constituency basis in each of the thirteen regions during periodic elections.

Regionalism

Any constitutional arrangement in which a country is divided geographically into political units, with the functions of government shared between the national government and the subnational (regional or second tier) authorities. The relative power and importance of the two levels of government depend on:

- the constitutional status of the regions: devolutionary, federal or confederal;
- the list of powers allocated to each level;
- the basis on which regional boundaries are drawn: economic, ethnic, historical etc; and
- the strength of regionalist/nationalist sentiment among the people of a region.

Register of Voters

A list of registered voters for a polling division or area or part thereof in a constituency prepared and maintained pursuant to the electoral law.

Registration Form

An application form to be completed when applying for a voter's registration card.

Registration Number

The number allocated to a prospective voter when registering as a voter and as appearing on the voter's registration card and the voters' list.

Registration Officer

A person appointed by the Electoral Commission to conduct the registration of voters for the President, National Assembly, Regional Council and Local Authority elections.

Registration Unit

A geographical entity within a constituency for which a register of electors is compiled.

Rejected Ballot Papers

A ballot paper which has been handed by a presiding officer to an elector to cast his or her vote but which at the close of the poll has been found in the ballot box either unmarked or so improperly marked that it cannot be counted.

Remuneration

The money/salary/compensation received by the person remunerated.

Repeal of an Act

To cancel or revoke an enactment previously made.

Representative (or Indirect) Democracy

In modern societies, for reasons of population, distance and time, it is impractical for every citizen to participate directly in the daily business of government (direct democracy). Accordingly, voters elect representatives whom they can trust to speak and make decisions on their behalf in parliament. To ensure that the representatives continue to reflect the will of the people who elected them, they are held accountable to the people in periodic elections. Nevertheless, controversy persists as to exactly whom the elected representatives represent. Are they expected to decide public issues in accordance with the policies of their political parties, their own best judgement and convictions, or the opinions of the people (however strongly the representative may disagree with these opinions)?

Republic

A form of government in which the head of the state is an elected president. A form of government in which the sovereign power is widely vested in the people either directly or through elected representatives.

Returning Officer

A person appointed by the Electoral Commission to be the head electoral officer in a constituency and in control of all polling stations in such constituency.

Review of Legislation

Looking over considering, scrutinizing, studying, evaluating legislation.

Rubber Stamp (Election)

A stamp prepared for use in marking the ballot papers at an election in accordance with the electoral law.

Rule of Law

A political system in which all person – rulers and ruled alike – are subject to the same known, predictable and impartial rules of conduct. The rule of law is one of the pillars of freedom. It can be contrasted with arbitrary power, that is, power exercised by the courts, the police, civil servants political leaders or others on the basis of personal preference or party interest. Paradoxically, freedom is the result of law, not its absence, provided the law is just.

Salary

The portion of the employee's normal monetary remuneration in respect of services rendered, whether according to relevant notch of his/her salary scale or whether as a fixed amount of money, but excluding any allowance, bonus, housing benefit or monetary fringe benefits.

Scenario

An imagined sequence of future events, either what one realistically expects to happen or what one hopes to happen. Scenario writing is, at best, a very inexact science.

Secession

Action by a region of a country to separate itself politically from the rest of the country and to rule itself as an independent state.

The claim to independence is commonly justified on grounds of severe repression, prior existence as a political entity, a strong sense of local identity, or an alleged right of self-determination. Most attempts at secession in Africa have proved unsuccessful (as in Biafra) though a referendum held in Eritrea (with the consent of the Ethiopian government) in March 1993, supported secession which then materialised.

Secret voting

A voting system by which only the voter knows for which party or candidate he/she voted.

Secular Government

Ruled by a government being non-ecclesiastical, non-religious, or non-sacred.

Self-Determination

The right of a people to decide their own future. The problem is to decide who are the “people”. Historically, self-determination has meant the right of colonised peoples to independence. Much more controversial are the claims of a right to independence, that is secession on the part of a particular ethnic community, region or “nation” within an existing independent state. Others understand the term to mean a right to substantial local autonomy, but not outright secession.

Separation of Powers

A constitutional principle designed to avoid an overconcentration of political power and, therefore of its abuse. The doctrine asserts that the principal functions of governments, executive, legislative and judicial – should be assigned to separate institutions – the executive branch, the legislature and the judiciary – which are kept strictly independent of each other, except where they act under a parliamentary system (the principle of “checks and balances”). The separation of powers is fully applicable only to the judiciary, as the cabinet is responsible for its actions to Parliament.

Settlement

Concentration of a sizeable number of people in a particular area that could be identified as a community, not yet properly organized and administered, but in need to be properly provided with services and facilities. It represents the embryo phase of a village. It is to be administered and developed by the Regional Council in the area.

Social Democracy

The political principles of those who hold that socialism should be achieved as an economic and political form of human society in place of capitalism, and that it should be done through the normal working of democracy.

Socialism

A political and economic theory advocating collective ownership of the means of the production and control of distribution. It is based on the belief that all, while contributing to the good of the community, are equally entitled to the care and protection which the community can provide.

Social Justice

Behaviour to oneself or to another (e.g. the human society), which is strictly in accord with currently accepted ethical law or as decreed by legal authority. Social justice emphasises fairness and equality.

Social Security

A system, or the theory and legislation behind it, whereby individual members of the community can count on some degree of care and protection provided by the community as a whole (e.g. health, old age, unemployed, pensioners, retirement benefits).

Society

Any number of people associated together geographically, racially or otherwise with collective interests.

Sovereign

Having undisputed right to make decisions and act accordingly, thus a sovereign state.

Speaker

In Namibia he/she is the presiding officer of the National Assembly.

Spoilt Ballot Paper

A ballot paper which has been spoilt in marking by the elector and has been handed back to the presiding officer and exchanged for another.

State

The universal form of political organisation in the modern world. It is the community (or, some would say, a section of it) organised and armed with a monopoly of legitimate coercive power to protect the social order from internal disruption and external attack, and also to provide certain public services. The state (the whole political society and system) should be distinguished from the government (the decision making structure and the process of the state) and civil society (voluntary institutions and practices of society which are independent of the state). A state exists when a sovereign (supreme) political authority rules over a population residing within the boundaries of a fixed territory, and is so recognised as such by the international community.

State of Emergency

A situation, often dangerous and threatening, which arises suddenly and calls for prompt action.

State Revenue Fund

A state fund in which annual or periodic income (e.g. taxes, customs, excise), collected by the state for public use, is deposited.

Status Quo

The existing state of affairs.

Street

Any road, thoroughfare, pavement, sidewalk, lane or other right of way set apart for the use and benefit of residents in a Local Authority area.

Subsistence Allowance

The money payable to a staff member for covering his/her accommodation and meals costs during periods of absence from home on official business, as specified by the respective authority.

Suffrage

The right to vote in elections.

Supplementary Voters Registration

The inclusion of persons in any voters' register who qualify to be registered as voters and who have not or could not so have registered during the last general registration in respect of which that register was prepared.

Surplus Value

In Marxist theory the difference between the value of a worker's labour and the wages paid to him by his/her employer.

Surplus Vote

In Namibia, during the elections, for the National Assembly it constitutes the surplus fraction which is not absorbed by the numbers of seats allocated to the political party according to the proportional electoral system. Such surplus competes with other similar surpluses accruing to any other political party or parties participating in the election, and any undistributed seat or seats is awarded to the parties concerned in sequence of the highest surplus.

Supreme Court

The highest judicial body in Namibia presided by the Chief Justice.

Supervisor of Registration (Election)

A person appointed by the Electoral Commission to oversee the registration of voters in a constituency for the election of the President, National Assembly, Regional Council and Local Authority.

Suspension with Pay

The official notification to a staff member to remain absent from work with full pay for a prescribed period while a charge of misconduct against him/her is conducted.

Suspension without Pay

The official notification to a staff member to remain absent from work without any remuneration for a prescribed period while a charge of misconduct against him/her is being investigated or as punishment of an offence.

Symbol (Election)

A figure or sign allotted to a candidate or a political party in accordance with the electoral law.

Tactical Voting

Tendency by which voters vote for the candidate and party which they would most like to see win the election.

Task

Work efforts consisting of several activities that produce a distinct and measurable result.

Terrorism

A highly emotive term which is used in two senses, both with negative connotations. The first focuses on the means employed, while the second is concerned with the motives of the perpetrators. As commonly understood, internationally terrorism refers to the resort to “indiscriminate” violence against innocent civilians, especially women and children. Terrorism carried out by agents of a government is known as state terrorism. In the second sense, the term terrorism is limited to violence undertaken for an “illegitimate” purpose. The resort to violence in pursuit of some “worthy” cause is not regarded as terrorism, but armed action.

Temporary Employee

Any staff members who is appointed to a temporary post and/or capacity for a period not exceeding twelve (12) months to perform or complete a specific job, unless the respective authority requests and approves a longer period. It does not include contract and/or casual workers.

Tendered Ballot

In Namibia it means a vote cast by a person in a constituency where he/she is not registered. The vote will be added to the constituency where he/she registered.

Theocracy

Government by religious leaders or people claiming to know the will of God how the state should be ruled. A form of government in which God (or a deity) is recognized as the king or immediate ruler and His laws are taken as the statute-book of the kingdom.

Threshold

A minimum requirement. In the case of proportional representation, a threshold provision would specify that a political party would need the support of (say) three percent of five percent of the voters before it is entitled to any representation in the national parliament. The purpose of a threshold is to encourage very small, often purely regional or ideological parties whose presence in the assembly might contribute to governmental instability, to broaden their base of support by appealing to a wider group of voters even combining with other parties.

Term of Office

A period of time, measured between its beginning and end.

Tolerance

A willingness on the part of individuals, political parties, security services and other organisations to accept, respect and actively defend the democratic right of others to hold and express opinions, however unpopular. Tolerance is a matter of moral principle as well as enlightened self-interest. The lesson of history, painfully learned, is that freedom is indivisible. Freedom depends on the freedom of all in a society. In a democracy, a diversity of views is not merely permitted ('tolerated'), but positively cultivated. Tolerance does not imply political neutrality or non-partisanship. Rather, it is an acknowledgement that others have a right to be partisan too and that they are entitled to an own opinion.

In respect of elections, political tolerance is a pre-requisite, if they are to be judged free and fair. Among the preconditions for free political activity are:

- Freedom of political campaigning
- Freedom from intimidation (including the right of a person

wearing the T-shirt of one political party to attend a political rally of a rival party in complete safety.)

- Verbal restraint: the avoidance of inflammatory language which might threaten or incite violence.
- A code of conduct binding party leaders and their followers to respect agreed standards of political behaviour and, in particular, to honour the outcome of a free and fair election.

Town

An approved township exists in such area or a town exists in such area which in the opinion of the Minister of Regional and Local Government and Housing complies with the requirements of an approved township and is governed by an elected town council.

Town Clerk

The chief executive official appointed to head the administration of a town. Also referred to as the chief executive officer.

Town Council

The elected policy and decision making body of a town or city, headed by a mayor.

Townlands

The land within a local authority area situated outside the boundaries of any approved township which has been set aside for the mutual benefit of the residents in its area, and for purposes of pasturage, water supply, aerodromes, explosive magazines, sanitary and refuse deposits or other public purposes or the extension of such township or the establishment of other approved townships.

Tradition

A cultural continuity transmitted in the form of social attitudes, beliefs, principles and conventions of behaviour, etc., deriving from past experience and helping to shape the present. A convention established by constant practice.

Traditional Authority

An authority of a traditional community established in terms of Section 2(1) of the Traditional Authorities Act (Act No 25 of 2000), comprised of a chief or head, senior traditional councillors and traditional councillors.

Traditional Authority Member

Constitutes a chief or head of traditional community, a senior traditional councillor, or a traditional councillor.

Traditional Community

An indigenous homogenous social grouping of persons comprising of families deriving from exogamous clans which share a common ancestry, language, cultural heritage, customs and traditions, who recognises a common traditional authority and inhabits a common communal area, and may include the members of that traditional community residing outside the communal area.

Traditional Community Member

A person, either or both of whose parents belong to that traditional community, and includes any other person who by marriage to or adoption by a member of that traditional community or by any other circumstances has assimilated the culture and traditions of that traditional community and has been accepted by the traditional community as a member thereof.

Traditional Councillor

A person of a traditional community appointed or elected to the Traditional Council.

Traditional Leader

A chief, a head of a smaller or larger group of people (e.g. traditional community, tribe), designated and recognised, a senior traditional councillor, elected, appointed or by descent (royal line), acting as spokesperson of such group and assuring the transmission of social attitudes, beliefs, principles and conventions of behaviour deriving from past experiences. In Namibia the traditional leader is also the protector and executor of customary law, and the distributor of land.

Trade Union

A voluntary organization of workers/wage earners in any industry for collective bargaining with the employers over terms of employment and conditions of work. An organization of workers concerned about their interests (e.g. wages, leave, benefits, social security, hours of work).

Transfer

The relevant authority places an employee in another post in its service of which the maximum of the salary scale is the same as that of the post occupied by him/her prior to such transfer.

Transparency

Openness concerning the conduct of public affairs, especially with respect to the decisions, actions and even motives of government ministers and officials. In a democracy, the people are entitled to know what their government is saying and doing on their behalf. Security considerations do have their place, but they need to be clearly justified in terms of national interest.

Travel Allowance

Money payable to an employee to cover his/her travel expenses during official trips, as determined by the relevant authority.

Tribalism

Relating to a tribe. A strong allegiance to and feeling for the tribe a person or community belongs to.

Trust Fund for Regional Development and Equity

Objects and Purposes: to financially assist with development of regions and local authorities and the implementation thereof, through the active participation of the local people and in accordance with the Decentralisation Act (Act No 33 of 2000), in the decentralisation programme at regional and local level; to provide, either at its own initiative or when requested so by a Regional Council or Local Authority Council, funding for: (i) technical assistance, guidance and training in the identification, planning, preparation,

appraisal, monitoring, evaluation, financing, implementation or management of development projects; (ii) the formulation of specific projects, needs or proposals in regions or Local Authorities; (iii) the conduct of negotiations in respect of, and to control, business ventures on behalf of Regional Councils and Local Authorities (if so requested); (iv) the cooperation and coordination of its activities with any persons or body who or which has an interest, or is a actively involved, in the implementation of any decentralisation programme in Namibia or to assist with such programme.

Uncontested Election

No party / organisation / association is prepared to put up a candidate or a list of candidates against the nominated candidate or list of candidates by a particular party association or organisation. The candidate or list of candidates is thus elected uncontested.

Unicameralism

A parliament that consists only of one chamber.

Unitary Government

A constitutional system in which the central national government exercises all political power. The central government is clearly dominant.

Unitary State

A statal entity organised under a single central government. The central power is supreme over the whole statal territory. The final power rests with the central government.

Verification (Election)

Testing and confirming the truth and accuracy of a voting contest (e.g. ballot papers) by counting officials.

Veto

The negative power to defeat a proposal single-handed, under a system that requires unanimity. The term is derived from the Latin word meaning “I forbid.”

Village

A community which in the opinion of the Minister of Regional and Local Government and Housing is in need of the services which are required to be rendered or may be rendered in terms of the Local Authority Act (Act no 23 of 1992) and covered by an elected village council.

Village Council

The elected policy and decision making decision body of a village.

Village Secretary

The chief executive officer appointed to the head the administration of a village.

Violence

The exercise of physical force so as to inflict injury or damage to persons or property. Political violence as opposed to ordinary criminal action, is undertaken in the interests of a cause rather than personal material or other benefit (though, in practice the distinction is by no means clear).

Vote of Confidence

Vote demanded for a proposed measure which the government, or the Regional Council or the Local Authority Council consider essential to a particular policy and is prepared to resign over.

Vote of No-Confidence

A vote of no-confidence in a proposed bill, measure, or person by Members of Parliament, or Regional Council or Local Authority Council.

Voter

Any person who votes at an election and has been registered for such purpose.

Voter Apathy

Lack of interest or indifference among prospective voters to register as a voter, and, if registered, to cast a vote during elections.

Voter Education

To inform and instruct potential as well as registered voters on the electoral process, to encourage them to be active participants in the voting process and to perform their participating task as responsible citizens of a country (see also civic education).

Voters' Lists

see Register of Voters

Voter's Registration Card (Voting Card/Voting Document)

A card issued to a person registered as a voter in accordance with the provisions of the electoral law, and may include a duplicate card issued by the Directorate of Elections, which entitles the voter to vote at any election of the President, members of the National Assembly, the Regional Council and Local Authority Council.

Voter Turnout

The total number or percentage of registered voters who cast their vote .

Voting Age

Eighteen years or older.

Westminster System

The parliamentary system developed in Britain. Its distinctive features are a titular head of state, a prime minister and cabinet responsible to a sovereign (supreme) parliament elected in single member constituencies under a first-past-the-post system.

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