

# Political Change in Madagascar: Populist democracy or neopatrimonialism by another name?

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## INTRODUCTION

Madagascar's political space is defined by the country's social movements. This is in contrast to many African states which have been shaped by a history of domination by "big men". In the case of Madagascar, no leader has had as much influence on the nature of the political system, or its dynamics, as the anti-colonial uprising of 1947, the military's dissolution of the First Republic in 1972, the strikes of 1991, or the populist support for "democracy" that Balkanised the country in 2002. Former President Didier Ratsiraka was the single largest figure in Malagasy politics from 1975 to 1992, yet the nature of his rule was defined by the events of 1972 and the way he came to office, just as the administration of Madagascar's first president, Philibert Tsirinana, was defined by what had happened in 1947 and Zafy Albert's 1993 – 96 presidency was defined by the events of 1991. The pattern appears to continue, but with an interesting twist: President Marc Ravalomanana created the 2002 uprising that brought him to power, but this event, in turn, has now come to define him.

This paper examines the formation of the Third Republic in 1992 in a historical context, and the events leading up to the crisis of 2002, before turning to consider the efforts of Marc Ravalomanana and the new government since. This should provide a better understanding of the institutional, social, and personal factors that influence Madagascar's political direction. To this end, this paper is divided into three sections: the first traces the patterns of political events to 1992 and the institutional structure that Ravalomanana has inherited; the second outlines the events of 2002 and their significance; the final section delves more deeply into the person of Marc Ravalomanana, his nationalistic views and their importance, his relationship with the legislature and the judiciary, and his performance to date, before turning to the recent emergence of challenges to his administration.

The paper concludes by offering a tentative answer to the question in the sub-title, considering whether Madagascar has gone through a momentous change in the nature of its democracy<sup>1</sup> or whether it has given birth to a new incarnation of neopatrimonial rule in which the president's office is used more for personal gain than public benefit.<sup>2</sup>

## MALAGASY POLITICS BEFORE 2002

### *The colonial period*

Madagascar became a French colony in 1896. Previously, the island had been largely centralised under the *Merina* monarchy of the central highlands. An earlier attempt by the French to govern indirectly through the *Merina* had failed, so in 1896 the French colonial authorities resorted to the model of direct rule. *Merina* administrative personnel were recruited, however, and came to be relied upon throughout the country. This resulted in a marked divide in privilege between the *Merina* and the seventeen other ethnic groups, nominally grouped together as *côtier*-coastal people. The impact of this social divide continues to be felt today.

On 28 September 1958 Madagascar held a successful referendum to determine whether it should become a self-governing republic. A presidential election was held, under French auspices, on 27 April 1959 in which Philibert Tsiranana and his *Parti Social Démocrate de Madagascar* (PSD) emerged victorious. On 26 June 1960, Madagascar gained full legal sovereignty from France with President Tsirinana at the helm. Its constitution created a state closely resembling the French system in its division of legislative and executive powers, but with a more powerful presidency.

### *After independence*

The years of Madagascar's First Republic, from 1960

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to 1975, were tumultuous ones. Tsirinana, an ethnic *Tsimihety*, maintained close ties with France, a stance of which many Malagasy disapproved. The *Merina* elite, which would have benefited from decreased competition from French companies objected to the new opportunities the president afforded *côtier* business leaders, experiencing little advantage from the political and economic changes that had taken place. Many argued that the independence was only nominal. By the end of the decade the country had begun to run into difficult times economically, further eroding the president's support base. The political sphere degenerated steadily until a student-led general strike shut down much of the country in 1972. On 13 May, government troops opened fire on student demonstrators, killing at least a dozen and wounding scores more. The president declared a state of emergency and dissolved the parliament but, unable to maintain control of a disintegrating country, turned over power to General Gabriel Ramanantsoa on 18 May 1972.

General Ramanantsoa, a patrician *Merina* bureaucrat, was able to placate the aristocracy, but was not able to stave off economic hardship or appease an angry populace. On 5 February 1975 he turned over power to Colonel Richard Ratsimandrava, a *Merina* commoner. Ratsimandrava was assassinated five days later and power was handed to the oligarchic National Military Directorate. To date many Malagasy consider the 1972 – 75 period to be the real independence revolution, but although there are similarities to be found with other revolutionary experiences, the fundamental social and institutional change experienced by France, Russia, and others during revolutionary periods were not present in Madagascar. Indeed, the continued role of an oligarchic military directorate, and the lack of fundamental institutional change, would suggest that the period of 1972 – 1975 is better characterised as a slow coup.

On 15 June 1975 Lieutenant-Commander Didier Ratsiraka, a *Betsimisiraka* from the Toamasina coast, was installed by the military directorate as head of state and president of the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC). A referendum on Ratsiraka's elevation and his call for a new socialist government was held on 21 December 1975, giving birth to the Second Republic. Ratsiraka quickly assumed the mantle of Leninist "scientific socialism", in which a strong-armed administration leads the social revolution. According to his "Red Book", *Charter of the Malagasy Socialist Revolution*, his "revolution" called for benefiting the poor and decentralising administrative functions – away from his *Merina* competitors in the capital. In March 1977 Ratsiraka's AREMA party won a commanding 90 percent of seats in the country's first local elections. Shortages of basic goods started the same year, even as he constructed 'white elephant' manufacturing facilities throughout the provinces and nationalised private industries.

By 1979 the country was bankrupt and suffering from

the effects of capital flight. Ratsiraka called for the assistance of the International Monetary Fund and, shortly thereafter, the World Bank, and bilateral American and European donors. The result was an abandonment of the economic ideals of socialism and the retention of a strong, autocratic presidency resistant to competition.

In 1989 President Ratsiraka, by then undisputed autocratic leader for 14 years, had a problem. His economy was in tatters, he had a debt crisis stemming from a donor bailout of his experiment in state-owned enterprise, and his most significant partner, the Soviet Union, was on the brink of collapse. For the first time his opponents were publicly challenging his legitimacy, and his authority was waning.

By 1991 Ratsiraka had become so weak that opposition leader Zafy Albert was able to lead an 80,000-strong civil servants' strike in Antananarivo. In August, 400,000 people marched on the city centre, and Malagasy economic life came to a sudden halt as banking, trading, and governance sectors ceased to function. The government was unable to stem the crisis and in the wake of Ratsiraka's loss of control Zafy Albert set up a shadow government proclaiming himself prime minister and the *Haute Autorité*, a political body of the 16 parties in the opposition coalition the *Hery Velona* (Living Forces), the National Assembly. Many embassies, including the United States and France, started sending official correspondence to both "governments." While this was done on the pretext of remaining neutral, it had the effect of legitimising Zafy's efforts. The surprisingly rapid and successful challenge from this parallel legislature forced President Ratsiraka to the bargaining table. On 31 October 1991 he signed the Panorama Convention allowing for a government transition. The terms of the Convention left Ratsiraka as president, but removed most of his powers. The *Haute Autorité* effectively became the legislature. A constitutional convention was held in March 1992 and the new constitution was approved by 70 percent of the population in a referendum on 19 August, creating Madagascar's Third Republic. Multiparty presidential elections were held on 10 February 1993 and Zafy Albert emerged victorious with 66.74 percent of the vote to Ratsiraka's 33.26 percent. He was sworn in on 27 March 1993. The *Hery Velona* parties subsequently won a clear majority in the 16 June 1993 legislative elections. Madagascar had become a "democracy."

### *The lack of institutionalisation*

Madagascar's institutional structure is based on its 1992 constitution, and the delegation of powers roughly follows the French system.<sup>3</sup> The prime minister was appointed by the National Assembly and responsible for domestic affairs. The president was the head of state and responsible for all issues pertaining to international relations, primary executive relations, and

the maintenance of sovereignty. What was to become important was not the original design so much as the institutional changes over time and, more importantly, the reasons for these. Article 41 of the constitution states that “the structure of the State shall include: the executive power, consisting of the President of the Republic and the Government; the legislative power, formed by the National Assembly and the Senate; the judicial power, exercised by the Administrative and Financial Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court, Courts of Appeal, Tribunals, and the High Court of Justice.” This remains unchanged. The nature of the relationship between the structures has been tampered with so much, however, as to be unrecognisable.

The institutional relationships, and the concomitant powers of the presidency, were first altered in 1995. This process was initiated by President Zafy Albert, frustrated by the restraints placed upon the powers of his office. Specifically, he found himself engaged in a constant battle for power with then Prime Minister Francisque Ravony. The decision to affect a shift in the constitution came not from any desire to improve institutional relations, but to divert power from his rival. Clearly unable to amend the constitution by achieving a two-thirds vote in the legislature, Zafy turned to the other constitutional mechanism: a popular referendum. Zafy’s campaign in support of the referendum said little about the constitutional shift in power, instead focusing on how it would bring development to the Malagasy people while rooting out corruption. The maneuver was successful and the electorate endorsed the amendment.

As a direct consequence, changes were made to seven constitutional articles: 53, 61, 74, 75, 90, 91, and 94. Most significant of these were Articles 53 and 90. The original Article 53.1 read “The President of the Republic shall appoint the Prime Minister under the conditions established in Article 90.” Article 90 read “At the beginning of each legislature, or in case of resignation of the Government or vacancy in the office of Prime Minister for any other reason, the National Assembly, by a majority of its members, shall designate a Prime Minister from among its members or elsewhere within a period of seven days from the opening of the special session or from the date of the vacancy.” Article 90 thus made the president’s powers in Article 53 a formality. It was the National Assembly that chose the prime minister. The referendum altered these articles to afford the National Assembly the opportunity to choose three potential candidates, from among whom the president could select the prime minister. If the president did not like the choices offered he could refuse them and demand three more names. In addition, the president gained the power to dismiss the prime minister without new elections being necessary. As a result, Madagascar’s

democracy became one in which the president could exert a great deal of power not only over executive matters, but legislative matters as well.

This constitutional shift was the first of many efforts by Zafy to centralise authority in the hands of the president and create a unitary government, secure in his Antananarivo power base. These efforts caught up with him, however, when he was accused of corruption and of exceeding his constitutional powers. This was the official reason for his impeachment by the National Assembly in July 1996;<sup>4</sup> the High Constitutional Court ratified the impeachment on 5 September 1996.

In the event of the president relinquishing office, Article 52 of the constitution passes power to the president of the Senate but, constitutional provisions notwithstanding, no Senate had yet been created. Norbert Ratsirahonana, then prime minister and former president of the High Constitutional Court, therefore became acting president until elections could be held in December. Ratsirahonana ran for the presidency in his own right but his *Merina* ethnicity, lack of provincial appeal, and technocratic nature ensured his campaign would fail to draw popular support. Despite his impeachment, Zafy Albert was permitted to run again and the second round of elections was contested by Zafy and Ratsiraka once again. This time, Ratsiraka won.

Ratsiraka won for three reasons. First, Zafy was the only viable contender and had recently been impeached for corruption. Second, Zafy was seen as having presided over an economic downturn in the country. And, third, voters were largely ill-informed about substantive issues. The only four candidates of note for president

were former President Ratsiraka, acting President Norbert Ratsirahonana, former Industrial Promotion Minister Herizo Razafimahaleo, and former President Zafy. Ratsirahonana and Herizo (leader of the Fanilo party) had neither the stature nor recognised name to win the necessary votes outside of the capital and the regional capital of Fianarantsoa (also in the Central Highlands). In addition, ethnopolitics played a role in their downfall, as Norbert Ratsirahonana was from the despised *Merina* highlands of Antananarivo and Herizo Razafimahaleo was a Betsileo from Fianarantsoa. Their highest votes were in their home provinces, which afforded them 10.1 percent and 15.1 percent of the vote respectively. For his part, Zafy Albert, though from the northern province of Antsiranana, had long derived his base of support from the capital. His removal from power, the drama of which had played out in the capital, undermined his electability. In the end Ratsiraka won the first round with a less than convincing 36.6 percent, skewed heavily by the vote in his home province of Toamasina where he captured 59.6 percent

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of the vote. Thus it was a case of Zafy Albert losing the election rather than Ratsiraka winning it. Whereas in 1992 Zafy had secured 46 percent of the vote in Antananarivo province, in 1996 he secured less than 10 percent.

The dearth of informed voters meant that the political debates over the socialism of the Second Republic, the expansion of democracy, and the platforms of the candidates themselves, were immaterial. People who voted their conscience in the 1996 – 97 presidential election did so because they thought life had been better under the then former President Ratsiraka.

Following his presidential victory in 1997, Ratsiraka held his own constitutional referendum. Once again the constitutional issues were secondary as Ratsiraka promoted the idea that a “Yes” vote implied development and security. This 15 March 1998 referendum was close run: 51 percent voted “Yes”, 49 percent “No”. Broadly viewed as an extension of the 1996 – 97 Presidential elections, this was a significant victory for President Ratsiraka.

The constitutional changes resulting from the 1998 referendum<sup>5</sup> were far more sweeping than those in 1995. Presidential powers once again increased. Under Article 53 the president gained the power to name the prime minister without reference to the legislative provisions of Article 90. Furthermore, he acquired the power to name the other members of government without consulting the legislature. In terms of Article 54 he gained the power to name the Council of Ministers without consultation and to sign all Council decrees, though he could, should he so wish, delegate these powers to the prime minister.

The relationship between the Senate and the President also changed. Whereas senators originally held office for four years, their mandate now was increased to six. In the 1992 constitution, Article 77.1 stated that “Two-thirds of the Senate shall consist of an equal number of members elected in each electoral district by elected representatives of the territorial entities, and one-third shall consist of members representing economic, social, cultural, and religious groups appointed by the President of the Republic upon nomination by legally constituted organisations and groups.” In 1998 the specific wording changed so that the article read “The senate is comprised, in two tiers, of members elected in equal number in each autonomous province and for one tier, the members named by the President of the Republic, for reason of their particular competences in judicial, economic, social, and cultural matters.” In effect the specific number of seats that could be chosen by the president was now unclear.

Beyond these fundamental institutional relationships, the government accelerated a process of devolution by creating “autonomous provinces.” Articles 126 – 138 were added to the constitution to spell out in detail the role of the autonomous provincial leadership as

managers of Madagascar’s “new democracy”. What was left vague in a single Article (139) was the cooperation intended between the central authority and the provinces, which was left subject largely to presidential interpretation. The institutional vacuum left in Antananarivo allowed President Ratsiraka to expand his control. As regional government remained subservient to the national government in Ratsiraka’s form of decentralisation, and few constitutional guarantees existed to protect regional governments from encroachment from the centre, regional governors had little power to challenge the president’s augmented authority. In the aftermath of these constitutional amendments, the majority of provincial governors were drawn either from the president’s AREMA party or his close personal allies and even family members, so the question of actual regional authority remained relatively moot.

There was an important institutional ramification in the provincial base Ratsiraka established. The electoral code was revised in August 2000 to extend the 1998 constitutional amendments.<sup>6</sup> Under these new revisions an electoral college system was set up alongside the provincial councils, which became responsible for choosing the provincial leadership, including the governor, through an indirect electoral process. Madagascar held its first elections for councillors in December 2000. With virtually no public education campaign, few people other than those within certain communities targeted by the president turned out at the polls. Ratsiraka’s AREMA party won nearly 95 percent of the seats in an election, with a turnout of only 10 percent of registered voters.

The elections for the newly created Senate were held in March 2001. Under the new constitution and subsequent code, senators were voted in by the councils, not in direct elections. AREMA, despite its flagging popularity, won 49 of the 60 contested seats. Ratsiraka appointed the remaining 30, which resulted in him controlling 79 of the upper house’s 90 seats. In June 2001 new gubernatorial elections were held, again indirectly voted upon by the councils. AREMA won every province except Antananarivo, and Ratsiraka further strengthened his control over the newly “autonomous” provinces. That AREMA failed in Antananarivo province would become significant the following year.

### *The power of the president in the Third Republic*

By June 2001 Ratsiraka’s powers were extensive. While not the autocrat he had been during the Second Republic, nevertheless through institutional manipulation, including reforms to the constitution and electoral law, he could pass his agenda effortlessly through the legislature, ensure its leadership answered to him, and guide provincial efforts in managerial reform.

Beyond institutional changes, Ratsiraka used his presidential powers to establish a significant political network reminiscent of the Second Republic. Samuel Lahady was President of the Executive Committee of Toamasina when Ratsiraka took power in 1975. A close colleague of the president, he held a series of important posts, and although ousted by Zafy Albert in 1991, he returned in 2001 appointed by Ratsiraka as a senator and as Governor of Toamasina shortly thereafter. Other governors, including Governor Emilson of Fianarantsoa, Governor Jean-Robert Gara of Antsiranana, and Governor Jean de Dieu Benjamin Maharante of Toliara, had longstanding political and economic relationships with the president and his family members. Family members in the private sector benefited greatly as well: Elyse Ratsiraka became a board member of Galana in Toamasina, the country's largest refinery, a relationship that proved important following the December 2001 elections as President Ratsiraka strangled distribution of petroleum to the capital. Ratsiraka's daughter, Annick Ratsiraka, was charged with organising the Francophonie summit in Antananarivo in 1997, and was named to the administration council of Air Madagascar, presided over by Ratsiraka's close counselor Nirina Andriamanerasoa. The president's daughter Sophie, whose husband Mamy Ranaivo became Director General of the Society of Exploitation of Minerals, KRAOMA, became a powerful advocate for her father, sitting on the board of the Banque de Solidarite Malgache (BSM), Global Madagascar (telecommunications), and similar bodies, receiving significant funding for the creation of non-profit organisations in the name of AREMA. His son Xavier, a pilot, became Director General of the Society of Malagasy Air Navigation (Sonavam) at the age of 23. Roland Ratsiraka, his nephew, became Mayor of Toamasina, the president's native city. Daniele Ratsiraka, his niece, was appointed to the Malagasy embassy in Paris in 1999. These were merely some of the more obvious cases of presidential nepotism.

In the absence of any charismatic challenger, with the opposition deeply fractured, a neo-patrimonial network well entrenched, and such significant institutional control firmly established, by June 2001 Ratsiraka was unconcerned about the forthcoming December presidential elections. Then, suddenly, Marc Ravalomanana made his appearance on the scene. He was already the popular major of Antananarivo who had been in this post, his only political position, for less than two years. In early July 2001 there was open speculation within the *Merina* political community that Ravalomanana would oppose Ratsiraka. Yet Ravalomanana's campaign only came together in September – just three months before the election. Once it got under way, however, the great public distaste for Ratsiraka, the strong desire for a new populist leader, and Ravalomanana's

own personal wealth, meant that the latter could build a base even in the *côtier* provinces, despite his ethnic origins.

At this stage Ratsiraka took measures to assert firm control over the judiciary. Article 98 of the 1992 Constitution read: "The judicial power shall be independent of the executive and legislative powers. The Administrative and Financial Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court shall assure this independence." However, under the 1998 constitutional revision Article 98 begins: "The President of the Republic is guarantor of the independence of Justice," and goes on to granting the president the power to name and remove magistrates. Ratsiraka exercised this power on 22 November 2001 when he approved Decree N° 2001 – 1081. This law ratified the High Constitutional Court's appointment of Georges T. Indrianjafy as President of the High Constitutional Court (HCC) and Benjamin Rakotomandimby to the post of HCC justice. Indrianjafy was Ratsiraka's first Minister of Population and Social Conditions when he took power in 1975. He was a member of Ratsiraka's Conseil Supreme de la Revolution and one of the founders of the AREMA party in 1976. He had held various ministerial posts before Ratsiraka appointed him to the Court in 1991. Rakotomandimby was another close associate and sometime AREMA leader. *Indian Ocean Newsletter* noted at the time that "Intervening as it does right before the campaign for the presidential election of December 16 begins, the nomination of a former Ratsiraka minister to the head of the HCC illustrates the incumbent's determination to keep a sharp eye on the institution that will be in charge of validating the electoral results and of verifying cases of electoral fraud, should any arise."<sup>7</sup>

Ratsiraka further used his presidential power to introduce a significant amendment to the electoral law. On 3 September 2001, he announced that the elections would be held on 16 December 2001. While he went out of his way to state at the time that he would respect the constitution, he was immediately accused by civil society groups of "poor governance" for simultaneously announcing decrees to guide the electoral process. First, candidates had to confirm their candidature by 27 October. This announcement was accompanied by a significant, and unexpected, rise in the registration fee for candidates. Many independents and candidates of smaller parties were unable to raise the money that rapidly. Second, candidates were allowed to campaign only between 25 November and 15 December; this made it difficult for lesser-known contenders to get their voices heard. Third, the only news agencies allowed to cover the electoral process directly was comprised of journalists chosen by the president. And, fourth, no posters were allowed to be

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affixed to public buildings or structures and no political advertisements could be associated with purchasable goods. This last edict was directly aimed at the candidacy of Marc Ravalomanana. As founder of Tiko, the country's largest dairy products company, his greatest potential for increasing his recognition outside the capital was to employ the supply lines established by his company. Ravalomanana skirted this law through clever word play. He introduced his "Tiako i Madagasikara" campaign slogan ("Love Madagascar;" later the TIM party) parallel to his new Tiko slogan "Tia Tiko" with Madagasikara written under it. For his part, Ratsiraka blatantly violated his own regulations by giving a public address on election day warning of dire consequences should he lose.

**Table 1: Percentage of Votes Won by Candidate and Province (CNE Results in December 2001)**

Province	RAVALOMANANA Marc	RATSIRAKA Didier	RAZAFIMAHALEO Herizo J.	ZAFY Albert	RAJAKOBA Daniel	RAJAONARY Patrick R.
Antan-anarivio	63.41	30.35	2.39	1.34	1.22	1.29
Antsir-ananana	31.01	36.63	2.54	26.94	1.65	1.24
Fiana-rantsoa	40.97	42.76	7.44	4.60	2.12	2.12
Mahajanga	47.11	37.39	4.24	6.45	2.85	1.96
Toamasina	28.84	62.52	2.43	3.67	1.31	1.24
Toliara	31.37	47.27	10.18	6.25	2.93	2.00
Total	46.44	40.61	4.27	5.34	1.77	1.57

## THE CRISIS OF 2002

Marc Ravalomanana is a charismatic leader. His rapid rise from obscurity in the provinces between September 2001 and December 2001 was an indication that the population was yearning for change. In fact there was great frustration with Ratsiraka, who had won back the presidency due to his opponent's lack of popularity. Not long previously, Ravalomanana's role as a business tycoon would have made him apparently unable of understanding the common man, and his *Merina* ethnicity would have put him on the wrong side of the country's single largest divide in political culture. Yet, taking the stage when he did, the majority of the population appeared to look on his business success as a harbinger of what he could do for the country. His ethnicity was eclipsed by his sense of nationalism and his call for a united Malagasy people. Ratsiraka was unable to stave off the challenge from Ravalomanana, despite having spent his entire second presidency manipulating institutions and deepening his personal networks.

According to the official tally of the National Electoral Council (CNE) of the Ministry of the Interior, Ratsiraka won 40.6 percent of the vote to Marc Ravalomanana's 46.4 percent, with no other significant showings. Ravalomanana won every province except Ratsiraka's home province of Toamasina.

The balloting process was said to have gone off relatively well. Accusations of vote tampering, problems with national identity cards, and the like,

were reported. These were not, however, deemed serious enough to nullify the validity of the elections. On the other hand, the vote counting process was highly irregular. There was a parallel vote counting process. The official count saw Ravalomanana lead 53 percent to Ratsiraka's 36 percent on 18 December, with a precipitous drop to 47.52 percent to Ratsiraka's 4 point rise on 20 December. The Committee to Elect Marc Ravalomanana (KMMR — Komity Manohana an'i Marc Ravalomanana) reported on 20 December, with two-thirds of the vote counted, that its candidate was leading with 54.95 percent to Ratsiraka's 34.98 percent. The National Electoral Committee, under heavy pressure from President Ratsiraka, halted the parallel voting process and closed the vote counting to public scrutiny. It completed the count itself behind closed doors. By the final vote count there was a 5.6 percentage point spread between the CNE's count and that of the KMMR. A civil society group, the Consortium of Election Observers (CNOE) had been conducting its own count and came to a tally between the two, giving Marc Ravalomanana's 50.5 percent to Ratsiraka's 37.7.

**Table 2: Percentage of Vote Total Compared: CNE, CNOE, and KMMR**

	CNE	CNOE	KMMR
Didier Ratsiraka	40.4	37.7	35.7
Marc Ravalomanana	46.6	50.5	52.2

The margin of victory was crucial. Under Article 47 of the constitution the president had to win a simple majority to avoid a run-off election. By the CNE count there would be a second round of elections. Under the CNOE and KMMR counts Ravalomanana was the victor in the first round. A maelstrom of accusations from all sides followed immediately. The sudden change in the official vote count between 18 and 20 December, noted by neither the CNOE nor the KMMR, and the opacity of the official vote count that followed, provided little reassurance that the Ministry of the Interior was acting independently of President Ratsiraka. Yet the lack of access by the other bodies to the final third of the ballot counting exercise was hardly calculated to inspire confidence. Ratsiraka lost the plurality but won the battle for the high ground, as he turned, in his New Year's declaration, to accept the results:

Dear Malagasy people, the 16 December 2001 presidential election has now been completed, so I wish to make a strong appeal to all of us, on the occasion of the New Year, to accept any election results published by the High Constitutional Court (HCC) which is the only constitutionally-recognised institution empowered to proclaim official election results.<sup>8</sup>

This choice of words was more important than it might have at first seemed. Ratsiraka knew, following the changes to the HCC he had made in November, that he could count on the support of the HCC. He was right; it was indeed the responsibility of the HCC to determine the final vote count and ratify the elections. Ravalomanana could do nothing more than demand a fair recount by the HCC. That Ratsiraka could depend on an HCC predisposed in his favour was not challengeable, as it had been within his constitutional prerogative to change the makeup of the court in the previous November. In this sense, any electoral tampering had happened not at the ballot box or the vote count, but in the constitutional amendments of 1998 and the modification of the electoral code that followed.

The HCC sequestered itself in the small town of Mantasoa while it deliberated. There was no public scrutiny of the discussion. On 16 January 2002 it made its ruling, which was an unabashedly partisan determination in favour of the incumbent. The HCC called for a recount of the vote, but rather than undertake this itself, it insisted that the CNE conduct the recount, from the beginning, behind closed doors, without oversight from the Court, the CNOE, or representatives from either leading candidate. Ravalomanana expressed his immediate concern about the Court, stating: "The HCC has responded to our demand, but it is not enough. We want it to do the comparisons itself and not to give the job to the CNE, which is not entitled to do it... and which is not credible." Yet the HCC ruling stood.

The timing of the HCC ruling was important. On 5 January 2002 supporters of Marc Ravalomanana began to express their outrage publically; ten thousand of them took to the streets of Antananarivo to demand a recount that would confirm Ravalomanana's victory in the first round. Ravalomanana himself fanned the flames by appearing at the rally to shout "We will defend the sovereign choice of the people up to the end."<sup>9</sup> He also used the occasion to warn the HCC that he would accept only its comparison of the voter returns. Within days, demonstrators on the streets numbered well over 100 000. Tempers flared as several people were injured and a car was set ablaze. Ratsiraka, confident in his position with the HCC, continued to

take the "high ground" stating that he would accept whatever decision the Court made.

The international community's reactions served to further cloud the issue. On 8 January the European Union, the United States, Japan, and Switzerland released a joint statement: "'Persuaded that the agitation comes from the suspicion that hangs over the counting of the popular vote's results', they called on the 'country's public authorities and all the parties of the electoral process' to defuse the current political crisis by working for 'a common interpretation of the results, notably on the basis of elements gathered by observers accredited to the CNE.'"<sup>10</sup> As the United States was an unabashed supporter of Ravalomanana, this was a confusing statement. On 15 January US President George W Bush released a statement that read, in part:

Candidates, political parties, election monitors and especially the electorate should have trust and confidence that the election results will be according to the law, reflecting the true will of the voters and genuine progress to democracy. The USA wishes that the HCC High Constitutional Court announce the election results quickly.

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU, now African Union) concurrently released a similar statement:

We wish to highlight the fact that the OAU is calling on the Malagasy people and all those involved in the current presidential election to remain completely calm and respect law and order, so as to enable the relevant institution – that is the HCC – to perform its duty with total peace of mind and in line with the constitution governing the nation-state in Madagascar

A cacophony of international voices supported this institutional position but apparently ignored the character of the institution itself. In consequence, when the HCC verdict was released the following day, the US, OAU and other international powers could do little but support a suspect ruling.

President Ratsiraka latched onto President Bush's statement, using it as support for his own institutional position, while Ravalomanana could do little but resort to his power base. He called the masses on to the streets on 17 January with a statement that "As long as the HCC does not make any effort to check the return sheets, we would go all the way with our protests" and, as Ratsiraka called for second elections by the end of the month, Ravalomanana responded that "it's not up to me to boycott the second round, but it's up to the whole nation to reject it." The numbers of protestors on the streets of Antananarivo grew rapidly,

Ratsiraka knew, following the changes to the HCC he had made in November, that he could count on the support of the HCC. He was right; it was indeed the responsibility of the HCC to determine the final vote count and ratify the elections.

and similar protests began in the regional capitals of Fianarantsoa and Mahajanga. In addition to his appeal to the people, Ravalomanana petitioned the HCC to disqualify Ratsiraka's candidature on the grounds that he had violated electoral law by canvassing outside of given dates, and using state vehicles, buildings, and civil servants for his campaign. All of these accusations were true, though it is unclear whether they reflected the commission of a crime severe enough to warrant disqualification. In any event, there was no opportunity to test this conclusion, as the HCC dismissed the petition out of hand.

On 25 January the HCC announced its support for the recount undertaken by the CNE; this gave Ravalomanana 46.11 percent of the vote and Ratsiraka 40.89 percent (a marginally higher percentage for Ratsiraka than the first count). It then declared that a second round of voting would take place thirty days hence. Not surprisingly, Ravalomanana rejected both this count and the idea of a second round of elections.

The next day, 26 January, was a Friday. Over the weekend Ravalomanana called for an unlimited general strike, to begin on Monday, 28 January. The popular response was unprecedented in Madagascar's independence period. The official figures released by Ratsiraka's government put the number of people in the streets of the capital at about half a million, while strike organisers said they exceeded one million. More critical than the numbers was the fact that those who were in the streets represented a cross-section of society: different ethnic groups, classes, professions, and, within Merina society, castes. It was a virulent though organised, even festive, social movement that brought the financial centre of Antananarivo, as well as Fianarantsoa and Mahajanga, to a halt. The government and the economy were paralysed; banks, roads, and the airport were closed.

Ratsiraka spent the following week calling for preparations for the second round of elections. Every day at noon, Ravalomanana made a speech to his supporters in Antananarivo's Place 13 Mai, at the same time calling for a presidential dialogue and reiterating that he would not stand in a second round of elections until the first round was properly counted. In early February he spelled out the conditions under which he would accept a second round of elections: there had to be international observers (barred by Ratsiraka in the first round); the CNE would have to be broadened to include groups other than government functionaries; there had to be an assurance that protestors would not be penalised; and there had to be a change in the process of scrutinising the ballots (effectively marginalising the High Constitutional Court). His demands were ignored rather than rejected by the prime minister's office and the Ratsiraka administration.

Ravalomanana had now exhausted his constitutional options. With the ruling of the HCC, the final word on the vote count, legally he had to accept a second round of elections. The ethical quandary was clear: if a challenger is faced with a highly flawed electoral process and a dearth of constitutional options for rectifying the outcome, does that give him license to undertake extra-constitutional measures in the name of a more democratic end?<sup>11</sup> Ravalomanana quickly decided that he was justified. In his view, his actions were not extra-constitutional, because the highest constitutional authority, the HCC, was acting on behalf of one of the parties involved, not performing a neutral function. As a good populist, he argued that democracy should reflect the will of the people, and the will of the people was for him to take office. A second round of elections would merely provide an opportunity for electoral manipulation. On 22 February 2002 Marc Ravalomanana declared himself president.

This action immediately fanned the flames of crisis at home and created a quandary for the international community. Almost unanimously, the international community chose to regard this dangerous and destabilising move as undermining the constitutional process. Even the United States and Germany, which particularly feared a Ratsiraka victory, could not condone this action and tried to convince Ravalomanana to recant. The formal statement by the US Embassy declared:

...the United States government objects to the action taken by the leading opposition candidate, Marc Ravalomanana, to declare himself president. The United States urges Mr Ravalomanana and all parties to consider carefully the repercussions that extra-legal and or violent actions could have in Madagascar in future and its relationships with the international community.<sup>12</sup>

France and the OAU took the strongest stands against Ravalomanana's declaration. The Secretary General of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), Amara Essy, stated:

I made it clear to Ravalomanana's supporters that if their candidate was inaugurated contrary to constitutional provisions, the OAU would neither tolerate nor accept that unconstitutional change of Government, by virtue of the Algiers Decision of July 1999 and the Lomé Declaration of July 2000. I therefore encouraged him to accept the second round to confirm the choice of voters.

Ravalomanana countered that Ratsiraka was merely using the time to mobilise his cronies to ensure that a proper second round could not be successful. Further OAU efforts to ameliorate the crisis proved futile.

For his part, Ratsiraka seized upon Ravalomanana's extreme actions as an opportunity to further centralise his power. Article 59 of the Malagasy constitution



states that the President may declare Martial Law, effectively wresting power from both the provinces and the other branches of government with the “agreement of the Presidents of the National Assembly, the Senate, and the Constitutional Court.” Having such strong institutional backing and given the ill-considered actions of Ravalomanana, Ratsiraka declared a State of Emergency that same day, which only served to further incite the protestors. The festive climate of the support for Ravalomanana began to change as the stakes were raised. Though Ravalomanana’s vocal supporters diminished in number, they became more strident and violent. Within a week, injuries resulted as protestors used rocks and sticks to try to suppress their rivals.

Ravalomanana, backed by this intensity of support, resorted to another strategy: calling for a referendum. Rather than a second round of elections, he argued there should be a popular referendum on the validity of his victory. Meanwhile, he continued forming a government as the new “president.” He asked his “prime minister,” Jacques Sylla, to form a cabinet. He also galvanised the support of one of the country’s largest civil society organisations, the Protestant FJKM (Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar).

Ratsiraka declared Martial Law on 28 February 2002, without institutional challenge. Effectively, General Leon Claude Raveloarison became governor of Antananarivo. This afforded Ratsiraka the constitutional power to suspend the right of protest, employ strong-arm military tactics, and attempt to control the press. That he used these new powers more to further his political claims and avoid transparent vote-counting was immaterial to his legal status; it was a case of upholding the constitutional process while subverting the intent of constitutional Article 59. If the subversion of intent outweighed the overtly extra-constitutional measures of Marc Ravalomanana, then the answer to the question as to whether Ravalomanana’s actions were justified is in the affirmative.

What was critical was that Ravalomanana did not only openly defy the declaration of Martial Law, he ignored it altogether. He swore in his new cabinet, the members of which took up their posts within the week. In a particularly unusual event, the new ministers approached their respective government offices with tens of thousands of supporters behind them. General Raveloarison had given the order for the military to “defend” the ministries, but that would have meant firing on the large number of unarmed Ravalomanana supporters. In the event, the soldiers stood back and the new ministers took over without bloodshed.

With hindsight, the justification for Ravalomanana’s

actions must be measured against the consequences, in that they brought out the sort of instability the US, France, OAU, and others had feared – the country was split in two. The pro-Ratsiraka governors of the five provinces (Mahajanga, Toamasina, Toliara, Fianarantsoa and Antsiranana) declared on 4 March that they were autonomous of Antananarivo. They established a “capital” of the autonomous provinces in Ratsiraka’s home town of Toamasina. Part of the army, led by Ravalomanana’s new “defense minister” Major-General Mamizara Jules, ignored this declaration, while pro-Ratsiraka forces were decentralised and told to obey only their immediate officers, not the central command. Ratsiraka’s support for this change of capital was, perhaps, a tactical error. It was his first significant violation of the constitution, which clearly afforded only Antananarivo the status of capital city, with no provision for any alternative. The resulting state of affairs was becoming increasingly dangerous and unstable.

International efforts to stave off a complete Balkanisation of the country were stepped up. Cape Verdian President Antonio Mascarenhas Monteiro led an OAU negotiation team to Antananarivo on 5 March. This group quickly concluded that there were effectively two rival governments operating in rival capitals. French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin personally called on both sides to compromise; United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan effectively labelled Ravalomanana’s actions a coup and supported cries for a compromise that would lead the country back to the ballot box. Yet, even as the official representatives of the international community condemned Ratsiraka, expatriate enthusiasm was apparent. Americans living in Antananarivo wrote a collective letter

challenging the US position, and their government for its inaction early in the conflict. Rallies in Réunion accused the French government of supporting Ratsiraka for reasons of personal gain. The Paris-based Malagasy Council of Environment and Development, the largest Malagasy expatriate organisation, signed a petition condemning the French government and the international community in general for acting legalistically to the point of frustrating democratic will.

March saw a further increase in conflict. The KMMR targeted Samuel Lahady’s position as Toamasina’s governor. As Ratsiraka fled to Toamasina to consolidate his defences, the five self-proclaimed autonomous provinces cut off Antananarivo from the key ports and supplies; oil and food in particular became scarce in the capital. Ratsiraka initiated a campaign of violence in which his supporters would threaten and, in some cases, kill *Merina* merchants on the coast. In a sign that ethnicity was becoming the plaything of political entrepreneurs, Ratsiraka incited his supporters to

Ravalomanana, backed by this intensity of support, resorted to another strategy: calling for a referendum. Rather than a second round of elections, he argued there should be a popular referendum on the validity of his victory.

pretend to be *Merina* and threaten *côtier* groups in the hopes of raising the accusation that Ravalomanana was playing at ethnopolitics.<sup>13</sup> Ravalomanana's acting "Prime Minister," Jacques Sylla, responded, saying "We do not accept any terrorist act committed in our territory." So began the reclassification of Ratsiraka's support movement. Meanwhile, in Antananarivo, protestors clashed even where armies did not, killing more than half a dozen people and injuring another 40 by the end of the month. General Raveloarison, unable to maintain security, persuade his troops to clamp down on protestors, or restore order, resigned his post as governor of Antananarivo a month after assuming the position. The International Monetary Fund left the country, joining the majority of bilateral donors. Discussions began about whether civil war was inevitable.

April did not see civil war, but there was escalation in conflict as the once neutral military continued to fracture between the camps of the presidential rivals. Antananarivo was further isolated, as bridges from the coast to the landlocked capital were blown up, ensuring no private operators could bring in supplies of any kind. The Antananarivo homes of some of Ratsiraka's ministers, who had already fled the capital, were burned down.

A number of international attempts were made to seek a resolution of the conflict. The most important of these was by a high-powered OAU-sponsored delegation comprising Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade, President Gbagbo from Côte d'Ivoire, President Kérékou from Benin and President Chissano of Mozambique; this brought the two rivals to Dakar.

The result was the Dakar Agreement of 18 April 2002, the five articles of which were a reflection of how much ground Ratsiraka had already lost. The Agreement was a compromise in which Ratsiraka agreed to another recount, and a popular referendum in the event of there being no clear victor from the first round of elections. Should this happen, a transitional government would be established and an Independent Electoral Commission would replace the National Electoral Commission. Unfortunately, the timing of the Agreement was unpropitious, as on 16 April 2002 the Administrative Chamber of the Supreme Court overturned the 25 January 2002 ruling of the High Constitutional Court which had mandated a second round of elections. The same Chamber also annulled decree No.2001-1080 of 22 November 2001, which had stacked the High Constitutional Court in Ratsiraka's favour, and called for another recount of its own.

Ratsiraka interpreted the Chamber's actions as a personal affront on the part of vacillating justices. In a sense the Chamber's judgement was probably not too radical a legal interpretation, as the sudden shift of judicial favour seemed to follow the trend towards a Ravalomanana victory. Ratsiraka distanced himself

from the Dakar Agreement before his plane even touched down on his return to Madagascar. On 29 April 2002 the newly constituted High Constitutional Court announced the results of its recount: Ravalomanana 51.46 percent, Ratsiraka 35.90 percent. Ratsiraka reacted:

three of its nine members, including the president, did not sit in the deliberations and four of the six others who effectively participated in what is referred to as a vote-counting exercise, are in fact close to the Marc Ravalomanana camp.

He therefore refused to accept the results, and the violence escalated further. The Court ruling did, however, give the international community a way out of its impasse. All but the OAU ignored the political wrangling over the Court's composition in favour of a recognisable confluence between institutional design (following the ruling of the HCC as mandated by the constitution) and a seemingly irresistible social movement. Ravalomanana was re-inaugurated president on 6 May, this time in front of the Court and the representatives of the international community. In his inaugural address Ravalomanana called for victory and reconciliation even while he assumed a tone of intense nationalism:

...I call on the former president Didier Ratsiraka to help restore these Malagasy values, so that we can move forward hand in hand to develop this country. Indeed we are all sons and daughters of Madagascar...I do wish to make an appeal so that all the pages are turned so that the country can develop rapidly, so that the masses stop suffering ... I especially call on you, the armed forces, to now assume your responsibilities. Time for hesitation has now gone ... You have now seen that justice, truth and legality emerged as a result of our efforts...<sup>14</sup>

In May the situation continued to deteriorate alarmingly, even as Ravalomanana emerged as the clear political and military victor. He gained some level of control of four of the five provinces that had previously sided with Ratsiraka, which left only Toamasina, under Samuel Lahady's leadership, a desperate and untenable measure.

The OAU continued to break ranks with the rest of the international community and rejected Ravalomanana's investiture. It continued shuttle diplomacy throughout the month even as the erstwhile street violence turned into military conflict. A second meeting was held in Dakar on 8 and 9 June. This time Ravalomanana was in a much more favourable position and made sure all in attendance knew it. The Second Dakar Agreement (Dakar II) had committed both sides to move towards early legislative elections as a sort of proxy vote. If Ravalomanana's supporters were to win a parliamentary majority, then Ratsiraka would recognise the presidency of Ravalomanana; if

Ratsiraka's supporters were to win the legislative majority then Ravalomanana would agree to a presidential referendum.<sup>15</sup>

From the perspective of enhancing democracy and seeking the expression of popular will, this Agreement was, in comparison with Dakar I, a poor document. Not only did it undermine the Malagasy constitution, it belittled the importance of the separation of powers contained therein. Its success would be predicated on the population voting in the same pattern for a legislator as for the president, a curious assumption. It proved immaterial as the Dakar II Agreement was no more successful than Dakar I.

As the conflict continued, Ratsiraka lost further ground. He maintained gubernatorial support outside of Antananarivo, but, with the exception of Toamasina, commanded a diminishing popular following. By mid-June Ravalomanana's security forces had taken control of all key towns including Toamasina. Ratsiraka fled for France on 15 June 2002. In the eyes of virtually every Malagasy and all the major foreign powers Ravalomanana was now president of Madagascar; only the OAU refused to accept his victory until the legislative elections in December placed the TIM in power.<sup>16</sup> Ravalomanana and the TIM inherited a country divided by the conflict and suffering as a result of the economic devastation brought about by six months without significant trade and by international corporate flight.

## THE MALAGASY MACRO-POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT SINCE THE POLITICAL CRISIS OF 2002

### *Marc Ravalomanana: Background*

Marc Ravalomanana is a self-made millionaire, a capitalist, a nationalist, and *Merina* (Ambaniandro). He was born 12 December 1949 in Imerinkasinina (Centre). Imerinkasinina was an established *IMerina* centre even before the rise of Antananarivo and the centralisation of *IMerina* under King Andrianimpoinimerina in the 1790s. Thus, when Ravalomanana decided to declare his candidacy for president from his native town, many construed it to be a statement about where his sympathies lie. In a country where the strongest ethnic divide has been between *Merina* and *côtier* it was a bold choice of venue for so important an announcement. It did, however, help to galvanise his political base.

Ravalomanana was born to an ethnic advantage, but to fairly humble roots. He convinced the Danish ambassador to underwrite his studies in Denmark and then returned home to take over the family dairy. In 1982, at 33 years old, he successfully obtained the

assistance of the World Bank to launch a new enterprise: Tiko. Tiko is now the primary Malagasy dairy company and a leader in the agribusiness sector. Ravalomanana claims that Tiko provides 3 000 regular jobs and collateral employment for 100 000 people in Madagascar. Though *Africa Intelligence* claims that the number of primary employees is closer to 1 000, the company's importance to the Malagasy economy and its reflection of Ravalomanana's strong business leadership skills have been unassailable.

The popular joke is that Ravalomanana decided to enter politics in 1999 by running for mayor of Antananarivo because there was too much red tape for him to conduct his business unfettered. His stated reason was that "People are ready for big change. But the barrier is the old system, the old politics." The change he referred to was the need to address corruption, mismanagement, unmotivated and underpaid municipal employees, crime, and pollution in Antananarivo. His success in Antananarivo led to his decision to run for president. In his supporters' view, "over the past two years, his result-oriented style of governance has given Antananarivo a dramatically needed face lifting. One prowess to be credited to the new mayor's team in their ongoing efforts to clean the capital off its garbage-strewn streets and implementation of an efficient system to collect the city most unsightly, disease-prone refuse."<sup>17</sup> Much of the city's population seemed to agree with this. As one man in Antananarivo put it (September 2001):

"I will vote for Marc Ravalomanana. I see that he has been a very competent person as mayor of Tana....He has done a good job with Tana and his a good politician too."<sup>18</sup>

Given that, according to the 29 April 2002 High Constitutional Court ruling, Ravalomanana won 71 percent of the vote in Antananarivo Province, it appears this view was widely representative.

Marc Ravalomanana is a practising Christian, and his spiritual life has had a strong influence on both his private and public sector success. All Tiko employees are required to go to church, though not necessarily the Protestant church of Ravalomanana's own faith. As he was Vice President of Madagascar's most important religious association, the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM), he won support for his candidacy for both Mayor of Antananarivo and President of Madagascar from the important church sector of Malagasy civil society. As president, Ravalomanana has increased the stature of the FJKM and specific Christian leaders, and has encouraged the proliferation of Christianity in Madagascar, even as he has faced more organised challenges from the church for his inability to confront economic problems.

Ravalomanana and the TIM inherited a country divided by the conflict and suffering as a result of the economic devastation brought about by six months without significant trade and by international corporate flight.

## *Nationalism and internationalism*

Ravalomanana is first and foremost a businessman. He is an economic liberal who got his start with the assistance of the World Bank, and he is a great supporter of US-style business-first policies in Madagascar. While he does not stand to benefit directly from Madagascar's access to US markets under the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA), he has been vocal about his support for this Act, and the market opportunities it creates. This is a far cry from Ratsiraka's "socialist" path or even the import substitution and protectionist policies that followed his change of direction. In this sense, Ravalomanana is an internationalist – even a globalist.

Ravalomanana is also a nationalist. He is not a protectionist, but has shown a propensity to protect those goods that are readily available from Malagasy manufacturers.<sup>19</sup> There is a close correlation between Ravalomanana's "internationalism" as a businessman, his "nationalism," and his political strategy. A note about Tiko distribution exemplifies this. Starting in mid-2001 Ravalomanana used Tiko distribution channels to enhance his political presence in the countryside and used the network of Tiko employees to help run his campaign. At the time of the 2001 election Tiko had 14 stores in the country. There is a large distribution centre in the Antananarivo quarter of Akoronrano, strategically opened next to the original location of Madagascar's premier supermarket, Géant Score. Yet, while Géant Score is owned by a Réunionnais concern (Sucreries de Bourbon), Tiko is decidedly Malagasy. Management is Malagasy and product inputs are Malagasy. As its distribution has increased throughout the island, so inputs have come from diverse parts of the island.

The expansion of Tiko's interests, and use of goods from, across the country, are consistent with Ravalomanana's own brand of nationalism. Many Tiko products are inscribed with "Vita Malagasy" (Made in Madagascar). He himself has said that this is to "counterbalance the undesirable influences brought by foreigners." This nationalistic sentiment manifested itself in his campaign slogan for mayor of Antananarivo: "Tiako Iarivo" (I love Antananarivo), and his campaign for the presidency, "Tiako-i-Madagasikara" (I love Madagascar).

All of this would seem to contradict those who seek to depict Ravalomanana as essentially Francophobic. He is a believer in global capitalist norms, supporting the continuation of a strong economic relationship with France not for reasons of patronage (as in the First Republic), but because France is the island's largest trading partner. The support he received from the US and Germany in 2002 served only to further his desire to take advantage of broader market opportunities. This is an important distinction. There are those who saw Ravalomanana's presidential victory as a victory

for the US in the waning years of the Franco-American contest for influence in Africa. Clearly this was a concern in Paris as the French Foreign Minister, Dominique de Villepin, visited Ravalomanana in Madagascar in June 2002. Significantly, he met with Marc Ravalomanana, Prime Minister Jacques Sylla, and Marcel Ranjeva, Ravalomanana's Minister of Foreign Affairs, a meeting that led to the signing of five financial conventions focusing on increased trade relations and French aid to Malagasy recovery.

Looking towards Ravalomanana's own actions, this view that Madagascar has chosen the US in preference to France is equally untenable. Ravalomanana may speak English with reasonable proficiency, but this does not imply that his gaze is fixed across the Atlantic. He has been working to link Madagascar more firmly into the global economic system while maintaining the country's distinct character. Using business linkages as an engine for growth has been at the core of his strategy.

## *Ravalomanana and the legislature*

Ravalomanana came into power with a pressing domestic problem. The National Assembly, the Senate, and five of the six provinces were controlled by Ratsiraka's AREMA party. He had mooted political reconciliation, but immediately after the resolution of the presidential drama this was impossible. AREMA leaders who remained in power had been abandoned by their leader. Ravalomanana had to deal with each institution separately.

According to Article 77 (modified by decree No. 2001-007 of January 2001) of the constitution, Ravalomanana could not dissolve the Senate, but he could, and did, replace the 30 senators appointed by President Ratsiraka. This left him far short of control of the Senate, however. Following the constitutional changes of 1998, the president enjoyed the right to dissolve the National Assembly; Ravalomanana used his authority to bring forward the scheduled elections to December 2002.

This proved a good strategy. Ravalomanana's TIM support network quickly became the TIM party and won 102 of the 160 available seats. The closely associated *Firaisankinam-Pirenena* coalition of moderate political parties won another 22 seats and non-partisans, mostly supportive of the president, won another 22 seats. AREMA won only 3 seats and its ally Leader Fanilo 2. The usual voter apathy of legislative elections proved something of the past, a turnout of 67.9 percent exceeded that of the 2001 presidential elections. This victory provided three things to Ravalomanana: it helped him remove the vestiges of AREMA power; it helped him gain essential legislative support for his programme; and it provided the victory necessary for the African Union to join the rest of the world in recognising his presidential victory.<sup>20</sup>

## Ravalomanana: Beyond neopatrimonialism?

As Bratton and Van de Walle note:

...contemporary political changes are conditioned by mechanisms of rule embedded in the *ancien régime*. Authoritarian leaders in power for long periods of time establish rules about who may participate in public decisions and the amount of political competition allowed. Taken together, these rules constitute a political regime. Regime type in turn influences both the likelihood an opposition challenge will arise and the flexibility with which incumbents can respond. It also determines whether elites and masses can arrive at new rules of political interaction through negotiation, accommodation, and election, that is whether any transition will be democratic.<sup>21</sup>

Clearly, it was Ratsiraka who shaped the nature of political competition during the Second Republic and his period of “democratic” revival. Popular antipathy to him ensured that accommodation of the *ancien régime* would ultimately fail and negotiation proved impossible. The question at hand is whether the rise of Ravalomanana, and the subsequent social movement were sufficient to constitute a break with the *ancien régime* and to bring about democratic transition, or if the right to rule is afforded Ravalomanana as person, rather than by virtue of his occupation of the presidential office, and whether his power is derived from favours to his supporters and his accumulated wealth, or from the bureaucratic and administrative systems in place.

At first sight, it would appear that Ravalomanana has not been in politics long enough to muster such lines of personal power. The close relationship between Tiako-i-Madagasikara and Tiko, however, belies such a claim. Numerous members of Ravalomanana’s inner circle come from Tiko. Most notably, Guy Rajemison Rakotomaharo was Tiko’s CEO’s advisor from 1996 to 1999, followed Ravalomanana to City Hall, became his presidential campaign manager, and, ultimately, was appointed as President of the Senate in July 2002. Narisoa Rajaonarivony, was formerly a marketing director at Tiko, briefly became Vice Prime Minister, before being made Ambassador to the US. Secretary of State for Commerce, Eric Beantanana worked for Tiko, and then for Ravalomanana’s mayoral campaign, before becoming Minister for Information, Culture and Communication. In April 2003 Razoharimihaja Solofontanaina, Tiko officer in charge of protocol and administration (and an executive member of the FJKM alongside Ravalomanana), was named the TIM’s National President. The Chairman of Air Madagascar, Heriniaina Razafimahefa, the chairman of JIRAMA (electricity and water parastatal), Patrick Ramiaramanana, and the Chairman of Secren (boat construction contractor), General Andrianafidisoa, were Tiko bosses. Magro, a Tiko subsidiary, serves as

TIM party headquarters in Fianarantsoa and other provinces and the presidential security detail is charged with protecting Magro officers for their role in sponsoring the TIM. Tiko was the primary mechanism for Ravalomanana to get his message to Madagascar’s remote rural population. Indeed, his campaign was complemented by a plethora of free Tiko T-shirts and hats, as well as a reduction in the price of milk products shortly before the election.

Now that he is president, Ravalomanana freely mixes state politics and business in a manner that has some labelling him a corporatist. The presidential airplane is registered under Tiko’s name. Asa Lalana Malagasy, a Tiko sub-corporation, has become the *de facto* public roads company. The largest media outlet, Madagascar Broadcasting System (MBS), does not suffer from executive over-reach. Ravalomanana owns the company, and his daughter Sara runs it. Tiko has expanded dramatically in the two years of its founder’s presidency, creating new alliances with German and American companies. It has part ownership of Phoenix, which took over the state oil company on its privatisation, and is considering starting a Tiko Petroleum company. Tiko also bought SINPA, the state agricultural corporation, and SOMACODIS, the Malagasy trading corporation, when they privatised in 2003. There was no invitation to tender in either case.

There were other reasons to be concerned about Ravalomanana when he assumed office. There have been accusations of corporate malfeasance: specifically, that Tiko had failed to repay debts. Ravalomanana himself was the target of lawsuits for expulsions and expropriations, contract violations, among other matters. The accusations against Tiko have continued, mostly resulting in legal settlements. Ravalomanana however, has remained above the fray.

Another challenge to Ravalomanana from the outset was based not on his corporate holdings but rather his allegiance to a corporate class. Since de Tocqueville, scholars have asserted that the growth of democracy is dependent upon a strong, energetic middle class. In Madagascar, the closest thing to a middle class is the business elite from which Ravalomanana emerged. This new business elite is a strong and important constituency in the capital. However, it has a reputation for excluding Madagascar’s poor rural majority while it creates new wealth for itself. This may be an acceptable practice in the private sector, but as Ravalomanana has imported this model into the public sphere he has come under significant, and deserved, scrutiny. Ravalomanana has clearly proven himself to be Ratsiraka’s moral superior. He has gone beyond enriching himself to undertake roads and other macro-level development projects with such fervour as to make a mockery of the memory of Ratsiraka. In this sense he has brought improvement for the people. Yet doing this while placating the business class, blurring political and corporate lines, and

buoying his own fortunes provides little assurance the Madagascar has eschewed its neo-patrimonial past.

### *Changes in presidential power*

Ravalomanana's constitutional powers in relation to the Senate are clearly delineated and very favourable to him. He has the right to appoint (or dismiss) 30 senators of his choosing. On 23 July 2002 he did just that. However, this left him and his TIM with a one-third minority while Ratsiraka's AREMA still held 48 seats. As the remaining senators are elected indirectly, local elections must precede senatorial elections. While local elections took place in November 2003, senatorial elections, had not been undertaken at time of writing. This means that AREMA still commands a majority in the Senate; rather than making AREMA an effective opposition party, however, effectively this has marginalised the Senate.

Local elections were divided – rural elections were held on 9 November 2003 and urban elections on 23 November 2003. Complaints about the efficacy of the rural elections led to a nullification of results in 20 constituencies, mostly in the extreme south,<sup>22</sup> and there were further challenges in Andoharanofotsy, rural Antananarivo province. Further electoral complaints led to a recount and a disputed result in Mahajanga province, where the TIM did not fare as well as it had hoped. Voter turnout was not accurately measured outside the capital, but even by the most optimistic estimates it did not exceed 25 percent of registered voters. Complaints about the registration process further marred the process and reduced the percentage of adults who went to the polls. The TIM party won 66 percent of the commune-level rural vote. The TIM won the mayoral office of all major urban centres except Toamasina (where Ratsiraka's nephew retained his position). In Mahajanga, however, the PFDM won more councillors' seats, though many resigned within days, claiming they were unable to work with the TIM.

In November 2002 Ravalomanana presented the HCC an interesting challenge as he began to issue executive orders, by-passing the AREMA-controlled National Assembly. One of these orders was to provide tariff exemption from a long list of imported goods; these included cement, fertilisers, paper, fibres, iron, steel, sheet metal, construction materials and agricultural machinery. The importance of this was not whether it was the best fiscal measure for a country trying to rebuild while in dire economic straits, but that the HCC permitted a sweeping tax reform by executive order without action by the National Assembly and without direct reference to the provinces. Throughout 2003 Ravalomanana encountered a compliant HCC. His plan for rounding up and trying perpetrators of the conflict exclusively from Ratsiraka's side was upheld and the lion's share of constitutional challenges to what were sometimes

questionable legal arrest and detainment processes were dismissed. Most notably, former Prime Minister Tantely Andrianarivo said that he could not be tried under the existing court system because he was not prime minister at the time he allegedly committed offenses in 2002. If it was argued and found that he had been prime minister then he would have to be tried by the High Court of Justice, a body that had yet to be created. The HCC allowed the trial to go forward in the normal court process. Though proceedings were supposed to go ahead in July, they were postponed and Tantely was held without bail. In November the prosecution introduced another charge, embezzlement. The defence went back to the HCC to argue that it was a violation of Article 305 of the penal code to introduce late evidence and that, therefore, all charges should be dropped. Despite the apparent technical error on the part of the prosecution, the HCC allowed both the continuation of the trial and the introduction of the new charge. This turned out to be significant as Tantely was convicted the following month on only two of the seven charges against him: embezzlement and usurpation of power. He was sentenced, harshly, to twelve years hard labour. The HCC ruling set another precedent as the prosecution successfully convinced the lower courts that Ratsiraka could be tried in normal courts as he was no longer president when he committed his crimes.<sup>23</sup>

The Supreme Court proved equally supportive of Ravalomanana's programme. A notable example came in February 2003 when France Telecom sued the Malagasy government for allowing Hong Kong based Distacom to take over Telma Telecom Malagasy, despite French investment in the latter. Madagascar's privatisation code is clear on the matter and by no stretch of the imagination could France Telecom be denied its rights. The administrative chamber of the Supreme Court, however, ruled that it was in the "higher interests of the state" to allow the sale to Distacom. The Supreme Court also hastened to ratify the 2003 local elections without investigation, despite allegations of malfeasance.<sup>24</sup> To date, there have been no significant court challenges to Ravalomanana's efforts at any level. This includes challenges to Tiko's benefiting from privatisation and challenges to the process under which former Ratsiraka supporters have been tried.

### *The performance of the president*

Ravalomanana's consolidation of power has clearly not been a result of institutional strengthening. Indeed, the opposite would seem to be the case: political institutions are, largely, as strong as the president has allowed them to be. He has shaped the TIM party which dominates the political sphere. He has shaped the nature and actions of the legislature and the judiciary. In addition, he has largely undermined many of the powers given to the provinces by the 1998 constitutional revisions. The

question is whether he is a great institution-builder simply reaping personal benefits in the process, or merely enhancing his personal network, entrenching his political and economic power. The test will come when there are significant issues on which he is challenged by one of the institutions he himself has created. This has yet to happen.

Ravalomanana continues to tout his non-partisan attempts at reconciliation with the forces of the *ancien régime*. The perpetrators of crimes in 2002, he asserts, should be tried as part of the effort to bring about reconciliation. Not only should innocent AREMA leaders be allowed to hold office, he has appointed them within his administration.

This appears to reflect a partial truth. Seeking justice is important for reconciliation, as tribunals in South Africa, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and elsewhere have demonstrated. Some critics, however, accuse the administration of selectively guiding the choice of who should be tried; harsher critics consider this a witch hunt. Ravalomanana is correct in saying that non-offenders have been offered positions, but these are mostly civil servant appointments at the Director General level or below. There was only one AREMA member in Ravalomanana's original cabinet. Grad-Iloafo, a Malagasy think tank, argued as early as April 2003 that "either the government is reshuffled or social chaos will prevail."<sup>25</sup> The president did ultimately push Prime Minister Sylla to reshuffle the cabinet in January 2004. Nine ministers lost their post and a large number were replaced with leaders from other parties. While this was both a move to build political will and reconciliation on the one hand, and co-opt opposition leaders on the other, the core motivation is unclear. Regardless of this, he has been reasonably successful in either arresting or promoting would-be spoilers from the old regime.

The greatest threat in the political sphere in the pre-2002 era was the ethnic divide between the *Merina* and the seventeen other groups on the island. The *Merina* began centralising control over the island at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and this position of supremacy led to their being favoured under French colonial rule. The point should not be missed that Didier Ratsiraka is *Betsimisiraka* from the Toamasina coast, the region of highest tensions in the 1947 anti-colonial movement. Some 100,000 people were killed in the suppression of this uprising, as the *Merina* sided with the French. Ravalomanana is *Merina*. Through the First and Second Republics it was unimaginable that a *Merina* could win the presidency. Ravalomanana has worked assiduously to overcome this cleavage. Ultimately, his indisputable victory in 5 of the 6 provinces is testament to the fact that the Malagasy people ultimately saw the ethnic divide as a marker of times past, and secondary to the need for a change of charismatic leadership. As mentioned, Ratsiraka attempted to fan the ethnic flames in his favour in 2002, not only attacking *Merina*

establishments on the coast, but allegedly engaging in the pretence that *Merina* were attacking *Betsimisiraka* establishments. This desperate ploy failed to bring ethnic difference once again to the centre of political culture. AREMA supporters have continued such strategies since 2002, but have met with equally limited success.

Ironically, Ravalomanana's ethnic challenges today are greater from within his own *Merina* support network. *Merina* society is historically caste based. While this caste system has diminished significantly in importance, it continues to permeate key *Merina* political constituencies. Ravalomanana is from an intermediate caste. The aristocratic caste (*Andriana*) supported him in 2002 because he is *Merina*. However, now that he is in power Tiko is profiting at the expense of many *Merina*-owned businesses, and a number of *Andriana* in positions of authority have suffered through his attempts to reconcile other groups. The fear is that ultimately there could be a re-emergence of the Club des 48, or something like it. This strong civic group, resembling a secret society, was composed only of leading *Merina* families. They are believed to have been responsible for the assassination of Colonel Ratsimandrava in 1975 and thus, in part, for Ratsiraka's rise to power. The problem takes on a further political significance. For instance, Manandafy Rakotonirina and Olivier Rakotovazaha, both of the MFM party, are advisors to Ravalomanana; they are *Andriana*. As concerns have grown that *Merina* business is not benefiting enough, their position has become more challenging of the president and their party has become less supportive of the TIM and has formed a stronger alliance with the moderate opposition. Fortunately for Ravalomanana, the primary opposition parties, AREMA and the Comité de Reconciliation Nationale (CRN) of Zafy Albert, have won no support from *Andriana*, so Ravalomanana has benefited from the lack of competition for their favour.

Ravalomanana faces similar challenges from the church. As Vice-President of the FJKM, his ties to the church as an instrument of civil society have been strong. He has benefited greatly from Protestant support, but this is no mere political window dressing; Ravalomanana is an evangelical minister himself. It has been said that he requires his entire staff to participate in organised prayer, and many of his political speeches resemble sermons. He often blurs the constitutionally drawn line separating church and state, even as this process has helped him straddle the ethnic divide. Recently, however, the FJKM has begun showing signs of weariness with Ravalomanana and, in particular, his inability to address the concerns of their poorer constituents.

Ravalomanana is playing with fire with the military as well. In order to win the military battles of 2002, Ravalomanana had to enlist the assistance of army "reservists" under the command of General Jules

Mamizara. Following their victory, Mamizara was rewarded with the Defense Ministry portfolio, but was subsequently a victim of the January 2004 cabinet reshuffle. The coincidental timing was poor; reservists were soon to be demobilised and a coalition of members accused the government of failing to pay them their due. Mamizara remains behind Ravalomanana, but he supported the reservists, adding weight to their claims. Street demonstrations led the government to enter into negotiations, but efforts through June 2004 failed, and protests turned violent. While Ravalomanana still commands the support of the military as a whole, he has marginalised a small, but vocal and organised, military opposition. In May 2004, as Ravalomanana celebrated two years in office, he could no longer boast the sort of unquestioned support he had previously enjoyed. Yet his strength should not be underestimated. The institutions he has created have served him well, though without opposition from within to challenge any of his programmes it is unclear if they serve an independent function that will survive a change of government (a litmus test for the level of institutionalisation). While Ravalomanana has not continued to win the hearts of all the business elite, or of the aristocratic *Merina* caste, he has opened up markets. There has been a flurry of international interest in Madagascar, if not yet investment by multinational corporations. However questionable the benefactors poorly-run state industries are being privatised. Part of the economic slump is a result of Ravalomanana floating the Malagasy currency. He has altered the tax structure and agency, and he has streamlined the import and export processes. Given his unusual view of nationalism, he has even pushed through a law that allows foreigners to purchase land in Madagascar. The severity of the economic decline has created hardship and threatened rural support in particular, but the rationale is that he believes he needs to get Madagascar's fiscal house in order not just because the International Monetary Fund has told him to, but because he is a free-marketeer at heart. All of these efforts will benefit business in Madagascar generally, and Tiko in particular. Reforms are necessary, however, and will, presuming the social ills can be redressed, ultimately be to the benefit the Malagasy population at large.

### *Opposition and the struggle for political party independence*

Ravalomanana's political honeymoon ended in early 2004. As yet he has met few of his campaign promises, the economy has slumped, and his domestic base is slowly eroding. As of the time of writing he is not under imminent threat, but his internal support needs to be watched carefully.

Other opposition parties can be categorised into moderate and radical factions. The RPSD (New Rally for Sovereignty and Development), GPR

parliamentary group, and AVI (Judged by the Work They Do Party) parties form the core of the moderate opposition. Norbert Ratsirahonana, head of the AVI party, gives cause for particular concern. He has long been a supporter of Ravalomanana, and helped bring him to office. AVI has been the TIM's closest partner. By mid-2004, however, the economic crisis led Ratsirahonana to join with other moderate opposition members in directly denouncing Prime Minister Jacques Sylla's government, and the president circuitously. Ratsirahonana even joined with presidential advisor Alain Ramaroson and perennial Malagasy opposition leader Richard Andriamanjato (Akfm-Renouveau) to call for Sylla to be replaced by Ny Hasina Andriamanjato.

AREMA, Zafy Albert's CRN (Committee for National Reconciliation), and the OFPACPA (Organisation of Families of People Detained Following Current Political Crisis) constitute a more radical opposition. Without Ratsiraka at the helm many thought that AREMA would cease to exist as a party, but the old guard has proven more resilient than expected, forming itself into a small, but credible, opposition. Zafy Albert has never recovered from his 1996 impeachment, but he has galvanised a vocal core group. He labels the president "incompetent" and the state of Malagasy affairs "a crisis", seeking government action before (in a thinly veiled threat) suggesting that the people will ultimately take to the streets to remove Ravalomanana just as they brought him to power. He seeks as agenda items a South Africa-style Truth and Reconciliation Commission to identify and try AREMA leaders and the perpetrators of the violence of 2002. He also calls for a new constitution and thus the establishment of a Fourth Republic. OFPACPA has both launched and faced the strongest challenge. Its leader, Victor Wing Hong, was close to Ratsiraka and the party remains close to AREMA. Hong was arrested in March 2004 for his role in organising a public opposition meeting the government saw as seditious; in June 2004 he was sentenced to 42 months in prison. While none of these opposition groups claims a connection, ethnic conflict in Toamasina has continued since 2002. There appears a link to Ratsiraka, but less clear is the role of AREMA.

No single opposition party is very strong, and no single opposition party is mobilised. Moreover, cooperation between opposition parties is not very effective. Yet opposition parties old and new are gaining strength, and in the absence of political consolidation to date, Ravalomanana has few lines of defence against hit-and-run attacks.

The TIM claims that economic life in Madagascar is better for the majority of the population than it was during Ratsiraka's presidency. Ravalomanana, in particular, refers to the enhanced international engagement, the implementation of a poverty reduction plan, improvements in the rule of law, and in decentralisation. On all counts this is probably



correct. Yet, beyond road improvement projects government has to date done little to focus development benefits on the rural poor who make up more than two-thirds of the population. Perhaps more to the point, without concurrent institutionalisation it is not clear that even improvements in the rule of law, reflected in less capricious courts, are necessarily deepening the democratic process for urban or rural populations.

The greatest internal challenge Ravalomanana faces is on the constitution itself. Zafy Albert, in particular, has called for its complete overhaul, claiming that Madagascar is facing a crisis and that anything short of a Fourth Republic will lead to a bloodbath; he demands a national constitutional conference. Ravalomanana has answered that “a president is not involved in such an issue,”<sup>26</sup> but this is a clear effort to avoid the process. The problem he has is that, as described above, the constitution has been profoundly modified from its original state. It no longer provides a clear set of basic laws or offers a cohesive roadmap for institutional strengthening and the development of the rule of law. To change the constitution, however, would mean undermining the broad powers the president enjoys, while appearing to give in to opposition demands. Even if Ravalomanana did agree to a constitutional convention, this would be unlikely to produce the sort of document Madagascar needs, as the goal of the opposition is not an effective fundamental law, but institutional manipulation to undermine the Ravalomanana government. It was, after all, the same Zafy Albert who initially altered the powers of the president when he was in office.

International support for Ravalomanana and the TIM is far less questionable than domestic favour. The United States, in particular, has supported the TIM and the administration. President George Bush first met Marc Ravalomanana on 11 November 2001 – before the elections. Referring to that event the White House calls it a meeting with “President” Ravalomanana without chronological qualification.<sup>27</sup> The US was one of the first countries to recognise Ravalomanana in 2002; since then Madagascar has qualified to participate in the second phase of the trade preference African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), and it has become one of 16 countries (8 in Africa) that has qualified for the \$1 billion in funds from the US Millennium Challenge Account. President Bush has personally “congratulated” the Malagasy government for its battle against corruption.<sup>28</sup> There are two apparent reasons for the strong support: the strong pro-US, economically liberal actions in Antananarivo, and Ravalomanana’s continual pledge to assist in the US’s War on Terror (in particular cracking down on potential weapons trafficking in the Mozambique Channel).

Germany and France have both continued to support Madagascar in increasing amounts of aid and the sponsorship of business ties. Key African partners, notably South Africa and Senegal, have offered significant verbal support for Ravalomanana, and criticised his challengers, while promoting bilateral trade. Multilateral donor impacts have been all the greater: the once intransigent African Union has come to support him; in January 2004 the European Union dedicated 1.9 million euros to “democracy” in Madagascar to demonstrate its support for the political direction of the country. This comes in addition to its dedicating 430 million euros to the country over five years for “revitalisation.” The International Monetary Fund committed itself to funding a \$117.1 million poverty alleviation programme in 2004, though the first disbursement came under threat because of Ravalomanana’s “zero-tax” programme, in terms of which, certain consumer items had taxes removed in an effort to ameliorate social problems. Ravalomanana has reason for concern: other economic liberalisation measures, including significant currency devaluation, have made life harder for the average Malagasy citizen. As a

result, popular support for Ravalomanana’s ability to lead the country to an improvement in the quality of life has waned. The zero-tax measure was only stop-gap, but nonetheless went against IMF conditionalities. In the end, Madagascar got only a warning from the Bretton Woods Institution, and received the funding – a sure sign of the desire the IMF has to work with the Ravalomanana government.

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## CONCLUSION

It has been broadly argued that the transition from authoritarianism to democracy in Africa is largely a function of the internal dynamics of neopatrimonial rule.<sup>29</sup> Madagascar is no exception. Ravalomanana created the social movement of 2002 only to have it shape him into a populist leader. But was the way Ravalomanana came into office democratic? The electoral process was skirted, the constitution was subverted, and fledgling democratic institutions were uprooted. Yet social movements are a form of political participation. New social movements in Latin America have been well discussed and their relevance to modern democratisation significantly probed. A common conclusion, as argued by Arturo Escobar, is that social movements that achieve political goals in fact help undermine clientalism.<sup>30</sup> This gives participants in the movement a sense of efficacy. Thus, if political mobilisation is “the process by which a group goes from being a passive collection of individuals to an active participant in public life”<sup>31</sup> then six to eight percent of Malagasy society became active political participants in a truly overt fashion.

The elections of 2001 cannot claim to have been part of a procedural democratic process. But, in an Aristotelian sense, the will of the people was realised through social movement. People take to the streets when institutions fail to provide the mediating opportunity they are designed to perform. In this case, the democratic process would have led to a second election and, perhaps, electoral manipulation and the retention of Ratsiraka as president. This would have been a less democratic outcome.

Assuming we are willing to accept the way that Ravalomanana came into office is democratic, and that he came to power as the people's choice, this does not make him a "democrat." A new democrat would be building institutions that can perpetuate the smooth transition of government over multiple electoral cycles. It is not clear that the president is doing this. What is apparent is that, by way of the advantages afforded Tiko, he is benefiting personally from his office. He has worked to advance his supporters and has ensured his political base through the process. Coming into office as a wealthy businessman, Marc Ravalomanana may prove an unusual species: a "democratic" corporatist who enriches himself and those around him, and consolidates his power base through patronage, while enhancing the lot of the population at large and reflecting popular will. How he reacts to the challenges he is now facing will define who he is, by determining how democratic and how personalised his rule will become.

## NOTES

- 1 What constitutes democracy in Africa has been the subject of a significant body of theoretical exploration for more than a decade. See in particular L. Diamond. *Democratization in Africa*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1999.
- 2 In a well-explored discussion, Bratton and Van de Walle describe neopatrimonialism as follows: "In neopatrimonial regimes, the chief executive maintains authority through personal patronage, rather than through ideology or law. As with classic patrimonialism, the right to rule is ascribed to a person rather than an office. In contemporary neopatrimonialism, relationships of loyalty and dependence pervade formal political and administrative systems and leaders occupy bureaucratic offices less to perform public service than to acquire personal wealth and status. The distinction between private and public interests is purposely blurred. The essence of neopatrimonialism is the award by public officials of personal favours, both within the state (notably public sector jobs) and in society (for instance, licenses, contracts, and projects). In return for material rewards, clients mobilise political support and refer all decisions upward as a mark of deference to patrons." M. Bratton and N. Van de Walle, *Neopatrimonial regimes and political transitions in Africa*, *World Politics* 46(4), 1994, p. 458.
- 3 *Journal Officiel de la République de Madagascar*, No. 2140, du 21 Septembre 1992, pp. 2196 – 2204.
- 4 While the grounds for impeachment related to his abuse of authority, the support for impeachment within the National Assembly came from broader causes. Ravony had been driven from the prime minister's office, but support for him remained. His successor, Rakotovahiny, was short lived in office and resigned in May 1996. The new finance minister, Jean-Claude Raherimanjato, was openly critical of Zafy's intended reforms. And, perhaps most critically, in May IMF Director Michel Camdessus effectively froze all IMF and World Bank funding until significant economic reforms were to be put in place, shutting off the single largest source of aid and jeopardizing foreign investment.
- 5 *Journal Officiel de la République de Madagascar*, No 2495, du 08 Avril 1998, pp. 1274 – 1286.
- 6 *Journal Officiel de la République de Madagascar*, No 2657, du 28 Aout 2000, pp. 2988 – 3018.
- 7 Georges T Indrianjafy, *Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 1 December 2001.
- 8 Madagascar: Ratsiraka says he will accept poll results in New Year message, *BBC Monitoring Worldwide*, 31 December 2001.
- 9 "Opposition supporters take to the streets in Antananarivo," *Pan-Africa News Agency*, 6 January 2002.
- 10 Pressure mounts for vote recounts, *Indian Ocean Newsletter*, 12 January 2002.
- 11 For further discussion on this question see R. R. Marcus and P. Razafindrakoto, Participation and the poverty of electoral democracy in Madagascar, *Afrika Spectrum*, 2003(1) p 27.
- 12 Madagascar: US objects to opposition candidate's self-proclamation as president, *BBC Monitoring Worldwide*, 23 February 2002.
- 13 For a discussion of ethnicity at the mercy of political entrepreneurs in Madagascar see: F. Roubaud, *Democratie électorale et inertie institutionnelle à Madagascar*. Document de Travail. Développement et Insertion Internationale (DIAL). DT/2001/03.
- 14 Madagascar: New president addresses nation, says Malagasy people indivisible." *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, 29 April 2002.

- 15 The “referendum” was a bit of word play. Ravalomanana had publicly called for a referendum on his victory. The Dakar II Agreement called for a referendum on the two candidates – a legalistic distinction from a run-off election but with the same ends. The language choice both avoided a constitutional issue over the terms of second elections and would allow Ravalomanana to save face by saying that he only agreed to a referendum and that there would be no second round of elections.
- 16 The OAU became the African Union at the Durban Summit, June 28 – July 10, 2002. Its Madagascar policy was unchanged.
- 17 [http://www.tiako-i-madagasikara.org/Ravalomanana\\_US.htm](http://www.tiako-i-madagasikara.org/Ravalomanana_US.htm)
- 18 Survey conducted by Richard R. Marcus and Paul Razafindrakoto
- 19 This often means Tiko goods. For instance, an agreement with South Africa ensured a great proliferation of South African goods, but milk product imports remain scant and subject to tariff.
- 20 Union africaine: Télégramme...enthousiaste, *Midi Madagasikara*, 13 janvier 2003; Les élections législatives vues par la presse étrangère, *Midi Madagasikara*, 27 décembre 2004.
- 21 M. Bratton and N. Van de Walle, Neopatrimonial regimes and political transitions in Africa, *World Politics* 46(4), 1994, p. 458.
- 22 Most significant were inconsistencies that halted vote counting in Ambovombe sub-prefecture. Elections législatives à Ambovombe: soupçons à l’encontre de la sous-préfecture. *Midi Madagasikara* 27 décembre 2002.
- 23 Significant is that Tantely received a sentence of 12 years hard labour when Didier Ratsiraka himself received only 10 years hard labour (in abstentia).
- 24 The Supreme Court is the highest authority overseeing local elections and the High Constitutional Court is the highest authority overseeing presidential and legislative elections.
- 25 Madagascar: Pro-government party urges cabinet reshuffle to avert “social chaos,” *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, 17 April 2003.
- 26 Malagasy president interviewed on second anniversary in office, *BBC Monitoring International Reports*.
- 27 President Bush’s Africa Policy Accomplishments and Initiatives, [http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/africa/africa\\_accomplishments.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/africa/africa_accomplishments.pdf) 5 July 2004.
- 28 Remarks by the President at Ceremony Celebrating Countries Selected for the Millennium Challenge Account. Office of the Press Secretary, 10 May 2004. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/05/20040510.html> 5 July 2004.
- 29 Bratton and Van de Walle (M. Bratton and N. van de Walle, *Democratic experiments in Africa*. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1997) make the point directly. It has been explored to some degree, however, by such scholars as Goran Hyden, Samuel Huntington, Naomi Chazan, and Larry Diamond.
- 30 A. Escobar and Sonia E. Alvarez, eds. *The making of social movements in Latin America: Identity, strategy, and democracy*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1992, p 322.
- 31 C. Tilly. *From mobilization to revolution*, Random House, New York, 1978, p 69.

# The ISS mission

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## About this paper

Madagascar's political space is defined by the country's social movements. This is in contrast to many African states which have been shaped by a history of domination by "big men". In the case of Madagascar, no leader has had as much influence on the nature of the political system, or its dynamics, as the anti-colonial uprising of 1947, the military's dissolution of the First Republic in 1972, the strikes of 1991, or the populist support for "democracy" that Balkanised the country in 2002. Former President Didier Ratsiraka was the single largest figure in Malagasy politics from 1975 to 1992, yet the nature of his rule was defined by the events of 1972 and the way he came to office, just as the administration of Madagascar's first president, Philibert Tsiranana, was defined by what had happened in 1947 and Zafy Albert's 1993-96 presidency was defined by the events of 1991.

The pattern appears to continue, but with an interesting twist: President Marc Ravalomanana created the 2002 uprising that brought him to power, but this event, in turn, has now come to define him. This paper examines the formation of the Third Republic in 1992 in a historical context, and the events leading up to the crisis of 2002, before turning to consider the efforts of Marc Ravalomanana and the new government since. This should provide a better understanding of the institutional, social, and personal factors that influence Madagascar's political direction. The paper concludes by offering a tentative answer to the question in the sub-title, considering whether Madagascar has gone through a momentous change in the nature of its democracy or whether it has given birth to a new incarnation of neopatrimonial rule in which the president's office is used more for personal gain than public benefit.

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