

SWAZILAND

Research paper's abstract



Since the post-independence, precisely after the 1972 election, Swaziland has struggled with a political conflict that was implanted by the 1973 Decree, which abrogated the progressive independence constitution together with its Bill of Rights and the banning of political parties in the electoral arena. The country soon saw political division along progressive and conservatives lines and a repressive state was borne in a bid to enforce adherence to traditional ideals of democracy as orchestrated by the late King Sobhuza II. For more than thirty years, the country was ruled through decrees until the promulgation of the

Constitution in 2005 which further entrenched the 1973 Decree. Current legislations governing elections promulgated in 2013 under a certificate of urgency picks the tone of the 2005 Constitution, and by extension the King's Proclamation to the Nation and the 1973 Decree. The electorate in Swaziland only elects the legislature and even then, not all the members of the legislature as the King also appoint some members through the tinkhindla based system of governance which only recognises individual merit in elections. As such, this excludes the participation of political parties and fails to cater for marginalised groups in elections and in governance. With the current status quo, Swazis have experienced subtle and non-lethal forms of electoral violence which places the country's status of human rights at a compromising position.

Conflict is not necessarily a negative phenomenon; it is part and parcel of social change in societies but can be destructive and counterproductive once it is not managed; and this seems to hold true for Swaziland. Political parties have formed and dismantled along the evolving and deep rooting form of governance; others have reformed their tactical response to address the political challenges¹. On a similar token, there have been notable fractures within some political parties due to the growing frustration and impatience over what seems to be a continued entrenchment of tinkhundla system of governance. This has had far reaching consequences and has motivated some form of violence in the Swazi society as well placing women and the youth at the receiving end. Women and youth face discrimination and exclusion, particularly, because of the socio-cultural context of the country.
