

The Obstacles and Challenges to Democratic Consolidation in Madagascar (1992-2009)

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Abstract: Madagascar's 3rd Republic (1992-2009) was classified by Freedom House as "partly free" or electoral democracy. However, instead of moving up to the status of liberal democracy (free), this electoral democracy reverted to an outright autocracy in 2009, when Andry Rajoelina, with the help of the military, overthrew the democratically elected president Marc Ravalomanana. Madagascar's short-lived democracy reminds us of the importance of democratic consolidation for the new democracies emerging from the "Third Wave" of democratization. The purpose of this article is to identify the major obstacles and challenges to democratic consolidation in a poor and divided country, like Madagascar. Building on Larry Diamond's three generic tasks of democratic consolidation, this article finds that, instead of consolidating, Madagascar's electoral democracy actually started to deteriorate in 2002, before its sudden death in 2009; and that, among other factors, the major obstacle to democratic consolidation was the ever-increasing power of the successive presidents, who had been characterized as "Monarchic Presidents." In line with these findings, the major challenge to democratic consolidation in this country is to constrain the presidential power, in order to make the president a "regular citizen," or at least a "first among equal citizens," and not a "father-and-mother of the country."

Keywords: Africa, Madagascar, democratization, democratic consolidation, democratic reversal, Marc Ravalomanana, Andry Rajoelina, Didier Ratsiraka, Albert Zafy

1. INTRODUCTION

Owing to the great influence of the "Third Wave" of democratization and the pressure from the Malagasy people themselves, Didier Ratsiraka, the leader of the socialist regime of Madagascar since 1975, was forced to embrace democracy by the end of the 1980s and early 1990s. A new democratic constitution, instituting the 3rd Republic (1992-2009), was adopted by referendum in 1992, and democratic elections were held across the country the following years. Ratsiraka eventually lost the 1993 presidential election to one of the opposition leaders, Albert Zafy, and most of the members of his revolutionary party, *Avant-garde de la Révolution Malgache* (AREMA), also lost their seats at the National Assembly and at different levels of the national and local governments. As a result of these democratic developments, Freedom House classified Madagascar's 3rd Republic as "partly free" or an "electoral democracy" in 1993.¹

However, sixteen years later, Madagascar's electoral democracy was anything but dead: once in power, the unelected president, Andry Rajoelina, was quick to suspend the 1992 Constitution, along with the National Assembly and the Senate. Indeed, under the pressure from the streets and the

¹ For the different levels or types of democracy, see L. J. Diamond, *The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle to Build Free Societies Throughout the World* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 2008); and Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2012: Methodology, available at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2012/methodology>, retrieved on 3 July 2012. See also Figure 1 – Madagascar: Country Status, below. It is also worth noting that Polity IV Project classified Madagascar as a democracy (with a score between 6 and 9) from 1993 to 2009 (M. G. Marshall and K. Jaggers, 'Polity IV Country Report 2010: Madagascar,' Polity IV Country Reports 2010, available at <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/Madagascar2010.pdf>, retrieved on 18 March 2013.

military, the last president of the 3rd Republic, Marc Ravalomanana, was forced to relinquish power to a military directorate, which in turn was forced to transfer the power to Andry Rajoelina in March 2009.²

When the process of democratization started in 1992, it seemed as though Madagascar, provided with a new democratic constitution, new “democratic” political leaders, and increased financial support from the international donors, was on the right path to a stable, “consolidated democracy.” In fact, many observers were convinced that the democratic system was working well, as it led in 1996 to the impeachment by the National Assembly of Albert Zafy, the newly elected president, on the charge of mishandling the economy. He was allowed to rerun for election, but lost to the former dictator Didier Ratsiraka.

The return to power of a former dictator, in the virtue of a democratic election, was a familiar pattern in African politics in the 1990s, and was usually seen as the sign *par excellence* of a democratic reversal. Madagascar, under Didier Ratsiraka, was not an exception. Indeed, as soon as he got back in power, Ratsiraka proceeded to amend the 1992 Constitution, which – among other provisions – made him virtually immune to any impeachment procedure, and allowed him to run for a third term.³ In addition, he managed to put under his control all of the other branches of the national government (National Assembly, Senate, and High Constitutional Court), as well as the different levels of local government.⁴ Nevertheless, the disputed presidential election in December 2001 led to other street protests, which ultimately resulted in Ratsiraka’s overthrow, and the rise to power of the businessman-turned-politician Marc Ravalomanana in 2002.

Marc Ravalomanana did more to consolidate the dictatorial regime reintroduced by Didier Ratsiraka than to promote democracy. In the same way as his predecessor, he also put under his control all of the different branches of the national government (National Assembly, Senate, and High Constitutional Court) and the different levels of local government. Furthermore, he enacted a series of constitutional amendments, which – among other provisions – gave him the power to rule by decree and restricted the eligibility of candidates for national elections.⁵ Finally, the last straw that provoked the latest street protests, which ultimately put an end to his personal rule, was the shutting down of VIVA Television, a private television station owned by then Mayor of Antananarivo, Andry Rajoelina, in December 2008.

These latest street protests were initially organized in the name of democracy and social justice, but the end result was unfortunately the death of democracy itself. Indeed, as the negotiations between Marc Ravalomanana’s regime and the opposition led by Andry Rajoelina in early 2009 failed, a group of military intervened in March 2009 to put Andry Rajoelina in power, and forced Ravalomanana to resign and flee the country. Thus, in the aftermath of this controversial “military coup,” the democratic experiment initiated in 1992 died, as the new leader quickly suspended the 1992 Constitution, the National Assembly and the Senate. He also set up an unconstitutional and unelected High Authority of Transition (HAT) to rule the country with him by decree. This dramatic short story of democratic experiment demonstrates the importance of democratic consolidation for a new democracy like Madagascar and the need to identify the obstacles and challenges to its success, in order to prevent a democratic breakdown or reversal.

1.1. Literature Review

The concept of *democratic consolidation* has become a major concept in the study of democracy and democratic transition since the “Third Wave” of democratization.⁶ Indeed, many new democracies of

² For more information about the events that led to the resignation of Marc Ravalomanana in March 2009, see T. Ralambomahay, *Madagascar Dans Une Crise Interminable* (Paris, L’Harmattan, 2011).

³ Patrick A., ‘Costard Sur Mesure,’ MadagascarTribune.com, available at <http://www.madagascar-tribune.com/Costard-sur-mesure,11600.html>, retrieved on 3 April 2009).

⁴ R. R. Marcus, ‘Political Change in Madagascar: Populist Democracy or Neopatrimonialism by Another Name?’ (Occasional Paper No. 89, Institute for Security Studies, South Africa, 2004); R. R. Marcus and A. M. Ratsimbaharison, “Political Parties in Madagascar: Neopatrimonial Tools or Democratic Instruments?” *Party Politics*, 11, 4 (2005), pp. 495-512.

⁵ Patrick A., ‘Costard Sur Mesure,’ *Op. Cit.*

⁶ S. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, OK and London, University of Oklahoma Press, 1991). See also J. J. Linz, and A. Stepan (eds), *The*

the “Third Wave” did not display the same strength and resilience as the established, “consolidated” ones, and reverted quickly to autocracy, as in the case of Madagascar in 2009. However, while the definition of the concept itself did not seem to pose any major problem, the different approaches to its study and the different components of the process of consolidation became controversial over the years.⁷

Thus, although some scholars, like Andreas Schedler, talk about “conceptual confusion” and suggest up to five different definitions of the concept,⁸ many other scholars agree with the minimalist definition proposed by Guisepppe di Palma in his famous expression: making democracy “the only game in town.”⁹ In this paper, we will refer to Larry Diamond’s definition which states that *democratic consolidation* is:

The process of achieving broad and deep legitimation, such that all significant political actors, at both the elite and mass levels, believe that the democratic regime is the most right and appropriate for the society, better than any other realistic alternative they can imagine. Political competitors must come to regard democracy (and the laws, procedures, and institutions it specifies) as ‘the only game in town,’ the only viable framework for governing the society and advancing their own interests.¹⁰

The literature of the study of democratic consolidation can be broadly categorized into two groups: the first group focuses on the agents or actors of democratic consolidation, which include the civil society organization, the political parties, the media, etc.; and the second group focuses on the different structural factors or determinants of democratic consolidation, which include the economic conditions (particularly the level of development or poverty), along with the political culture and institutions of the new democracies.

Larry Diamond and Raymond Suttner are among the scholars who focus on the important roles played by different agents or actors in the process of democratic consolidation.¹¹ Particularly, Larry Diamond argues that: “Consolidation of democracy will be impossible if a civil society is not established.”¹² Most of those who focus on the structural factors or determinants of democratic consolidation identify the poor economic conditions or poverty of the new democracies as the main factor hindering the process of democratic consolidation in those countries.¹³ However, in addition to the poor economic conditions, some of these scholars point to the political institutions and cultures of

Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown and Reequilibration. An Introduction (Baltimore, MD, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

⁷L. J. Diamond, "Toward Democratic Consolidation," *Journal of Democracy*, 5, 3 (1994), pp. 4-17; Guillermo A. O'Donnell, "Illusions About Consolidation," *Journal of Democracy*, 7, 2 (1996), pp. 34-51; L. J. Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore, MD, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); and G. Alexander, *The Sources of Democratic Consolidation* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2002).

⁸A. Schedler, "What Is Democratic Consolidation?" *Journal of Democracy*, 9, 2 (1998), pp. 90-91.

⁹G. Di Palma, *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transitions* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA, University of California Press, 1990); J. J. Linz, "Transitions to Democracy," *Washington Quarterly*, 13, 3 (1990), pp. 143-164; G. A. O'Donnell, "Illusions About Consolidation," *Journal of Democracy*, 7, 2 (1996), pp. 34-51; and L. J. Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore, MD, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

¹⁰L. J. Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation, Op. Cit.*, p. 65.

¹¹L. J. Diamond, "Toward Democratic Consolidation," *Op. cit.*; L. J. Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation, Op. Cit.*; R. Suttner, "Democratic Transition and Consolidation in South Africa: The Advice of 'the Experts'," *Current Sociology* 52, 5 (2004), pp. 755-773.

¹²L. J. Diamond, "Toward Democratic Consolidation," *Op. Cit.*, p. 4.

¹³M. Svobik, "Authoritarian Reversals and Democratic Consolidation," *American Political Science Review*, 102, 2 (2008), pp. 755-773; R. Mattes, "South Africa: Democracy without the People?" *Journal of Democracy*, 13, 1 (2002), pp. 22-37; M. Gasiorowski and T. Power, "The Structural Determinants of Democratic Consolidation: Evidence from the Third World," *Comparative Political Studies*, 31, 6 (December 1998), pp. 740-771.

the new democracies as major factors influencing democratic consolidation in one way or the other. Particularly, while suggesting a new approach to the study of democratic consolidation, Milan Svobik argued that “the level of economic development, type of democratic executive, and the type of authoritarian past determine whether a democracy consolidates.”¹⁴

1.2. Purpose and Research Questions

Instead of focusing on the agents or determinants of democratic consolidation, this article aims to identify the major obstacles and challenges to the process of democratic consolidation in the case of Madagascar’s 3rd Republic. The identification of these obstacles and challenges is crucial in order to help this country to overcome its failures to consolidate democracy. In doing so, this article builds on the three generic tasks of democratic consolidation identified by Larry Diamond, in his seminal work, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*,¹⁵ and specifically addresses the following questions: Was Madagascar’s electoral democracy consolidating before its sudden death in 2009? If yes, to what extent? If not, what were the obstacles and challenges to democratic consolidation in this country?

1.3. Methodology

As mentioned earlier, Larry Diamond defines democratic consolidation as “the process of achieving broad and deep legitimation, such that all significant political actors, at both the elite and mass levels, believe that the democratic regime is the most right and appropriate for the society.”¹⁶ In connection with this definition, he also identifies three generic tasks, which according to him, “all new and fragile democracies must handle if they are to become consolidated.”¹⁷ These three generic tasks are:

- deepening democracy,
- political institutionalization, and
- regime performance.

Thus, in order to address the question of whether Madagascar’s electoral democracy was consolidating or not under the 3rd Republic, this article will analyze how each one of the above generic tasks was completed in this country. This analysis will then allow us to identify the obstacles and challenges to democratic consolidation in this country. Newspaper articles, along with data, reports and studies from different scholars and organizations, at the national and international levels will be used in this article to address the research questions.

2. MADAGASCAR’S ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY AND THE THREE GENERIC TASKS OF DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

This section focuses on how the three generic tasks of democratic consolidation were completed in Madagascar under the 3rd Republic. As mentioned earlier, these three generic tasks are democratic deepening, political institutionalization, and regime performance.

2.1. Deepening Democracy

Deepening democracy means making “the formal structures of democracy more liberal, accountable, representative, and accessible -- in essence, more democratic.”¹⁸ Larry Diamond recognizes that this task may overlap with the other tasks of democratic consolidation, but he emphasizes that decentralizing and devolving power to local governments, along with putting the military under civilian control are the most important subcategories of this task. In addition, in order to find out whether a new democracy is becoming more democratic or not, we can also refer to the assessments provided by different organizations and think tanks, such as Freedom House or Polity IV Project.¹⁹ In

¹⁴ M. Svobik, "Authoritarian Reversals and Democratic Consolidation," *Op. Cit.*, p. 153.

¹⁵ L. J. Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*, *Op. Cit.*

¹⁶ L. Diamond, *Op. Cit.*, p. 65.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2013,’ available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world>, retrieved on 23 June 2013; M. G. Marshall, K. Jaggers, and T. R. Gurr, ‘Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2011,’ available at: <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm>, retrieved on 22 June 2013.

this paper, we will specifically refer to the scores of political rights and civil liberties provided annually by Freedom House to assess the deepening or deterioration of democracy in Madagascar from 1992 to 2009.

2.1.1. Increasing Political Rights

Political rights are the foundation of any democratic regime. Freedom House defines political rights as rights that “enable people to participate freely in the political process,” and assesses the political rights ratings of a country based “on an evaluation of three subcategories: electoral process, political pluralism and participation, and functioning of government.”²⁰ In the case of Madagascar, the citizens’ political rights were protected under the 1992 Constitution of the 3rd Republic of Madagascar,²¹ and the country received relatively high scores in terms of political rights from Freedom House until 2005.²² In connection with this, the great majority of the citizens also believed that they had the right to create or join political parties, as well as the right to choose freely the candidates they like during elections.²³

However, these political rights were frequently violated without any qualm, when they stood in the ways of the successive presidents and their political parties. Thus, Didier Ratsiraka (1997-2001) and Marc Ravalomanana (2002-2009) typically denied to the opposition any access to public radio and television stations. During his two terms in office, Marc Ravalomanana sent into exile or to prison hundreds of members of the opposition, including the former president Didier Ratsiraka himself.²⁴ Furthermore, one of the most flagrant violations of the political rights of a Malagasy citizen occurred in 2006, when Marc Ravalomanana prevented Pierrot Rajaonarivelo, one of the candidates to the presidential election, from returning to the country to participate in the election.²⁵

Consequently, the scores of Madagascar in terms of political rights declined from 2 in 2001 to 3 in 2002, and from 3 in 2005 to 4 in 2006. This is a clear indication of the deterioration of Madagascar’s electoral democracy before its sudden death in 2009. Indeed, instead of deepening or becoming more democratic, it was obviously reverting toward autocracy since 2002.

2.1.2. Increasing Civil Liberties

Freedom House defines civil liberties as “the freedoms of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy without interference from the state.”²⁶

In the same way as the political rights discussed earlier, the Malagasy people’s civil liberties were also protected under the 1992 Constitution of the 3rd Republic of Madagascar.²⁷ As a result, the country also received decent scores in terms of civil liberties from Freedom House until 2009,²⁸ and

²⁰ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2013: Methodology,’ available at:

<http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2013/methodology>, retrieved on June 26, 2013.

²¹ See *Constitution de la République de Madagascar [1992]*, Articles 9-16, available at:

<http://www.primature.gov.mg/webfiles/Projet-Rev-Constitution.pdf>, retrieved on 26 June 2013.

²² See Fig. 1 – Madagascar: Country Status, below. Madagascar consistently received a score of 2 (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as the highest score) from 1993 to 2001. This score went down to 3 in 2001, and further down to 4 in 2006.

²³ Afrobarometer, ‘Les Malgaches et la Démocratie: Principes, Fonctionnement, Participation,’ (Briefing Paper No. 64, Afrobarometer, 2009).

²⁴ Naivo-Kely, ‘Fonjan’i Tsiarafy: Tonga Lapan’ny Demokarsia’ [Tsiarafy Prison: Palace of Democracy],” *Madagascar Tribune* (January 15 2009); Albert Zafy, ‘Lettre Ouverte Du Pr. Zafy à Son Excellence Marc Ravalomanana,’ *Madagascar Tribune* (June 5 2008); J.-L. Vivier, *Madagascar Sous Ravalomanana : La Vie Politique Malgache Depuis 2001* (Paris, L’Harmattan, 2007).

²⁵ J.-L. Raharimanana, “Les Raisons De La Colère Contre Le Président De Madagascar,” *Rue89.com*, available at : <http://www.rue89.com/2009/01/31/les-raisons-de-la-colere-contre-le-president-de-madagascar>, retrieved on 31 January 2009; J.-L. Vivier, *Madagascar Sous Ravalomanana, Op. Cit.*

²⁶ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2013: Methodology,’ *Op. Cit.*

²⁷ See *Constitution de la République de Madagascar [1992]*, Articles 9-16, available at:

<http://www.primature.gov.mg/webfiles/Projet-Rev-Constitution.pdf>, retrieved on 26 June 2013.

²⁸ See Fig. 1 – Madagascar: Country Status, below. On civil liberties, Madagascar consistently received a score of 4 (on a scale of 1 to 7, 1 as the highest score) from 1993 to 2002. This score went

the great majority of the Malagasy citizens believed that their freedoms of expression and belief were respected.²⁹

Nevertheless, on many occasions, these civil liberties were also trampled by the successive presidents, when they challenged the power of the latter. Particularly, Marc Ravalomanana shut down many radio and television stations during his two terms in office.³⁰ Thus, according to Jean-Loup Vivier, he closed down, in 2004 alone, one television station and five radio stations.³¹ Many other television and radio stations were shut down later, including VIVA Television, which ultimately led to his downfall in 2009.³² In addition to the violation of the freedom of expression of the Malagasy citizens, Marc Ravalomanana also violated their freedom of religion, by closing down a popular Christian church (the FPVM) in 2005,³³ and by removing the “secular nature” of the state through a constitutional amendment in 2007.³⁴

In sum, these wide-range and repeated violations of civil liberties were also a clear sign of the deterioration of Madagascar’s electoral democracy before its sudden death in 2009.

2.1.3. Decentralizing and Devolving Power to Local Governments

According to Larry Diamond, devolution of power to local governments can improve democracy for the following reasons:

First, it helps to develop democratic values and skills among citizens. Second, it increases accountability and responsiveness to local interests and concerns. Third, it provides additional channels of access to power for historically marginalized groups and thus improves the representativeness of democracy. Fourth, it enhances checks and balances vis-à-vis power at the center. Fifth, it provides opportunities for parties and factions in opposition at the center to exercise some measure of political power.³⁵

In the case of Madagascar, the idea of decentralizing and devolving power to local governments was accepted and demanded by the great majority of people, and there was a willingness to implement this idea with the creation of “six autonomous provinces” by Didier Ratsiraka in 1998, and the creation of “22 regions” to replace these “autonomous provinces” by Marc Ravalomanana in 2004. However, the different ways in which these local governments were set up told a whole different story.³⁶ Instead of truly devolving power to local governments, the two presidents were actually tightening their control over the peripheral areas of the country, by delegating their power to trusted political allies, and hence extending their political networks throughout the country.

The same drive to control, rather than to devolve power to local governments, was also shown by the creation of the “22 regions” by Marc Ravalomanana in 2004. Indeed, since the chiefs of regions were directly appointed by the president, not elected by the people, and since the objective was

up to 3 in 2003, before it went down again to 4 in 2009. In fact, it is quite surprising that Freedom House was still giving Madagascar high scores on civil liberties, when these liberties were frequently violated in the country, especially under the presidency of Marc Ravalomanana (2002-2009).

²⁹ Afrobarometer, ‘Les Malgaches et la Démocratie: Principes, Fonctionnement, Participation,’ *Op. Cit.*.

³⁰ J.-L. Vivier, *Madagascar Sous Ravalomanana*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 150.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

³² J.-L. Raharimanana, "Les Raisons De La Colère Contre Le Président De Madagascar," *Op. Cit.* ; and D. Galibert, "Mobilisation Populaire Et Répression À Madagascar," *Politique Africaine*, **113** (Mars 2009), pp. 139-51.

³³ J.-L. Vivier, *Madagascar Sous Ravalomanana*, *Op.cit.*, p. 130 ; T. Cocks, "Madagascar Bans a Popular Church," *BBC News*, October 6, 2005. The FPVM church happened to be a dissident of Marc Ravalomanana’s own FJKM church, in which he was serving for many years as a lay Vice President.

³⁴ D. Galibert, "Mobilisation Populaire Et Répression À Madagascar," *Op. Cit.*, p. 143, note 6. It was not clear what political objective Marc Ravalomanana intended to achieve through this move.

³⁵ L. J. Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 121-122.

³⁶ World Bank, *Madagascar: Vers un Agenda de Relance Économique* (Washington, DC, World Bank, 2010), available at :

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTMADAGASCAR/Resources/PolicyNotesJune2010.pdf>, retrieved on 27 June 2013; J.-L. Vivier, *Madagascar Sous Ravalomanana*, *Op. Cit.*

administrative efficiency, not popular representation, we have to recognize that the desire to control the whole country was more important for the president, than the need to devolve power to the regions.³⁷

In sum, according to the assessment by the World Bank, the decentralization and devolution in Madagascar were embryonic, as only 5% of the state budget was devoted to local governments, compared to 30% in developed country and 22% in South-East Asia and Latin America.³⁸

2.1.4. Putting the Military Under Civilian Control

As Larry Diamond puts it, “[by] definition, democracy cannot be consolidated until the military becomes firmly subordinated to civilian control and committed to the democratic constitutional order.”³⁹ In line with this, putting the military under civilian control is one of the most important keys to democratic consolidation.

In the case of Madagascar, the World Bank finds that the military was already under civilian control, and was not the main driver of political change in the country.⁴⁰ In fact, the main problem with the Malagasy military was not its control by civilians, but its internal division, along with its politicization and instrumentalization by political leaders. In connection with this, both Marc Ravalomanana in 2002 and Andry Rajoelina in 2009 have “knocked at the barracks doors,” and owed their rise to power to military interventions.⁴¹ Additionally, Marc Ravalomanana appointed in 2007 Cecile Manorohanta as the first civilian and female Defense Minister of the country in order to weaken the military.⁴² However, the unintended consequence of this appointment and Marc Ravalomanana’s own way of politicizing and instrumentalizing the military was that a widespread discontent emerged among officers and soldiers, which may explain the mutiny of the group of military based in the CAPSAT camp in March 2009 that ultimately led to the resignation of Marc Ravalomanana.

Thus, paradoxically, in and of itself, putting the military under civilian control (with the risk of politicization, which would result from this move) did not solve the Malagasy military problem. Instead, there would be a need to give the military some autonomy and, following Larry Diamond’s suggestion, to “refocus the military’s mission, training, and expenditure around issues of external security.”⁴³

2.2. Political Institutionalization

Besides the task of deepening democracy, that of political institutionalization constitutes also an important key to democratic consolidation. Larry Diamond defines political institutionalization as: “a move toward routinized, recurrent, and predictable patterns of political behavior. This involves the settled convergence around (and internalization of) common rules and procedures of political competition and action.”⁴⁴

In line with this definition, the task of political institutionalization can be subdivided into to the following subtasks:

- Strengthening the Bureaucracy,
- Strengthening Institutions of Governance, and
- Strengthening Horizontal Accountability and Rule of Law.

³⁷ J.-L. Vivier, *Madagascar Sous Ravalomanana*, *Op. Cit.*.

³⁸ World Bank, *Madagascar: Vers un Agenda de Relance Économique*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 71.

³⁹ L. J. Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 113.

⁴⁰ World Bank, *Madagascar: Governance and Development Effectiveness Review: A Political Economy Analysis of Governance in Madagascar*, (Washington, DC, World Bank, December 2010), p. 25.

⁴¹ S. Randrianja, ‘Ravalomanana, 2002-2005: Des Produits Laitiers Aux Affaires Nationales: FAST Country Risk Profile Madagascar,’ (Working Paper, Swiss Peace, Switzerland, March 2005); J. F. Ramasy, ‘Madagascar: Les Forces Armées Garantées De La Stabilité Politique Et Démocratique?’ *Identity, Culture and Politics*, 11, 2, (December 2010), pp. 1-41.

⁴² S. L. Blazek, *Power Struggles and Conflict Recurrence: An Examination of the Political Competition in Madagascar*, (American University, Washington, D.C., unpublished PhD dissertation, 2010); J. F. Ramasy, “Madagascar: Les Forces Armées Garantées De La Stabilité Politique Et Démocratique?” *Op. Cit.*

⁴³ L. J. Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 113.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 75

2.2.1. Strengthening the Bureaucracy

Strengthening bureaucracy means making the “state bureaucracy usable.” As Larry Diamond puts it:

To be usable and ultimately effective, the state must have technical talent and training, which require (particularly in its upper reaches) a professionalized, meritocratic bureaucracy with relatively good pay, competitive standards of recruitment, and ideally, an esprit de corps. Such a competent state is needed to improve education and other forms of human capital; to develop the physical, legal and institutional infrastructure of the market economy; to manage the macro economy with fiscal discipline and intelligent budgeting priorities; to negotiate with international trade partners, creditors, and investors; to control for negative externalities of the market of the market without overregulating it; to modernize and broaden the collection of taxes; to maintain order and rule of law.⁴⁵

In the case of Madagascar, the task of strengthening bureaucracy was daunting, as the bureaucracy of the country was generally weak since the country’s independence in 1960. While a systematic study of the Malagasy bureaucracy is yet to be conducted, two specific cases of bureaucratic deficiency and instrumentalization would be sufficient to demonstrate the scope of the problem.

On the one hand, in the case of the shutting down of VIVA Television, which led to the political crises of 2009 and the overthrow of president Marc Ravalomanana, some journalists point out the fact that the High Council on Audiovisual (HCA), which should have been the key institution in charge of the whole process, was never put in place.⁴⁶ According to these journalists, had the HCA been created and given some authorities, the debacle of VIVA Television would have been avoided, since the proper procedure would have been followed by the state and the victim (Andry Rajoelina, in this case). While this hypothesis may be correct afterward, one may also suggest that, had Marc Ravalomanana and his government respected the freedom of expression of all citizens (including the Mayor of Antananarivo, Andry Rajoelina), they would not have had to shut down any television stations at all. In other words, the deficiency of the bureaucracy has been compounded in this case by the non-respect of the most fundamental principle of democracy, which is the freedom of expression of all citizens without any exception.

On the other hand, the case of the anti-corruption bureau, known as BIANCO, shows how an institution was created and instrumentalized to eliminate the political and economic competitors of the incumbent president. In 2004, Marc Ravalomanana created BIANCO to fight corruption in the country. However, while the statute of BIANCO required a declaration of wealth from all citizens occupying high positions in the state, Marc Ravalomanana himself refused to abide by this rule. Instead, anyone who was critical of his governance was subjected to an investigation from this institution, in addition to tax audits by tax services.⁴⁷

2.2.2. Strengthening Institutions of Governance (Political Parties, Legislatures, Electoral System)

Larry Diamond subdivides the task of strengthening the institutions of governance into the following subtasks:

- Strengthening political parties,
- Strengthening legislatures, and
- Strengthening electoral systems

Most studies on these institutions of governance (political parties, legislatures and electoral systems) in Madagascar also demonstrate that either they were typically weak, or they were instrumentalized by the presidents.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.

⁴⁶ H. Manjaka and RAW, ‘Fermeture De Stations Télé Et Radio: Le Haut Conseil De L’audiovisuel À La Rescousse?’ *Madagascar Tribune*, 22 January, 2009.

⁴⁷ J. Ramambazafy, ‘Terrorisme D’Etat: Marc Ravalomanana a Définitivement Atteint Le Point De Non-Retour Vers Sa Chute,’ *Madagate.com*, 23 January 2009.

Thus, assessing the strength of the party system in Madagascar, the World Bank finds that: “The party system is extremely weak in Madagascar, rather than being based around ideologies or aggregating political will, political parties are at the service of key individuals.”⁴⁸

Marcus and Ratsimbaharison also draw the conclusion that the Malagasy political parties were generally weak, hardly institutionalized, and used by political leaders “as tools of patrimonial rule and not as instruments of democracy.”⁴⁹

With regard to the legislature, the major factor crippling its effectiveness was the ever increasing power of the successive presidents. Traditionally, Madagascar inherited a “monarchic conception of power,”⁵⁰ which led to constitutionally powerful presidents, described by some analysts as “Monarchic Presidents”⁵¹ or presidents with “near-imperial role.”⁵² The Malagasy people themselves consider their successive presidents as “*ray aman-dreny*” (literally, father-and-mother). Furthermore, during the 3rd Republic, each president sought to increase their power at the expense of the legislature and the judiciary, through a series of constitutional amendments. As a result, by the time Marc Ravalomanana resigned in March 2009, the president had the constitutional power to rule by decree (taking away even the *raison d'être* of the legislature) and dissolve the National Assembly any time he wanted.⁵³

Finally, concerning the electoral systems, the International Crisis Group reports that:

Until 2010, the electoral process was controlled by three institutions: the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reform (MIRA), the National Electoral Council (CNE) and the High Constitutional Court (HCC). The fundamental problem of this way of sharing responsibilities is that it maintains the process under the control of the executive power. Indeed, the Ministry has been always under the thumb of the president, in the same way as the HCC, which has frequently refused to register some candidates; and the composition of the CNE does not allow it to work independently. Besides, the local representatives of the administration are used to exhort the population to support the government in order to make sure that they receive financial supports.⁵⁴

In addition to this tight control of the electoral process by the executive, other analysts also point out the rampant electoral frauds and irregularities under the 3rd Republic. Some of the most outrageous practices were the vote buying by some candidates, the intimidations of voters and voting officers, and the orders given by the central government to local government officers to delay or change election results.⁵⁵

Once again, as with the political parties and the legislature, the major problem with the electoral system was the monarchic power of the presidents. The presidents of the 3rd Republic and their respective political parties wanted to win all elections by any means necessary, and that was their reason for controlling the electoral systems, without any regard to democratic principles.

⁴⁸ World Bank, *Madagascar: Governance and Development Effectiveness Review*, Op. Cit., p. xi.

⁴⁹ R. R. Marcus and A. M. Ratsimbaharison, “Political Parties in Madagascar: Neopatrimonial Tools or Democratic Instruments?” *Party Politics*, 11, 4 (2005), p. 495.

⁵⁰ International Crisis Group, ‘Madagascar: Sortir Du Cycle De Crises,’ (Rapport Afrique No. 156, 18 March, 2010), available at : <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/southern-africa/madagascar/156%20Madagascar%20-%20sortir%20du%20cycle%20de%20crises.pdf>, retrieved on 27 June 2013, p. 13.

⁵¹ International Crisis Group, ‘Madagascar: Sortir Du Cycle De Crises,’ Op. Cit, p. 13; and World Bank, *Madagascar: Governance and Development Effectiveness Review*, Op. Cit. p. viii.

⁵² World Bank, Op. Cit. p. viii.

⁵³ R. R. Marcus, “Madagascar: Legitimizing Autocracy?” *Current History*, 100, 646 (2001), pp. 226-31; R. R. Marcus, “Political Change in Madagascar: Populist Democracy or Neopatrimonialism by Another Name?” Op. Cit.; Patrick A. “Costard Sur Mesure,” Op. Cit.; World Bank, *Madagascar: Governance and Development Effectiveness Review*, Op. Cit..

⁵⁴ International Crisis Group, ‘Madagascar: Sortir Du Cycle De Crises,’ Op. Cit., p. 23. (My translation).

⁵⁵ J.-L. Vivier, *Madagascar Sous Ravalomanana*, Op. Cit..

2.2.3. *Strengthening Horizontal Accountability and Rule of Law*

Concerning the subtask of strengthening horizontal accountability and the rule of law,

Larry Diamond states that:

An institutionally mature, resourceful, and autonomous legislature is an important instrument of horizontal accountability. Even in a parliamentary system in which government emerges out of the legislature, the latter is expected to question ministers and hold government accountable. However, elected executives, state bureaucrats, soldiers, and police cannot be held accountable without a judicial system that has the constitutional and political autonomy to ensure a genuine rule of law. Neither can civil liberties be protected and the power of the state constrained without such an institutionalized judicial system.⁵⁶

The typical weakness of the legislature under the 3rd Republic led to the fact that horizontal accountability vis-à-vis the legislature did not exist for the successive presidents. With regard to the judicial system, some analysts also point out the fact that there were “significant efforts to reform” the system,⁵⁷ and that the government benefited technical supports from Norway in this area.⁵⁸ However, the reality was that, in the same way as the legislature, the judiciary of the 3rd Republic was weak and completely dominated and manipulated by the successive presidents.

In addition to its total domination by the “Monarchic Presidents,” the judiciary also suffered from different financial and technical problems, which have been described by Freedom House as follows:

A lack of training, resources, and personnel hampers judicial effectiveness, and case backlogs are prodigious. The judiciary remains susceptible to corruption and executive influence. Most of the approximately 20,000 people held in the country’s prisons are pretrial detainees and suffer extremely harsh and sometimes life-threatening conditions. In many rural areas, customary-law courts that lack due process often issue summary and severe punishments.⁵⁹

Consequently, the laws were not always respected in Madagascar under the 3rd Republic. Starting from the top, the successive presidents themselves frequently ignored the constitution and many other laws of the land in their exercise of power. A typical example of the violation of the constitution occurred in 2004, when president Marc Ravalomanana created by decree his “22 regions,” in replacement of the “six autonomous provinces,” which were established by a constitutional amendment initiated by Didier Ratsiraka in 1998.⁶⁰ It is true that the constitutional amendment of 2007 corrected this mistake afterward, but the violation was already done.

2.3. Regime Performance

With regard to the task of regime performance, Larry Diamond makes the following observation: “Over time and over a succession of specific governments, the democratic regime must produce sufficiently positive policy outputs to build broad political legitimacy or at least to avoid the crystallization of substantial pockets of resistance to the regime's legitimacy.”⁶¹ In connection with this observation, he defines regime performance as “the political outputs and character of the regime, as well as the material conditions it generates (or for which it is seen to be responsible).”⁶² He also categorizes it into:

- Economic performance, and
- Political performance.

⁵⁶ L. J. Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 111.

⁵⁷ R. R. Marcus, “Marc the Medici? The Potential Outcomes of New Forms of Neopatrimonial Rule,” *Op. Cit.*

⁵⁸ J.-L. Vivier, *Madagascar Sous Ravalomanana*, *Op. Cit.*

⁵⁹ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2009 – Madagascar,’ available at:

<http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2009/madagascar>, retrieved on 27 June 2013.

⁶⁰ J.-L. Vivier, *Madagascar Sous Ravalomanana*, *Op. Cit.* p. 109.

⁶¹ L. J. Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*, *Op. Cit.* p. 76.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 77.

2.3.1. Economic Performance

According to Larry Diamond, the economic performance of a regime is based on the “material conditions” it generates,⁶³ and can be measured in terms of annual growth rates of the GDP, GNP per capita, and the overall evaluations of the economic and social conditions of the country by national and international observers.

Based on these economic indicators, Madagascar’s 3rd Republic, particularly under Marc Ravalomanana (2002-2009), performed better than the two previous Republics. Thus, assessing its overall performance, the World Bank states that:

Until the political crisis in early 2009 Madagascar had been largely seen as a development success in the making. Madagascar’s growth has increased over the last 15 years, following the abandonment of socialist economic policies, reaching an average annual real growth rate of 5.7% between 2003 and 2007. Poverty declined from a high of 80% in 2002 to 65% in 2008, and was largely concentrated in the rural areas.⁶⁴

In addition to these relatively high economic growth rates and the slight reduction of poverty, the personal incomes of the population have also improved, as the GNP per capita increased from \$240 in 1992 to \$420 in 2009.⁶⁵ Furthermore, different analysts also point out the achievements of Marc Ravalomanana in building infrastructures, and attracting foreign direct investments and foreign aid. It was estimated that about 9000 kilometers of road have been built under Marc Ravalomanana and, in terms of foreign direct investment, more than \$3 billion have been invested in 2008 alone in the mining industry.⁶⁶

However, the main criticisms of the economic performance of the 3rd Republic had to do mainly with the wealth distribution, the way Marc Ravalomanana managed the national economy, and the fact that Madagascar still lagged behind many other African countries, most notably its closest neighbor, Mauritius. As mentioned earlier, 65% of the Malagasy were still extremely poor (living with less than one dollar a day) by 2008. The opposition and different civil society organizations, like CONECS and SEFAFI, have pointed out this fact to criticize the management style of president Marc Ravalomanana.⁶⁷ Furthermore, many observers also agree that the president notoriously used to mix his private interests with public interests,⁶⁸ and that himself, his family and companies (Tiko Group) were by far the most important beneficiaries of the recent economic successes of the country.⁶⁹

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ World Bank, *Madagascar: Governance and Development Effectiveness Review*, *Op. Cit.* p.ix.; See Figure 2 - Madagascar: GDP Annual Growth Rate in Comparison With Mauritius and the Average Sub-Saharan Africa, below.

⁶⁵ Fig. 3 - Madagascar: GNP per Capita in Comparison with Mauritius and the Average Sub-Saharan Africa, below.

⁶⁶ F. Pompey, ‘L’opposition Malgache Accuse Le Président Ravalomanana D’exercice Solitaire Du Pouvoir,’ *LeMonde.fr*, 24 September 2007; J.-L. Vivier, *Madagascar Sous Ravalomanana*, *Op. Cit.*; S. Randrianja, ‘Les Années Ravalomanana (2002-2009): Politique Et Liberalisme Economique,’ In S. Randrianja (ed), *Madagascar, Le Coup D’Etat De Mars 2009* (Paris, Karthala, 2012), pp. 239-277.

⁶⁷ A. Zafy, ‘Lettre Ouverte du Pr. Zafy a son Excellence Marc Ravalomanana,’ *Madagascar Tribune*, 5 June, 2008; Conseil national économique et social (CONECS), ‘Résolutions du CONECS du 26 Novembre 2008,’ *Madagasikara-soa.com*, 2008; SEFAFI (Observatoire de la Vie Publique), ‘Communiqué du SEFAFI au Sujet de la Hausse du Coût de la Vie en Date du 12 Septembre 2008,’ *Soa Hoan’i Madagasikara*, 14 August, 2011.

⁶⁸ The typical example of this unlawful practice was the purchase a presidential jet (Air Force One II) in 2008. In this deal, the president used some of his personal money with taxpayers’ money to buy an airplane which was ultimately registered under his private company Tiko Air. See S. L. Blazek *Power Struggles and Conflict Recurrence*, *Op. Cit.*; M. Pellerin, “Madagascar: Un Conflit D’entrepreneurs?” *Politique Africaine*, 113 (Mars 2009), pp. 152-65.

⁶⁹ J.-L. Vivier, *Madagascar Sous Ravalomanana*, *Op. Cit.*; IRIN, ‘Madagascar: What Went Wrong ?’ *UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*, 11 February, 2009.

Finally, when compared to those of other African countries, particularly its closest neighbor, Mauritius, Madagascar's recent economic successes were actually mediocre.⁷⁰

As Larry Diamond puts it: The better the performance of a democratic regime in producing and broadly distributing improvements in living standards, the more likely it is to endure.⁷¹ In the case of Madagascar, although the 3rd Republic performed economically better than the previous Republics, the major problems were its failure to address social inequality, to improve the living standard of the population as a whole, and to avoid patrimonializing state resources.

2.3.2. Political Performance

Larry Diamond defines political performance as “political outputs and character of the regime,”⁷² which may include different political outputs, such as: “physical safety and security, which require protection from arbitrary harm by the state or criminal elements,” “prestige of [the] country in world affairs,” “peace in foreign relations,” “political freedom, accountability, and constitutionalism.”⁷³ Since “political freedom, accountability, and constitutionalism” have been discussed in the previous tasks of deepening democracy (Tasks 2.1 and 2.2), this section will focus on “physical safety and security,” “prestige of [the] country in world affairs,” and “peace in foreign relations.”

Similarly to its economic performance, the political performance of Madagascar's 3rd Republic was also a mix of successes and failures. Indeed, the public safety and security, especially in the rural areas, still constitute a huge problem.⁷⁴ In addition to the attacks from real criminals, the state itself acted on many occasions, particularly under Marc Ravalomanana, as a predator preying on the political and economic competitors of the president, his political party (TIM) and his companies (Tiko Group). As mentioned earlier, the tax audits by the tax services and the investigation of corruption by BIANCO have been instrumentalized by Marc Ravalomanana to eliminate his political and economic competitors.⁷⁵

In terms of its international prestige, Madagascar was scheduled to host the summit of the African Union in 2009, and the summit of the International Organization of the Francophonie in 2010. However, the street protests and the unconstitutional transfer of power in March 2009 led to the cancellations of these events.

Concerning the effects of political performance, Larry Diamond states that: “The ability of a new or recent democracy to deliver decent, open, relatively clean governance should not be underestimated as a policy output that can help consolidate democracy.”⁷⁶ In the case of Madagascar, there is no doubt that the 3rd Republic performed better than the two previous Republics. However, the problem was the manner in which the economic and political performances were achieved. If they were achieved under a genuine democratic regime, they would tremendously contribute to democratic consolidation. On the contrary, if they were achieved under non-democratic regime, they would undermine the whole process.

3. THE OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

This section reviews the completion of the three generic tasks of democratic consolidation, in order to identify the major obstacles and challenges to their completion in Madagascar. The assessment of the completion of each task is summarized in Table 1,⁷⁷ along with the corresponding obstacles and challenges.

⁷⁰ See Fig. 2 and 3, below.

⁷¹ L. J. Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 78.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁷⁴ Union Nationale Pour le Développement et la Démocratie (UNDD), ‘Communiqué du 11 Décembre 2008,’ *Madagascar Tribune*, 13 Décembre 2008 ; J. Ramambazafy, ‘Terrorisme d'état: Marc Ravalomanana a définitivement atteint le point de non-retour vers sa chute,’ *Op. Cit.*

⁷⁵ J. Ramambazafy, ‘Terrorisme d'état: Marc Ravalomanana a définitivement atteint le point de non-retour vers sa chute,’ *Op. Cit.*

⁷⁶ L. J. Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 89.

⁷⁷ See Table 1 – Completion of the Three Generic Tasks of Democratic Consolidation in Madagascar (1993-2008), below.

The Obstacles and Challenges to Democratic Consolidation In Madagascar (1992-2009)

Table1. Completion of the Three Generic Tasks of Democratic Consolidation In Madagascar (1992-2009)

Task Main Categories	Task Sub-Categories	Outcomes	Obstacles	Challenges
Task 1 – Democracy Deepening	Task 1.1 – Increasing Political Rights	Failure	Ever increasing presidential power	Constrain the presidential power, make the president a “regular citizen” or at least a “first-among equal citizens”
	Task 1.2 – Increasing Civil Liberties	Failure	Ever increasing presidential power	Constrain the presidential power, make the president a “regular citizen” or at least a “first-among equal citizens”
	Task 1.3 – Decentralizing and Devolving Power to Lower Levels of Government	Failure	Ever increasing presidential power	Constrain the presidential power, make the president a “regular citizen” or at least a “first-among equal citizens”
	Task 1.4 – Putting the Military under Civilian Control	Mixed results	Internal division, politicization and instrumentalization of the military	“Refocus the military’s mission, training and expenditure around issues of external security,” in order to prevent its politicization and instrumentalization by political leaders
Task 2 – Political Institutionalization	Task 2.1 – Strengthening the Bureaucracy	Failure	Deficiency and instrumentalization of the bureaucracy by the president	Find and allocate financial and human resources for this task, and at the same time, insulate the bureaucracy from presidential interference and influence
	Task 2.2 – Strengthening Institutions of Governance (Political Parties, Legislatures, and Electoral Systems)	Failure	Weakness and instrumentalization of the institutions of governance by the president	Constrain the presidential power, make the president a “regular citizen” or at least a “first-among equal citizens”
	Task 2.3 – Strengthening Horizontal Accountability and the Rule of Law	Failure	Weakness and instrumentalization of the judicial system by the president	Constrain the presidential power, make the president a “regular citizen” or at least a “first-among-equal citizen”
Task3–Regime Performance	Task 3.1 – Economic Performance	Mixed results	Undemocratic management style	Achieve economic performance within a truly democratic governance
	Task 3.2 – Political Performance	Mixed results	Undemocratic management style	Achieve economic performance within a truly democratic governance

3.1. The Obstacles and Challenges to Deepening Democracy

The discussion on the completion of *Task 1.1 – Increasing political rights* and *Task 1.2 – Increasing civil liberties* reveals that the political rights and civil liberties of the Malagasy citizens have been frequently violated by the successive presidents, who behaved, as mentioned earlier, like “Monarchic Presidents,”⁷⁸ or Presidents with “near-imperial roles.”⁷⁹ The willingness of these presidents to increase their power without limit and to eliminate any competitor constituted the major obstacle to the completion of these two important tasks of democratic consolidation. As a result, it can be argued that by 2006, Madagascar’s electoral democracy was clearly deteriorating, and moving away from liberal democracy to autocracy.

In connection with the above considerations, the challenge for the completion of these two tasks is to constrain the presidential power, in order to make the president a “regular citizen” or at least a “first-among-equal citizen,” who must abide by the laws and accept competitions and criticisms from other citizens. This can be a very difficult challenge in a country where most people have a “monarchic conception of power” and consider their president as a *ray amandreny* (father-and-mother).⁸⁰

The discussion on the completion of *Task 1.3 – Decentralizing and devolving power to local governments* shows that at least Didier Ratsiraka and Marc Ravalomanana attempted some administrative reforms that looked like a decentralization and devolution of power to local governments. However, instead of truly decentralizing and devolving power to local government, these two presidents were actually tightening their control over the whole country, by delegating their power to trusted allies or political appointees, and hence extending their political networks throughout the whole country. Once again, the willingness of the presidents to increase their power without limit and to eliminate any competitor constitutes the major obstacle to a genuine decentralization and devolution of power. And we can, once more, submit that the challenge for the completion of this task was also to constrain the presidential power, in order to make the president a “regular citizen” or at least a “first among equal citizens.”

Finally, putting the military under civilian control did not seem to be a daunting task in the case of Madagascar, and this had already been done, according to some analysts. However, the real problem was the internal division, along with the politicization and instrumentalization of the military by political leaders. As stated earlier, Marc Ravalomanana in 2002 and Andry Rajoelina in 2009 owed their rise to power to military interventions. Consequently, the challenge in this case was to “refocus the military’s mission, training and expenditure around issues of external security,”⁸¹ in order to prevent its politicization and instrumentalization by political leaders.

3.2. The Obstacles and Challenges to Political Institutionalization

The discussion of the completion of *Task 2.1 – Strengthening the bureaucracy* shows the deficiencies in terms of bureaucracy in Madagascar. However, when bureaucratic institutions existed, they were mostly instrumentalized by the presidents in order to increase their power and to eliminate their competitors. Thus, the challenge to this task is to find and devote financial and human resources to

⁷⁸ International Crisis Group, ‘Madagascar: Sortir Du Cycle De Crises,’ *Op. Cit.*, p. 13. (My translation).

⁷⁹ World Bank, *Madagascar: Governance and Development Effectiveness Review*, *Op. Cit.* p. viii.

⁸⁰ International Crisis Group, ‘Madagascar: Sortir Du Cycle De Crises,’ *Op. Cit.*; World Bank, *Madagascar: Governance and Development Effectiveness Review*, *Op. Cit.*; O. Jütersonke and M. Kartas, *Peace and Conflict Assessment Impact (PCIA): Madagascar* (Geneva, Switzerland, Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP), Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, 2010).

⁸¹ L. J. Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*, *Op. Cit.*, p. 113.

the task in a poor and divided country like Madagascar, and at the same time, insulate the bureaucracy from presidential interference and influence.

The discussion on the completion of *Task 2.2 – Strengthening institutions of governance (such as political parties, legislatures, and electoral systems)* demonstrates how weak these institutions were under the 3rd Republic. In addition to their weaknesses, they were also dominated and instrumentalized by the presidents in their drive to increase their personal power. The political parties were used as “neopatrimonial tools” to win elections, the legislatures reduced to “rubber stamps” in the hands of “Monarchic Presidents,” and the electoral systems instrumentalized in order to produce the electoral results they wanted. Once again, the major obstacle to the completion of this task was the willingness of the presidents to increase their power and to eliminate their competitors, and once more, the challenge is to constrain this presidential power, and to make the president a “regular citizen,” who must accept democratic competition from any citizen.

Finally, the discussion on the completion of *Task 2.3 – Strengthening horizontal accountability and the rule of law* shows that the successive presidents were not accountable to any of the other branches of the government under the 3rd Republic, which they dominated and instrumentalized in their drives to increase their personal power and eliminate their competitors. As a result, the rule of law was not always respected, and the presidents was always able to get anything he wanted from the judiciary. Thus, similarly to the other tasks discussed above, the major obstacle to the completion of this task is, once again, the willingness of the presidents to increase their power and to eliminate any competitor. And once again, the challenge is to constrain this presidential power, and to make the president a “regular citizen,” who must be accountable and abide by the law.

3.3. The Obstacles and Challenges to Regime Performance

Of the three generic tasks of democratic consolidation, it was that of regime performance that the 3rd Republic did relatively well. Indeed, among other things, the 3rd Republic, especially under Marc Ravalomanana, achieved relatively high annual growth rates of the GDP, averaging 5.7% a year between 2003 and 2007, and was able to reduce relatively the poverty rates of the Malagasy citizens from as high as 80% in 2002 to 65% in 2008. In addition, Marc Ravalomanana’s regime received high marks from the international community, as the country was honored to host the summit of the African Union in 2009, and that of the International Organization of the Francophonie in 2010.

However, while a regime must be truly democratic in order to complete the tasks of deepening democracy and strengthening democratic institutions, it does not need to be democratic at all in order to achieve good economic and political performances. In fact, Marc Ravalomanana was proud to say that he “managed the country like his own enterprises,”⁸² which clearly indicates that he did not care much for democratic principles in running the country. Consequently, this management style led him to ignore some of the most basic democratic principles, and to violate the political rights and civil liberties of the citizens, for instance by shutting down scores of radio and television stations, as well as a popular church, and by removing the “secular nature” of the state from the 1992 Constitution.

Thus, taking into consideration the characteristics of Marc Ravalomanana’s regime, we have to ask the question of whether similar economic and political performances could have been achieved within a truly democratic governance, which would have required, at least, a total respect of citizens’ political rights and civil liberties, strong institutions of governance, and a complete independence of the judiciary. Consequently, the challenge is to achieve similar economic and political performances within a truly democratic regime, not with an undemocratic management style which is more appropriate for running private companies.

⁸² R. Carayol, ‘Duel d'hommes d'affaires à Madagascar,’ *Le Monde Diplomatique*, March 2009.

FIGURES

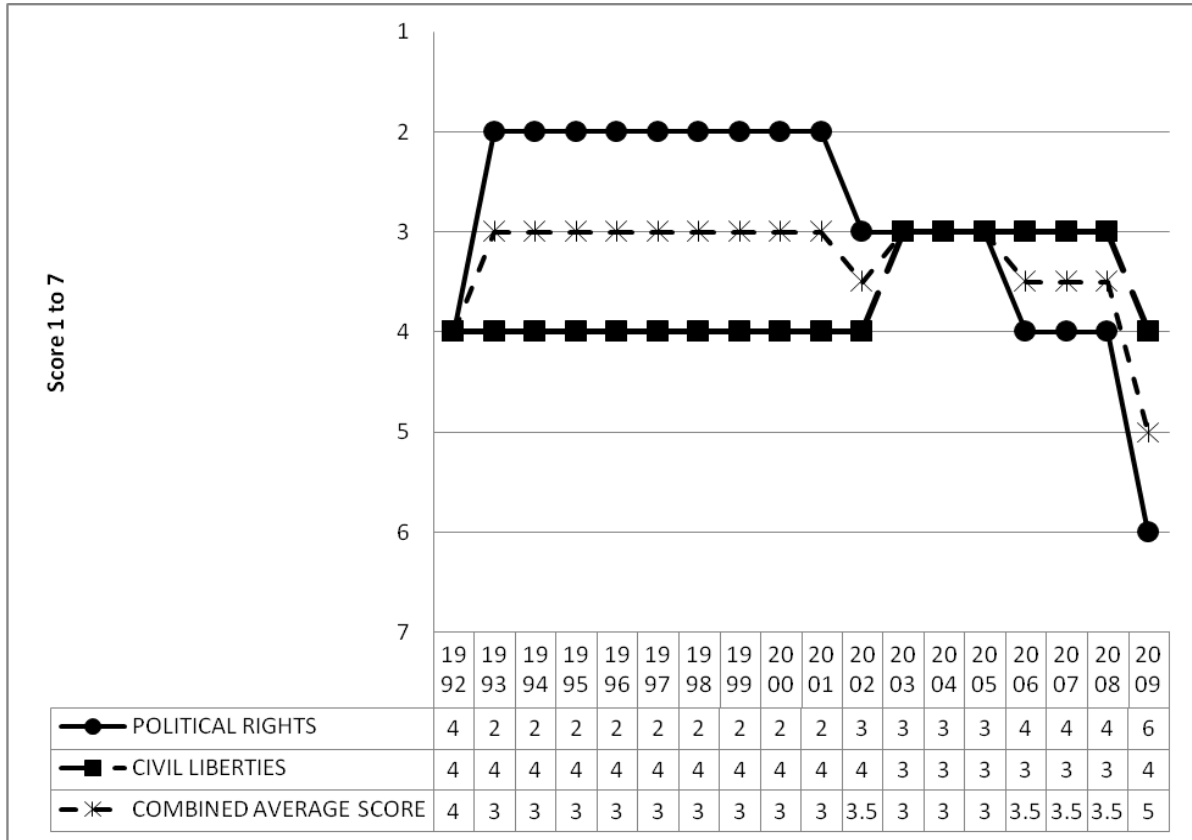


Fig1. Madagascar: Country Status
Source. Freedom House

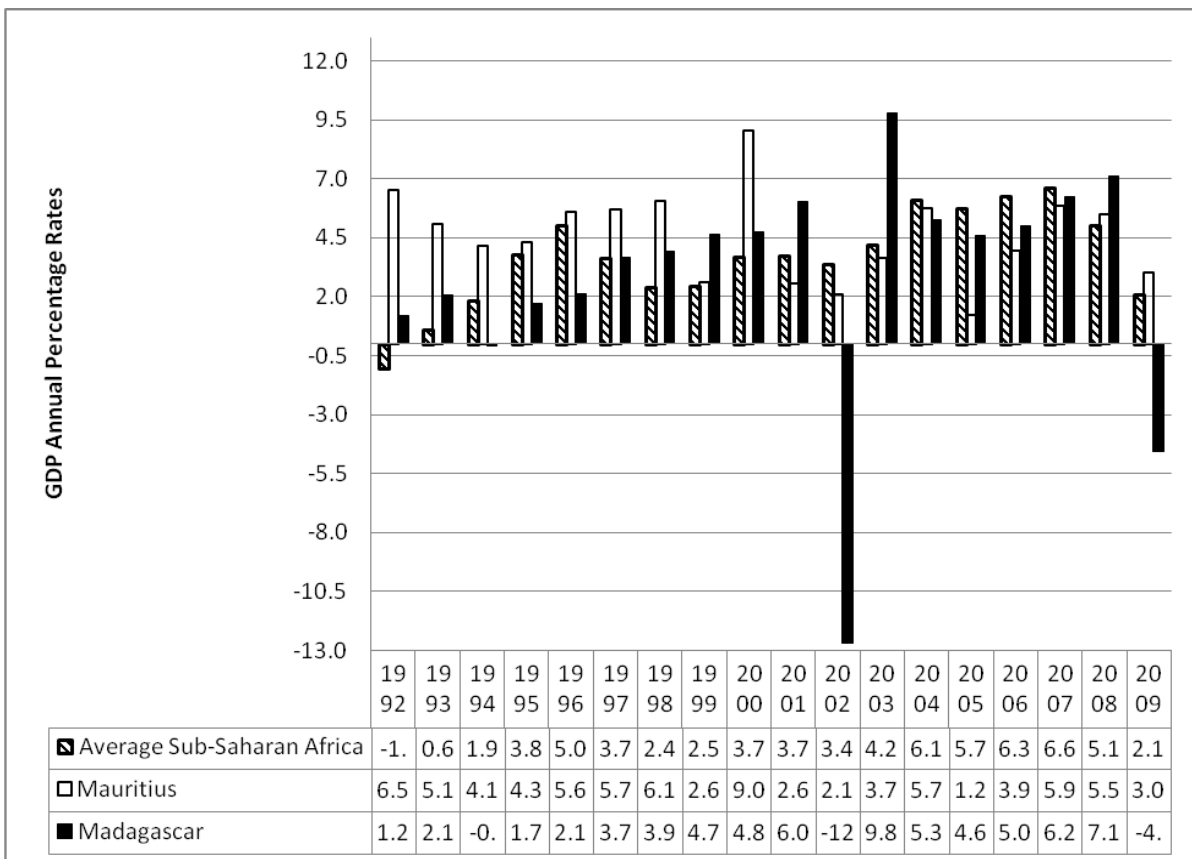


Fig2. Madagascar's GDP Annual Growth Rates in Comparison with Mauritius and the Average Sub-Saharan Africa

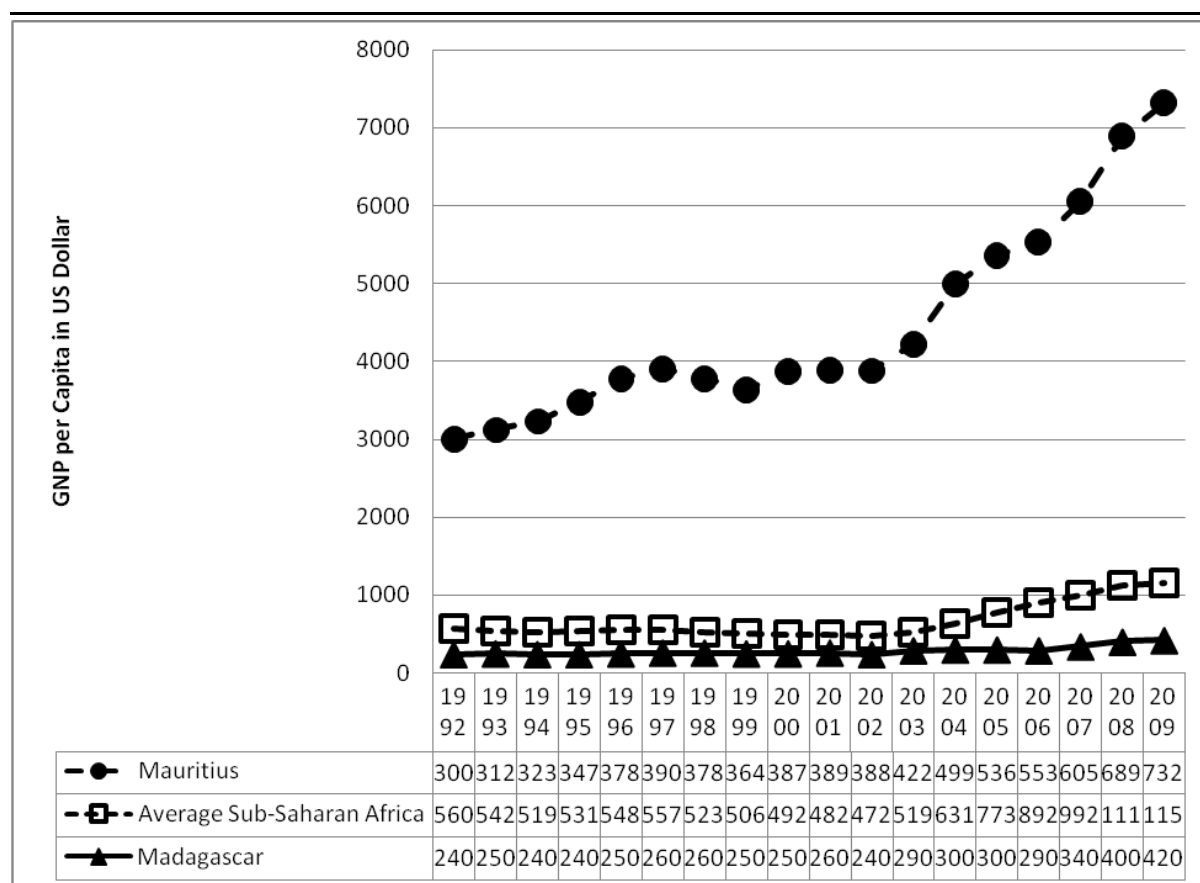


Fig3. Madagascar: GNP per Capita in Comparison with Mauritius and the Average Sub-Saharan Africa

4. CONCLUSION

Building on Larry Diamond’s three generic tasks of democratic consolidation, this article finds that Madagascar’s electoral democracy under the 3rd Republic (1993-2009) was not consolidating. On the contrary, it was clearly deteriorating since 2002, when the political rights score of the country declined from 2 to 3 on the Freedom House’s scale. This deterioration worsened in 2006, as the political rights scores dropped from 3 to 4.

This study also finds that the single most important obstacle to the completion of the three generic tasks of democratic consolidation was the willingness of the successive presidents to increase their personal power and to eliminate their competitors, which led them to violate the political rights and civil liberties of the Malagasy citizens. The political institutions under the 3rd Republic were typically weak, and hardly institutionalized. In addition, they were also instrumentalized by the successive presidents in order to increase their personal power and eliminate their competitors. Under these conditions, the economic and political performances of the 3rd Republic, particularly under Marc Ravalomanana, were questionable, because they were not achieved under a genuine democratic regime, and would not have contributed to democratic consolidation.

In sum, the main argument of this study is that the single most important challenge to democratic consolidation in the case of Madagascar is to drastically constrain the presidential power, in order to make the president a “regular citizen” or at least a “first among equal citizens,” not a *ray aman-dreny* (literally, father-and-mother). We must recognize, however, that this can be a very difficult challenge in a country where most people hold a “monarchic conception of power,” and consider their presidents as “father-and-mother” of the country. Nevertheless, this is the price to pay if the Malagasy people are serious about the consolidation of democracy in their country. Indeed, the alternative to a constrained presidential power will be the continuation the cyclical street protests and political crises aimed at overthrowing a president who had become too autocratic to tolerate, as in the cases of Philbert Tsiranana in 1972, Didier Ratsiraka in 1992 and again in 2001-2002, and Marc Ravalomanana in 2009.