Madagascar, Facing Cyclical Political Crises Since 1972: Issues and Strategies for Sustainable Reconstruction

Georges SOLOFOSON, Joël RANDRIAMIHAINGO, Julieph RANAIVO, Holy Nivosoa RAKOTOMALALA, Olivier VAOVOLO RAZAFINDRATOHA

Shalom University of Madagascar, Talatamaty, Madagascar

ABSTRACT

Madagascar has experienced periods of political instability in recent decades, marked by frequent changes of government and recurring political crises. These problems are often linked to issues such as governance, corruption, the economy and ethnic tensions. The cyclical political situation in Madagascar since 1972 has created major challenges for the stability and development of the country. In addition, leaders have often been unable to stabilize the situation, as the famous maxim in management is: "To govern is to foresee". Those in power thus remain subject to their political and personal interests, which compromises the political stability and economic development of Madagascar.

To address this crisis and work towards reconstruction, several strategies can be considered. Notable political crises include that of 1972, triggered by a military coup led by Colonel Ratsimandrava, and those of 2002 and 2009, all of which had significant consequences for the political stability of the country.

Resolving a political and economic crisis is a complex process that requires a multidimensional approach and the cooperation of various actors, including the government, national and international stakeholders, and civil society. Promoting inclusive dialogue between different parties is essential to find consensual solutions to political problems. This could include discussions between representatives of the government, the opposition, civil society, ethnic groups, and other important stakeholders.

Keywords: Crisis, resolution, politics, development, civil society

INTRODUCTION

This research aims to be an in-depth reflection at the crossroads of the legal and the political, due to its factual and conjuncture aspect. It offers a critical analysis of failing political practices and their challenges in terms of implementing public policies in Madagascar. Recent political news, marked by persistent instability, as well as its influence on public opinion, the media and social networks, motivated the choice of this theme.

Faced with the complex reality of failing political governance in a sovereign country struggling to ensure political stability and combat its systematic impoverishment despite its many economic potentials, it is essential to diagnose these problems in order to propose relevant alternatives.

There is no escape for the leaders, despite their inability to steer the country on the path to development. The famous management maxim, "to govern is to foresee", illustrates this inability. Thus, those in power often remain dependent on their political and personal interests, to the detriment of political stability and

economic development in Madagascar.

Democracy and the rule of law constitute the universal foundations of the Republic, which must be respected as essential conditions for the proper functioning of modern society. However, Madagascar struggles to establish these principles, despite the explicit provisions of its successive constitutions. The country is often faced with a perpetual cycle of political crises, largely due to the struggle for power and the failure to respect fundamental rights.

This research aims to provide insight into the major problems arising from these failing practices, in order to propose reforms likely to improve the political and socio-economic situation in Madagascar.

PROBLEMATIC

The near-persistence of the cyclical political crisis is among the elements that accelerate the pace of decadence and economic dependence of Madagascar. To slow down this decadence, it is crucial to unconditionally respect the rule of law for all citizens. In this regard, it is necessary to answer a series of questions related to the issues of this theme:

- Why has Madagascar been going through these cyclical and spectacular political crises since 1972 to the present day?
- Is there a significant link between these political crises and poor governance?
- Do these cyclical political crises seriously harm the country's development process?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK/LITERATURE REVIEW/KEY CONCEPTS :

The quasi-persistence of the cyclical political crisis is among the elements accelerating the decadence and economic dependence of Madagascar. To curb this trend, it is crucial to unconditionally respect the rule of law for all citizens. It is therefore necessary to answer the following questions, in connection with the issues addressed in this thesis:

- Why has Madagascar been going through spectacular cyclical political crises since 1972 to the present day?
- Is there a significant link between these political crises and poor governance?
- Do these cyclical political crises seriously harm the country's development process?

The theoretical perspective of this thesis adopts a critical approach to the factual aspects of cyclical political crises in Madagascar, focusing on the difficulties of applying the legal instruments governing political life. The triggers of these crises cover several dimensions, including legal, historical, political and economic.

Since October 14, 1958, the date of the return of Madagascar's sovereignty, officially proclaimed on June 26, 1960, the country has been responsible for managing its own affairs while respecting international commitments. The relevant public international law seems clear, especially since the absence of legal and political subordination remains a crucial issue in relations between States.

However, Madagascar's independence divides public opinion and sparks heated controversy, both among citizens expressing their ideas on social networks or in television interviews, and among political parties, particularly opponents of the regime, despite the country's chronic development delay and political instability. Some believe that independence is relative, while others blame dirigisme and neglect of the patriotic spirit.

To better articulate the argument, it is essential to define politics and political crisis. Politics, from the Latin

"polis", designates the art of managing the city and relates to the "public thing" or "res publica" according to Plato. In constitutional law, this term is polysemic and encompasses both the science of state government and the different modes of governance, such as liberalism, authoritarian or reactionary power.

Political crisis, according to the lexicon of legal terms, refers to an event that causes the fall of the government in a parliamentary regime and the period during which the resigning government is not replaced. This definition corresponds well to the dysfunctions and disorganization of state apparatuses resulting from the crisis, with issues that affect the development process.

The resolution of political crises in Madagascar has often been attempted through political agreements, such as the Panorama Agreement of October 31, 1991. This agreement forced the political protagonists to coexist in order to organize elections leading to the enthronement of the Third Republic and the fall of the socialist regime. Trade union movements and opposition parties demanded the abolition of the National Front for the Defense of the Revolution (FNDR), the establishment of political pluralism and a true separation of powers. These demands having been met, a political transition was put in place, with the creation of several transitional institutions.

It is undeniable that the republican tradition requires participatory, inclusive, impartial and universally accepted elections to ensure genuine democratic change. Past experiences show that these elections often become a source of political confrontation due to suspicions of irregularities. Elections are not an end in themselves, but a democratic means of achieving political stability when they are organized in a concerted manner.

Unfortunately, Madagascar's political life has been marked by repeated failures, from independence to the present, with notable cyclical political crises in 1972, 1991, 2002, 2009, 2018 and the recent crisis of 2023. With the exception of the student demand of May 13, 1972 and the demand of 73 deputies in 2018 for an impartial presidential election, the other crises were caused by the contestation of the electoral results and the questioning of the credibility of the institutions responsible for the elections. This situation has led to media attacks on institutions such as the Ministry of the Interior, the Independent National Electoral Commission and the High Constitutional Court.

The politicization of the administration, although prohibited by law, is a common practice in Madagascar, where members of the government are often dependent on the head of state. The Prime Minister, according to article 65 paragraph 11 of the Malagasy Constitution of 2010, is the head of the administration, but the President of the Republic has the power to dismiss him. This situation calls into question the principle of separation of powers.

The Constitution of the Fourth Republic provides for the guarantee of the political neutrality of institutions, but in practice, the President remains the supreme head of the armed forces and president of the High Council of the Judiciary, which compromises the separation of powers.

Finally, the lack of a real democratic culture constitutes a major obstacle to the economic development of Madagascar. Democracy, although provided for by successive constitutions, does not always translate into practice into respect for fundamental rights and the separation of powers. Recurrent political crises and the politicization of the administration continue to negatively affect the country's development process.

METHODOLOGY

This research will be structured around a conceptual analysis of democracy and its implication in the proliferation of political crises. Aware of the imminent dangers, it is opportune to reveal the hidden reality through a rigorous methodological approach.

To strengthen this approach, it is essential to start with a precise diagnosis of the problem, prioritizing a theoretical approach and conducting an experimental or cognitive analysis.

The first phase consists of surveys conducted among different social classes, including politicians, Internet users, lawyers and public officials.

During the second stage, data collections will be carried out from various institutions, with the aim of obtaining reliable information that can be scientifically exploited.

Furthermore, the organization of a reflection and discussion session on the specific aspects of the project constitutes a key point of this research. All these activities will be carried out in close collaboration with a professor specialized in this field.

Considerations and limitations of the research

This thesis aims to address the cyclical political crisis in Madagascar and its impacts on the country's development. However, several limitations arise, manifested in various forms:

1. **Temporality and political context:** The first constraint concerns the temporality of the research object and the current political situation in Madagascar. In a country in democratic reconstruction like Madagascar, direct participation in the sanitation of political life is complex due to the fear of political reprisals. A participatory approach is necessary to overcome these obstacles.
2. **Access to information:** The second limitation is linked to the difficulties of accessing certain information within the public administration. Accessibility to certain documents is restricted due to compliance with the principle of administrative secrecy.
3. **Citizen reluctance:** Finally, during the research, some citizens showed a reluctance to speak out, fearing possible legal harassment.

The implications of the political crisis for development

The persistence of the cyclical political crisis in Madagascar since its independence has negative repercussions on the implementation of public policies and leads to systematic poverty. This impoverishment is manifested by increasing external debt, aggravating the vicious circle of underdevelopment. The achievement of the objectives set by the government, in connection with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is compromised. The General State Policy (PGE) suffers from the political crisis, because the State focuses on crisis management rather than economic recovery.

Recommended solutions

To mitigate the negative economic effects of the political crisis, while respecting the constitutional principles of the rule of law, the following solutions are proposed:

1. **Political reform:** It is crucial to correct past mistakes by promoting political reconciliation between the different political actors. This reconciliation must integrate the "fihavanana", a Malagasy socio-cultural value based on compromise. In addition, the democratic opposition must be maintained as a counter-power, because a well-managed democracy is essential to achieve national objectives. The guarantee of public freedoms and pluralism of opinion is also fundamental to engage the population and strengthen collective responsibility.

2. **Legal and institutional reforms:** The implementation of legal and institutional reforms is necessary to ensure political stability. It is recommended to amend the constitution to move from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic, promoting broad autonomy for regional authorities. A constitutional reform should

also clarify the separation of powers between the executive, legislative and judicial branches. The revision of the current constitution is essential to resolve the confusion between the semi-presidential and Orleanist parliamentary regimes. To limit abuses of authority, it is crucial to reduce the predominant role of the Head of State in certain institutions, such as the High Council of the Judiciary (CSM) and the armed forces. The competition between the Presidency of the Republic and the National Assembly in terms of legislative initiative must be examined to avoid authoritarian excesses.

3. **Decentralization and local governance:** It is recommended to maintain a single central government to ensure national unity, while promoting further decentralization at the local level to support inclusive development. State representatives at the local level should have a technical rather than political role, and a statutory law should clearly define the autonomy of Decentralized Territorial Communities. The roles of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in decision-making and citizen education should also be strengthened to ensure better citizen participation.

CONCLUSION

Summary:

The expertise resulting from this research unequivocally demonstrates that the cyclical political crisis that has hit Madagascar since 1972 seriously compromises the country's development process. Systemic failure is a central ingredient of this crisis, exacerbated by the crisis of dirigisme, institutional manipulation, competition for power and repeated violations of the constitution. These factors ipso facto lead to a systematic impoverishment of the country.

In addition, this crisis is fueled by elements such as the loss of trust of citizens in leaders, the insufficiency of a real democratic alternation, and the politicization of the administration. Madagascar finds itself in a paradoxical situation: despite its many economic potentials, the country remains among the poorest in the world. Local public opinion suspects a complicity between certain political leaders and the colonial powers in the cyclical political crisis, highlighting their respective responsibilities.

It is clear that only respect for the fundamental principle of the rule of law can guarantee the sustainable development of Madagascar.

Opening:

This theme offers a valuable opportunity for citizens and governments to respect legal frameworks in the management of public affairs. For citizens, it helps avoid a passive role by encouraging them to actively participate in cleaning up public life and combating authoritarian excesses. Research contributes to strengthening civic education, promoting fundamental rights and freedoms, and democratic culture.

Ultimately, the critical perspective resulting from this research constitutes a valuable tool for reforming Madagascar's political life. It proposes a normative transformation that meets the essential needs of citizens, with an emphasis on the protection of fundamental rights and citizen responsibility. This thesis paves the way for a new era for the consolidation of roles and responsibilities within national sovereignty.

Other Suggestions:

1. **Inclusive dialogue:** Encourage open and inclusive dialogue among all stakeholders, including political actors, civil society, ethnic groups and international institutions. This can help find consensual solutions and build national consensus.
2. **Political and institutional reform:** Undertake reforms to strengthen democratic institutions, ensure

the separation of powers and eliminate corruption. A strong constitution and independent institutions are essential.

3. **Strengthening the rule of law:** Prioritize strengthening the rule of law to ensure the protection of fundamental rights, fair justice and accountability of political actors. Establish independent monitoring and oversight mechanisms.

4. **Inclusive economic development:** Implement economic policies aimed at reducing inequalities, promoting sustainable development, creating jobs and stimulating economic growth. Emphasis should be placed on economic diversification and social inclusion.

5. **Investment in education:** Prioritize education to equip citizens with the skills needed for active participation in political and economic life. Education also contributes to poverty reduction and the creation of an informed society.

6. **Regional and international cooperation:** Collaborate with neighboring countries, regional organizations, and the international community to gain support, advice, and resources. Regional cooperation can also contribute to political stability.

7. **Social Security and Poverty Reduction:** Implement social security programs and initiatives to reduce poverty. Social safety nets can alleviate social tensions and contribute to long-term stability.

8. **Promoting Civil Society:** Encourage the development and involvement of civil society as a counterweight to political power. Civil society organizations play a crucial role in the checks and balances of power.

9. **Sustainable management of natural resources:** Adopt policies for sustainable management of natural resources to avoid conflicts related to their access and use. This can contribute to economic and social stability.

10. **Psychosocial support and reconciliation:** Establish psychosocial support programs to help people overcome trauma related to political crises. National reconciliation is essential to heal divisions.

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