



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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MAWSON: My name is Amy Mawson and I'm here with Dr. Khabele Matlosa. The date is February 10th, 2010 and we're here at the EISA (Electoral Institute of Southern Africa) offices here in Johannesburg. First of all, thank you very much for agreeing to this interview.

MATLOSA: *You're most welcome.*

MAWSON: Maybe I could start off just by asking you a little bit about your career path. So what position you hold now and how you got into elections work.

MATLOSA: *Absolutely. You're most welcome once again to the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa. I did get your message that you were engaged in this project and that you'd like to talk to us. I gladly agreed because this is one of my areas of work and I've been working in this area for a long time. It is one of my passions, actually.*

To answer your question directly, I come from Lesotho. I started my career in that country. I studied in Lesotho with my first degree and studied my Master's degree in Leeds University in the UK (United Kingdom) and then did my PhD in Cape Town at the University of Western Cape. Then I did my post-grad diploma in conflict resolution in Uppsala University Sweden.

So then I started working. I started off as a lecturer at the National University of Lesotho in my own country, Lesotho. From there I went to work in Zimbabwe, briefly with an institution called the Southern African Regional Institute for Policies Studies, in Harare, Zimbabwe. Then I joined EISA as the Director of Programs which is my current position now. In fact, it may interest you also to know that I'm just about to leave the EISA to join the UNDP as their Governor's advisor to be in charge of UNDP programs in Africa, the whole continent. So I'm on my way out of EISA, basically. So that's basically myself in terms of my career and my interest in this area.

I've been working in this elections, democracy and governor's area for a very long time, pretty much—to be exact, actually, since the 1980's. That's when I started taking an interest in this area. I think it was prompted by the problems that we used to have in my own country, Lesotho, with elections. I noticed that the only peaceful election we ever had was in 1965, when we were preparing for for self-government to take over the reigns of power from the colonial administration in 1966 when the country gained its independence. That was shocking to me. Since that time all the elections were marked by violence. The first post-independence election of 1970 was marked by violence, massive, enormous amount of violence claiming human lives, destroying property, shaking even the moral fabric of society, as it were.

That's 1970, and then we never had elections for a long period of time, right? For close to 15 years, the country experienced one party rule under the Basotho National Party administration.

Then we then had what we can call a mock election, basically. It was a mock election in 1985, because that wasn't an election to write home about. It was a one party, a one-person show, as it were. Opposition parties boycotted the election. The ruling BNP contested the election on its own and was returned to power. So I kept saying, "What's going on here?"

Then we had a military rule between 1986 and 1993. By the way, that's the only SADC (Southern African Development Community) country that ever, ever had a

military government. SADC has about how many countries now, as we speak now? SADC has—Southern African Development Community. It has a membership of 15 countries. Lesotho was the only country then to have a military government in power. The recent case is Madagascar, that's the recent case. But then Lesotho was the only one with a military government.

Then after the military government, then we had a transitional election in 1993. With a sigh of relief, I said now we can probably see our way. It was a good election and all of us were excited. I remember we were all so optimistic about the future of the country. It went very well, it went very well. The party that had been denied free play in the political space won the election. That is Basotho Congress Party. We all predicted that. It was a good election, as I said. It didn't really have a lot of incidents of violence and all that.

Then come 1998. You've never seen anything like that. The country, just turned, overnight, the stories that you used to read about Somalia. You could visualize the way—you could see. What's going on? I have never seen anything like that in my life. Never.

MAWSON: So were you in Maseru at that time.

MATLOSA: *I was in Maseru, absolutely. Highly involved as an analyst, not a politician. So we're analyzing—so I've written about all of them. All the elections up till now, all of them, all of them, I've written about. To reflect, I've written on: 1965, 1970, 1985, 1993, 1998, 2002 and the most recent one of 2007. The 1998 election was the worst in terms of post-election violence. It even prompted a military intervention in Lesotho, remember, by South Africa and Botswana on behalf of SADC. Right? Now, that was the worst ever political instability the country had experienced.*

Following the post-election crisis of 1998, a lot of thinking went into what triggered that crisis. We engaged in dialogue and consensus emerged that we need to embark on electoral reforms.

MAWSON: So that was when the IPA (Interim Political Authority) started working.

MATLOSA: *Absolutely, the IPA then started working. The IPA was a product of the SADC intervention. You will recall that, if we could just go back a little bit, retrace our steps. In 1994, there were some problems in the country within the security forces and all that, and the King at the time usurped power, the current king, King Letsie III. That prompted SADC to intervene with a view to restore democratic order. A Troika arrangement was put in place to oversee Lesotho's democracy on behalf of SADC. The SADC Troika comprised South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe. Following the SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Mauritius in 1995 Mozambique joined the SADC Troika. There were now four countries representing SADC and acting as external guarantors of Lesotho's democracy. [Time 8:29]*

These guarantors negotiated with the King to relinquish power and restore democratic order. This was basically the context prior to the 1998 elections. There was political tension prior to the elections. Political violence followed the election. IPA was then set up to facilitate both electoral and constitutional reforms with a view to ensure that future elections do not lead to violence and political instability. Indeed, the subsequent election of 2002 was held under a reformed electoral system. That was a good election that brought with it a ray of hope. But Lesotho politics is like a pendulum swing: one moment, you are optimistic as with

the 2002 elections, at another you tend to become pessimistic as with the recent 2007 elections and its aftermath.

MAWSON: It's not predictable.

MATLOSA: *It's not predictable. That's the right word. It's unpredictable, highly unpredictable.*

MAWSON: Can I ask you; so in 1998 it was the first time that Lesotho was using an independent election commission, right?

MATLOSA: *Let me reflect, yes.*

MAWSON: I think it was first established in 1997.

MATLOSA: *Correct, you are right. You are right, because in 1993 elections were run by an Elections Officer based in the Prime Minister's office. There were problems with that, because then how could that elections officer be impartial if he or she is based in the Prime Minister's office and the Prime Minister, himself, is the contestant. So the transformation of the elections office into an independent electoral commission was a positive step in the right direction.*

The first chair of the commission was Mr. Sekara Mafisa, who is now the current Ombudsman. He was the first chair of the commission. He was then succeeded by Mr. Leshele Thoahlane. Both of them did a fantastic job as the chairs of the commission and positioned it in such a way that it is really respected. It has some respect from all political actors, from all sides of the spectrum. So it was Mr. Sekara Mafisa first followed by Mr. Leshele Thoahlane who is now head of the anti-corruption unit in Lesotho. Now the current chair, another powerful personality, is Ms. Limakatso Mokhothu who took over from Mr. Leshele Thoahlane.

In a nutshell, the institution has been growing and progressively gaining public integrity. It's beginning to gain respect and public trust. It is beginning to prove to all that if you want to run a clean and transparent election that enjoys credibility, and public trust of all the actors, you really need an independent electoral commission. There's no doubt about it.

MAWSON: My understanding was that since the last elections in 2007 when it seemed to be some more problems because of these informal alliances that some of the major parties went into in order to sort of get seats through the Mixed Member Proportional model (MMP). They wanted to get both the constituency seats and the compensatory seats so they formed these informal alliances, for example the LCD (Lesotho Congress for Democracy) formed an alliance with the NIP (National Independent Party) Party.

MATLOSA: *National Independent Party, yes.*

MAWSON: And the ABC (All Besotho Convention) Party formed an alliance with the Lesotho Workers' Party. My understanding was that the public's trust in the IEC was a little bit shaken by what happened in 2007. It's not clear to me whether that trust was really a reflection of the public's mistrust of political parties which then sort of leaked over into mistrust of the IEC, or whether the IEC really had done some things that caused the public to lose trust a little bit in the IEC. What is your perspective on that?

MATLOSA: *That's a very important point. We need to actually discuss it in some depth, because to me, that is exactly where the current problem facing the country lies.*

Let's trace it. Lesotho has been using the British type first-past-the-post electoral system since independence. It's a system that operates on the bases of constituencies, as you know, and the candidates contesting the elections come from constituencies. So each constituency has to elect one individual to represent it. In that case then a Parliament has the number of seats equivalent to the number of constituencies in such a way that each MP (Member of Parliament) is responsible for each constituency.

The tricky part about that model is that one; it does not require you to win election by absolute majority. Simple plurality of votes qualifies you to be an MP, which means that the electoral system could deliver minority winner legitimately representing electorates in Parliament. Which again tells us we can equally have a minority government governing the country. A minority government. More importantly, it disenfranchises the electorates, because you can have a number of votes wasted. Candidates and governments have won elections on minority votes. It disenfranchises the electorate.

Even more importantly, it is too adversarial. It is too adversarial. It makes politics too adversarial. It's what we call winner takes all system. It's what we call zero-sum contested elections. It's not conducive to nation-building, especially in fragile societies, if I may call it that way, fragile, conflict-ridden, polarized societies. It's not good for that, it's not good.

The reason why I mentioned it earlier that all the elections in that country have been marred by violence, is in part attributable to the winner-take all electoral system that was used between 1965 and 1998. In part then we've come to discover that one major cause of this election-related violence in that country over the years is the electoral model. It's the first-past-the-post electoral model. It was just not serving the country at all.

It was with this realization that IPA with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) organized various dialogue fora to which I personally participated and made various presentations around electoral system reforms. Then a decision was made that now, let's change from this model to a Mixed Member Proportional system to bring in proportionality and bring in compensation to smaller parties. The idea was to compensate smaller parties. I want to emphasize that. I want to emphasize that because I'm coming to the heart of your question shortly. I want to emphasize the fact that when the Mixed Member Proportional system was introduced the whole idea was to bring in proportionality so that when you win a certain amount of votes, you are able to at least benefit the same proportion when votes are calculated to translate them into parliamentary seats, you get my point.

Second idea was that you have smaller parties. Some of these parties do not have concentrated support within constituencies, but they have support which is considerable enough across constituencies. But the first-past-the-post will not allow you to get into Parliament if you don't have concentrated support in constituencies, but it's across constituencies, because you have to win constituencies. So we had to combine the first-past-the-post system with proportional representation system which is what is operated in this country, South Africa. South Africa operates the party list, the proposal presentation system, as well as Mozambique, Angola and Namibia, you name them.

We had to bring this to Lesotho to combine the two systems now.

MAWSON: Why was the decision taken not to have a fully proportional system?

MATLOSA: *I think the idea was that you don't want to move all the way from the first-past-the-post full-blown into the proportional representation. You need to keep the best of what you already know, what the electorates also know. You don't bring about a too-radical transformation. This was meant to be a gradual and incremental change. Probably, even if at some point you'll get to adopting proportional representation, the process should be gradual. Take the best of the first-past-the-post system and the best of the proportional representation system. It worked well. It was adopted in 2001.*

MAWSON: One.

MATLOSA: *One, You do recall, yes, 2001. It resulted in to the appropriate constitutional amendments. And it was first applied in 2002. It worked well. It worked marvelously, you know. The election itself was peaceful to start with and we had a broadly representative parliament. The election was not followed by violence and political instability. The electorates seemed excited about the new model, because at some point we thought it was too complicated for them but they managed to vote perfectly well under the circumstances, and civil society organizations together with the IEC were able to undertake civic and voter education.*

MAWSON: Because they had to do two ballots now.

MATLOSA: *Absolutely, because with the new MMP model voters cast two ballots, unlike with the First-Past-The-Post system. With the old model you just had to vote once. This time around you had to vote one for the constituency, the constituency vote. And then you had to vote again for the party, the party list. So it's two ballots.*

Once the new MMP model came into operation since 2002, we were all comfortable, probably too complacent maybe. We were all comfortable that we got the right formula.

MAWSON: Every one said, told me in Maseru that it was so peaceful. Everyone was happy.

MATLOSA: *It was so peaceful and we were all so gratified and relaxed. But given the pendulum swings of Lesotho politics, the ray of hope brought about by the 2002 elections has been tainted by the aftermath of the 2007 elections and this shows how unpredictable politics is in that country. The political elites in that country, I think every time they're thinking of how best they can manipulate every system that we have in place in this country. Now they've come with something that nobody ever thought of. They noticed a loophole in the electoral law regarding party alliances. Big parties entered into informal alliances with smaller parties.*

Let me put it this way, because there's context to this as well, that you don't miss the sense of how these things were unfolding. Just before the 2007 elections the ruling party, Lesotho Congress for Democracy, LCD, experienced a bitter split, a very bitter split, a devastating split, when a new party emerged in the form of the All Basotho Convention, as a breakaway group from the ruling party through floor crossing in Parliament. The break-away group was led by by the then Minister of Information and Technology, Mr. Tom (Motsoahae) Thabane, a very, very influential politician within the LCD then. The LCD was so hurt by that

development alone. The split brought about a very tense atmosphere as we were approaching the election in 2007. The split happened in late 2006.

This led to the Prime Minister calling for a snap election. It was a fiercely contested election. Major political players noticed a loophole within the electoral system and sought to exploit to the fullest. Both the LCD and ABC noticed that they could get into informal alliances with smaller parties without legally breaching the electoral law. So the All Basotho Convention went into an informal alliance with the Lesotho Workers Party. LCD went into an informal alliance with another smaller party, National Independent Party. In my own opinion, both alliances had the net effect of undermining the MMP electoral model.

The only legitimate alliance was the one formed by the BCP allied parties, Basutoland Congress Party, Basutoland African Congress, I think, and another smaller party. That one was registered with the IEC as a formal alliance and contested the election under one banner of the Lesotho People's Congress (LPC). LCD/NIP and ABC/LWP alliances were not registered formally with the IEC. The leader of LCD (The Prime Minister) appeared on the NIP list the same way leader of ABC (Mr. Tom Thabane) featured prominently on the LWP party list.

MAWSON: I hadn't realized that the Prime Minister was on the NIP list.

MATLOSA: *Yes, the Prime Minister was the first on the NIP party list. NIP is not a significant party, but the LCD identified that party as an ally precisely because that party uses a similar symbol to their own symbol. This had caused the LCD some considerable votes in 2002. Thus, part of the LCD strategy therefore was to try and reclaim their lost votes.*

MAWSON: It's a very similar symbol.

MATLOSA: *In the previous election of 2002, NIP garnered a lot of votes, some of which, we reckoned, were meant for LCD, but the electoral, particularly in the rural areas, could not distinguish between the two symbols. That's why LCD went quickly to establish this marriage of convenience with the National Independent Party.*

The ABC also went to Lesotho Workers Party hoping to capture the votes of the workers. Unfortunately for ABC, Lesotho is a labour reserve economy. It is not the huge economy with an expansive industrial base like South Africa. Because we don't really have a huge manufacturing sector, much of the workforce, in fact, is in South Africa working on the mines and farms. Probably they thought they could use the alliance partly to also mobilize Basotho migrant workers in South Africa. But this strategy has not worked that way anyway. [Time 26:39]

But the main point here is that LCD/NIP and ABC/LWP alliances were not formally registered with the IEC. I think this point should be stated vividly. I'm sure that you discussed this with Mr. Thoahlane the other former IEC chairperson and also the current chair, Ms. Mokhothu.

MAWSON: Mokhothu.

MATLOSA: *I think maybe they made this clear, that when all these things were reported, the alliance by BCP, BAC and the other smaller party was given a blessing by the IEC. Okay? Saying, this one can contest election. Now the IEC then warned the LCD and ABC, I'm sure you got this. The IEC then warned the Lesotho Congress for Democracy, and All Basotho Convention that, "Your alliances may not work.*

They are informal. They may disturb or distort the new model." All this information is contained in the report of the IEC on the 2007 elections.

MAWSON: I haven't actually seen that report.

MATLOSA: *I can give you a copy. It's in the report, that it will distort the model. Now both parties ignored the warning by the IEC. It's important for us to record that. Both parties ignored the advice by the IEC and went ahead. But the IEC also erred, in a way, because after warning the parties they could have also gone public to warn the public now that, "Look. We have this kind of situation and we have warned the parties this way and they have not listened to us." The IEC could have publicly blown the whistle.*

On a lighter note, let's take an analogy of a soccer match. The IEC is like a referee in a soccer match. When a referee sees a player breaching the rules of the game he issues out a yellow card. So the IEC issued a yellow a card to LCD/NIP and ABC/LWP alliances. This was good and amounted to fair play. The IEC was simply saying, look, what you are doing is not correct. Now, if the same player breaches the rules again, he's issued a red card. The IEC failed to issue a red card to both informal alliances. That's basically it.

Coming back to your earlier point about public trust in the IEC following the 2007 elections, my sense is that the people began to lose trust in political parties. Political parties do not enjoy a lot of public trust in Lesotho and this got worse following the 2007 elections. I therefore think that political parties have lost public trust more than the IEC. We do not have evidence suggesting the the IEC has lost public integrity, but Afrobarometer studies have demonstrably shown that parties are losing public trust.

MAWSON: And the turnout reflects that.

MATLOSA: *Absolutely it does. Look at the 2007 elections when voter turn-out plummeted to, forty-something percent, 45% there about. That's shocking. The turnout shows that voter apathy is a reflection of declining trust by the public on the political parties and politicians. I think, to be honest with you, the trust in the IEC has not dropped that much. I think the IEC was caught in the crossfire, if I may put it that way. The IEC unfortunately was caught in the crossfire. I don't think they are that much to blame. I think the main culprit, and I've said this over and over again in many conferences and in my own writings on the subject, that the main problem lies with the political parties and with the political elites. The IEC, unfortunately, got caught in this conundrum.*

MAWSON: Because they got caught in this crossfire, can I just ask you, because when I was speaking to some of the commissioners in Maseru, they were saying to me, really, their problems now are perceptions, that the public does sort of have this perception that the IEC maybe is not trustworthy, because they got caught in this crossfire.

MATLOSA: *Absolutely, it has affected them any way.*

MAWSON: Right. So what do you think they can do to overcome this? If it's really a matter of them just getting caught in the crossfire and they weren't maybe so culpable of wrong doing themselves, how do they overcome these, sort of, public perceptions?

MATLOSA: *I think the IEC needs reach out much more to the public, quite frankly. They need to reach out much more. They don't have to wait for an election to happen for them to reach out to the public. They need to reach out to the public on a continuous and regular basis in between elections and more so during elections. Public outreach is important for the IEC. I think after this debacle, they really need to reach out much, much more.*

One way to do that, you know we can learn from the IEC in South Africa too. The manage elections and in between elections, they focus on democracy building. Lesotho IEC could learn some useful lessons from this experience. That'll allow them to be active both during elections and in between elections, to build democracy through civic education in between elections but focus on elections through voter education during election periods.

Thus far, our IEC has not been very good at that, so they really need to develop a much more strong civic and voter education program. So civic education would be between elections, and emphasize more voter education around elections. They need to really do that. That is number one.

Number two, they need to strengthen the effectiveness of party liaison committees so as to build trust within the parties and smoothen its relationship with the parties too. As it is now the parties are divided. You may also have picked up that we are scheduled for a local government election this year. You may have picked it up now that some opposition parties are threatening to boycott this election. Part of the reason why some opposition parties are threatening to boycott the local government elections is that they are calling for electoral reforms ahead of the poll. [Time 36:04]

Thirdly, in order to redeem itself, the IEC really, quite frankly, needs to spearhead electoral reforms. They have to spearhead electoral reforms, in particular reform of the electoral law. The electoral law needs to be reformed and one important reform area is how best to regulate party alliances during electoral contests. It is imperative that these reforms are embarked upon, in particular ahead of the general election, twenty-what? Twenty—.

MAWSON: Twelve.

MATLOSA: *Twelve. If you don't do that before that, then the country is not going anywhere. The country will remain in a crisis mode.*

MAWSON: The IEC is only in the position, right, to sort of propose legislation, or propose reforms and then it's up to Parliament to pass them.

MATLOSA: *Correct.*

MAWSON: So if the parties are the ones that are always trying to use these loopholes, do you think it's possible that the reforms will actually get passed in Parliament?

MATLOSA: *To be quite frank with you, that country, even the politicians themselves know it, it needs major electoral reforms now. We never thought of it. We knew that we'd need electoral reforms at some stage, but I never thought that it would be this early. I never thought that it would be this early. I was actually giving the country ten years before I could think of going through another major electoral reform. I was giving it until 2012, from 2002 to 2012. That was my projection, but it seems that the need is right now for major reforms, much much earlier than I had thought. This thing has come very early, very early; earlier than I thought.*

Now, they know for a fact that we need the reforms and they know for a fact that SADC itself, Southern African Development Community, is also worried about the political situation in Lesotho. The situation should not deteriorate the way it has gone in Madagascar. It should not deteriorate the way that it has gone in Zimbabwe. So the politicians also know that the spotlight is on them. SADC sent an eminent person to mediate the process, in the form of Sir Ketumile Quett Masire, former President of Botswana, who did a marvelous job. The report he did, it was a marvelous report, fantastic. Done everything a human being would, you know, humanly do under the circumstances, but we're still in a deadlock situation. The Lesotho Council of Churches, under Bishop Mokuku's stewardship, has taken up the baton from Sir Ketumile trying to mediate the post-election conflict and there does not seem to light at the end of the tunnel, at least so far.

MAWSON: I wanted to ask you about this.

MATLOSA: *Sure. Yes, they're trying their best, but we're still in a deadlock. What I'm trying to say is that the politicians know. So when the reforms are initiated, they'll be under pressure to adopt them in Parliament. They will not reject them. And they should not be left on their own devices, by the way. Civil society has to mobilize and mount pressure on political leaders to adopt and implement electoral reforms, by the way. It has to be a concerted effort. Civil society has to lobby out there, that we need these things to happen so that we bring the country back on track to democracy and peace. The country needs democracy and peace in order to develop and achieve social progress.*

Having said this though, I should hasten to add that the economics of politics is a tricky business in Lesotho. Lesotho is a poverty-stricken labor reserve economy. The private sector is virtually non-existent. The state is the main employer. Thus, the state is the only avenue for accumulation of wealth and sustenance of a more decent livelihood. Lesotho politicians are perfectly aware of that. So, what do they do? They look at the state as an avenue for wealth accumulation, let me put it that way. Right? So they look at the state as the only avenue, in that sense, for accumulation and for wealth accumulation.

MAWSON: Parliamentarians are very well paid.

MATLOSA: *Absolutely, very well paid. They are well paid even more than lecturers and professors at the National University of Lesotho (NUL), as it were. You get my point. So then part of the reason why they look at the state as a site for wealth creation is exactly that parliamentarians and cabinet members are well paid and get lucrative salary packages with numerous allowances. So the contestation for the state power becomes so fierce. It turns into a cutthroat competition, which, often times, then results into violence because the stakes are too high. Elections are perceived as war by other means.*

MAWSON: Can I ask you then, related to that, because you were talking earlier on about the way the parties decided to try and find loopholes for the 2007 elections. It was making me wonder whether when the IPA negotiations were going on around 2000, 2001 and the parties were deciding on the new electoral model, were they—in your opinion, were they not serious then about the Mixed Member Proportional model? Because I know that LCD originally was trying to get a parallel model which they basically got in the last election.

MATLOSA: *That's correct, that's correct.*

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- MAWSON: Right?
- MATLOSA: *Absolutely.*
- MAWSON: Were they not really serious then when negotiating the model? Was it sort of international pressure or regional pressure that was encouraging them to adopt this new model and the parties themselves did it to get through the process, but they were not really that committed to it?
- MATLOSA: *That's a good question. Actually, there were two competing schools of thought around the negotiations for the new electoral model. One school, championed mainly by the opposition parties, in particular, propounded the idea of adoption of the Mixed Member Proportional system. In particular, one smaller party, Popular Front for Democracy (PFD) whose leader happened to be the co-chair of the IPA championed the call within IPA for adoption of the MMP system. This is a very small party in terms of electoral support, but very noisy by the way. Very noisy in terms of bringing policy issues on the table for discussion. Very—what's the word?*
- MAWSON: Progressive?
- MATLOSA: *Progressive, that's the right word, progressive ideologically too as it espouses social democratic ideals. Those are the parties that are formed that were genuine about this change, in particular coming from opposition side, that we really meant change, so that we addressed the problems that we experienced in previous elections. That was one school of thought. Its proponents argued for 80:40 proportions in devising the new electoral model: 80 seats contested on constituency basis and 40 contested through party lists. But you also had another school of thought, a counter-trend should I say, comprising a group of politicians who firstly attempted to resist this change, but when pressure became unbearable then tried to get the Parallel System. The champion of this course was the ruling LCD. They initially opted for a Parallel model and then later argued against 80:40 proportions suggesting 90:30. But when all these strategies failed, the current model was then adopted through an arbitration tribunal which recommended the model as it stands now with a provision that later on the country could also consider adopting the full Proportional Representation system.*
- MAWSON: So with the parallel system, what they would have got is the 80 constituency seats and then the 40 proportional seats as a separate—.
- MATLOSA: *Separate, counted separately. Correct.*
- MAWSON: So no compensation.
- MATLOSA: *No compensation. If the Parallel Model had been adopted we would have lost the compensatory element that is inherent in the MMP model basically. So in a nutshell, opposition parties pushed hard for electoral reforms. The ruling LCD first resisted the electoral reforms, to change from the first-past-the-post to the Mixed Member Proportional. When pressure mounted from within the country and outside, they then said okay, no, no, no, at least then parallel. That didn't work. Then they then said okay, no the proportions should be, I think, 90/30 there about, 90/30. That didn't work. So they had to accept the 80/40 reluctantly. It was not their own choice. That is why it was so easy for them in 2007, therefore, to manipulate the system and distort it in such away that it ultimately, to all intents and purposes, became a parallel system.*

MAWSON: So, when we got to the 2007 elections, earlier on you were talking about how the IEC, they gave the yellow card, they warned the parties that this was not the right way, that they should really be not trying to exploit this loophole, but they didn't give the red card. What would have been the red card from your perspective?

MATLOSA: *I think the red card would have been a simple thing really. We have warned the parties, they haven't listened to us; you convene a party liaison committee meeting. The IEC has different committees?*

MAWSON: They have consultative committees.

MATLOSA: *Consultative committees, different, about 7 of them. You call the parties together. You say this is the situation and we have warned the parties this way. We're still warning them now in the presence of all of you. Okay? That's what should have happened, warning them that this will not continue. We want them to commit themselves in this meeting that they're going to change tactics. If they don't we're going to go public. We are managing the process and we have to make sure that when we manage it well. The tricky part is that this thing was not, what's the word, a breach any aspect of the electoral law. That's where the IEC got caught napping in this whole situation really. I feel for them. There was no law breached, but there was everything wrong politically about that. Unfortunately for the poor IEC, they administer the law and not politics. They could have said, "So let's call a meeting of all of them, put the thing on the table, and then threaten them that if you don't change strategy, we're going to go public so that the public knows that we have done these. Even though we as the IEC are perfectly aware that you have no breached any aspect of the electoral law, we are concerned that the action may distort the model." Yes.*

MAWSON: Can I ask you one thing?

MATLOSA: *Absolutely.*

MAWSON: This is something that I have been struggling with a little bit, to understand. I know that there was nothing specific in the law that said that these alliances could not happen and this is why and where the IEC really found themselves in this trap. But there was somebody in Maseru who said to me, look, what the IEC could have done, they could have tried to reject the alliances and if they then got taken to court by the parties saying, "No. Look, there's nothing in the law. You can't reject them," then at least the IEC would have covered themselves. At least they would have openly tried to reject the alliances and they could have tried to reject them on the basis of it being, although not specifically written down in the law that these alliances could not happen, that it negated the spirit and the intent of the MMP model. Do you think there's any basis that they could have done that?

MATLOSA: *I don't know, I'm not a lawyer so maybe I may not have grasped the essence of the argument very well. I'm not a lawyer, but I fail to see how the IEC would go to court if the parties have not breached the law. You resort to courts if there a legal case to resolved. And, you also go to court if you have a prima facie evidence that a particular law has been breached.*

MAWSON: No, I didn't mean they would go to court. I meant the IEC would say, "No. Look, we're not going to accept the NIP list with all these clearly LCD cabinet members on it." And then probably what would have happened is the parties would have tried to take the IEC to court to say, "You can't reject it. It's not written down in

the law.” Then at least the IEC would have been able to say, “Well, we tried.” Do you see what I mean? They would have been able to cover themselves.

MATLOSA: *That's right, that's right. I get it. I get it, absolutely. That could have been one route, but the IEC I think, come to think of it now, the law says that, if I recall off the cuff, the law actually says that the leader of the party will submit, the leader or a designated member of the leadership of the party, will submit the list to the IEC. That's what the law says. The law doesn't say the list would be scrutinized by the IEC to ensure that those on the list are in fact—.*

MAWSON: That's true, yes, that's true.

MATLOSA: *It doesn't do that. So the IEC they're stuck to the law. The parties have submitted their lists. Even if I can see them, this is really, this is not on, the law forces me to accept it. This is what Mr. Mohale did, who's the legal officer, Mr. Moteka Mohale. That's what he did, the poor guy. He simply accepted the list and he could see that there was something untoward on the list, but he was—legally he was powerless. Let me put it that way. Legally he was powerless. But I'm saying yes, legally there was nothing untoward about the process, but politically and in terms of managing the electoral process there was a lot wrong.*

MAWSON: So do you think then, as you were saying, what the IEC could have done even within the bounds of the law, they could have gone public and told people.

MATLOSA: *Absolutely, absolutely.*

MAWSON: Do you think the reason they didn't is because they didn't have time? Because a lot of people at the IEC were saying, “Well, it's such a hectic time. We didn't—you know, the snap election, we didn't have time.”

MATLOSA: *No, no, I don't think so. I'm sorry, I don't think so. I quite frankly think that they were put under pressure, yes. There was an enormous amount of political pressure put on the IEC. I have no doubt in my mind. The pressure of the snap election, for example, there's a snap election. Snap elections are not easy, so there was pressure, you have to compress your election calendar. Now you are faced with this thing and politicians are putting you under pressure. You have to accept that list.*

Let's also remember, quite frankly, the IEC is independent, but to all intents and purposes, still highly dependent on government. There's no doubt about it. Financial resources are from government through the relevant ministry. I don't think it's even through the consolidated fund, the consolidated budget of the—through Parliament. It's direct through the relevant minister. So there is a lot of political pressure that can be exacted on the IEC. So I don't think time was a factor. I think, yes the snap election as a factor combined with deliberate political pressure by politicians themselves, you know.

MAWSON: It compounded things.

MATLOSA: *It compounded the whole thing, but there was an enormous amount of political pressure, I can assure you. There was an enormous amount of political pressure on the IEC.*

MAWSON: So that gets to a kind a key point of our research is do you think if the IEC was a stronger institution, not necessarily like the individuals in the IEC, but whether it had a sort of stronger institutional basis they would have been able to do more?

MATLOSA: *Our IEC needs to be reformed too. So far, we've been talking about the need for electoral reforms and the need to tighten the electoral law. There's also a dire need to reform the IEC itself. There's no doubt about it. A number of things: One is that the IEC needs to be truly independent and autonomous of political actors. It's in the law, but in real life, in practice there's still a lot of loopholes. So that needs to happen, that the IEC is truly independent — in the manner in which they are appointed, for example. The appointment, security of tenure, the manner in which the IEC is funded, those need to be changed.*

Two, the IEC needs to build its independence also around the manner in which the Secretariat is appointed. They need to employ, on their own, the Secretariat.

MAWSON: I thought they did that.

MATLOSA: *No, no, they don't. The Secretariat is drawn from the public service. They come from the public service. Take for example the director. You see, the IEC is two tiered, you see that. You have the Commission under Ms. Mokhothu. You also have the Directorate under the director, currently there is an acting Director, Mr. Mokhochane. That Directorate is comprised of public servants recruited through the Public Service Commission and governed by public service rules and regulations. That already compromises the IEC. Much as it was progressive move to transform the Chief Electoral Office into the IEC in 1997, there is still need to continually reform the IEC with a view to ensuring its independence and public integrity. You get my point.*

MAWSON: Yes.

MATLOSA: *The Director is seconded from government. That compromises the independence of the IEC. The IEC does not employ directly. Its staff is seconded from government.*

In South Africa, just for comparison, you have the commission and the commission is detached from the Directorate. It is a policy making body, while the directorate is an operational arm which takes its own decisions on day-to-day management of the Commission. The Chief Electoral Office, Advocate Pansy Tlakula has powers to employ her own staff independently from the public service.

MAWSON: Directly on their own?

MATLOSA: *Directly on their own. They don't have to go to government, no. Directly on their own. That is independence to me.*

Then finally, the security of tenure of the IEC. We've talked about the manner of appointment, financing, we've talked about the Directorate, independence. Also security of tenure is crucial. The security of tenure of the commissioners is another indicator of how independent the IEC is. In Lesotho, at least, the tenure is assured.

MAWSON: Can I ask you then another question that I've been wondering about. When I was in Lesotho it sort of struck me that, obviously there were the problems in 2007, they were sort of with the way the electoral model was applied. The other thing I've been noticing looking at Lesotho, both from desktop research and when I was there, is that the dispute resolution system after elections does not seem to function very well.

They have this tribunal that gets set up at every election I think since 2002, which has three people in it that are appointed at each election. But this tribunal has actually never been used, a conciliatory mechanism. There's never, a party has never taken a complaint to it and IEC has never had an official complaint taken to it by a political party. The parties always go to court or some times they don't even go to court, they just complain and cause noise and organize stay-aways, those sorts of things. Why do you think it is that Lesotho has not managed to build an effective dispute resolution mechanism?

MATLOSA: *A critical point again. In fact, I wanted to raise this point earlier on when we were discussing about how the IEC can redeem itself after following the 2007 debacle. That's the point that actually slipped my mind, because I wanted to say that one of the ways in which the IEC needs to redeem itself and prove to the public that they are still a credible institution, they need to strengthen their dispute resolution mechanisms. In fact, I would even emphasize that instead of waiting to deal with post-election management of conflicts, the IEC should put more emphasis on prevention. Prevention, because I think there's a saying that prevention is better than a cure. I would go that route actually to suggest that the IEC needs to do much, much, much more before elections. Even more than during and after elections to build a robust and effective institutional mechanism to deal with election related conflicts.*

In between elections—okay, let me give an example, a very good example that I like of South Africa so that we can see how it's done elsewhere. In South Africa, the IEC plays a very proactive role in dealing with the disputes and conflicts, whether violent or non-violent. Because you don't just want to say you focus on violent conflicts disregarding non-violent conflicts. Left unattended, non-violent conflicts can actually escalate into a violent conflict. So, it is important that they are nipped in the bud quite early before they turn violent. So IEC in South Africa, therefore redresses disputes much early and for this purposes has developed a robust institutional mechanism using various strategies. One, the IEC works closely through what we call party liaison committees.

MAWSON: Which have been here since 1994.

MATLOSA: *Absolutely. A fantastic mechanism. That party liaison committee works at the national level, provincial level, as well as local level. Fantastic. And it works very well. That is why, that's partly why the IEC enjoys confidence broadly of all the parties, there's no doubt about it. It enjoys confidence of all the parties. I don't see a reason why the IEC in Lesotho cannot do the same thing. That's my first point. This party liaison committee strategy, mechanism, works throughout, by the way, throughout. It's not only election related. It works throughout the country even in between elections.*

MAWSON: So it works between elections.

MATLOSA: *Oh, yeah, even between elections.*

MAWSON: So how does it work?

MATLOSA: *That's how you prevent election-related conflicts instead of waiting for a crisis to happen and you start fire-fighting.*

MAWSON: The IEC calls regular meetings with the parties.

MATLOSA: *Oh, yes. Regular meetings. And parties, if there's are any conflicts they report those in those meetings and they are resolved there and then. You don't have to wait to go to court.*

Second, then they have a, how do you call, a conflict management and peace panels. Fantastic. Conflict management and peace panels. These ones, they work closer to elections, they are not permanent, they're closer to elections. And we, or our institution, the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA), collaborates closely with the IEC in building these panels, training them and helping them work, deal with conflicts on the ground. Resolve them there and then. We emphasize negotiation, mediation, and resolving problems there and then through compromises without having to resort to court, no. That's second and there's no reason, again, why Lesotho cannot develop that, conflict management and peace panels, given the conflict-ridden character of politics in that country.

Thirdly, then the IEC brings the parties together in South Africa to sign onto a justiciable code of conduct. This is signed in public through a big meeting at a convenient venue in Pretoria. This even is convened by the IEC.

MAWSON: So the code of conduct is—

MATLOSA: *They sign publicly by the way, publicly. It's a show on television, it's in newspapers, it's on radio so that the public knows that our leaders have committed themselves to these do's and don'ts.*

MAWSON: So that code of conduct—

MATLOSA: *The IEC then monitors the implementation of that code. If it's breached then they take appropriate action.*

MAWSON: What kind of appropriate action, do you think?

MATLOSA: *Yes. If it's breached, depending on the nature of the breach, it may just be a warning or that party may actually be, what's the word?*

MAWSON: Struck off.

MATLOSA: *Struck from the—exactly—from the list of parties who contest elections. It's as serious as that.*

MAWSON: That's very impressive.

MATLOSA: *It's as serious as that.*

MAWSON: A lot of code of conducts do not have that kind of teeth.

MATLOSA: *The South Africa Code of Conduct does not only have strong teeth, but it also bites. It actually has that. It is a deterrent, a good deterrent, I must say.*

Fourthly, in South Africa, again, an Electoral Court gets established around election period. Once all the other mechanisms that I mentioned earlier have not worked then another recourse is the electoral court, established specifically to deal with the election-related disputes. And that helps the judicial system because then it releases pressure on the judicial system and then all election-related matters are dealt by the specific and dedicated court at that time. It's a

good system because, unlike in Lesotho where exactly like what you were talking about the tribunal, is it's still part of the judicial system which has its own cases, criminal cases, you name them. The judicial system in Lesotho has numerous cases to deal with and may not have the capacity to deal with electoral disputes timeously. Thus, electoral cases take long to resolve and you may find a situation where in fact an electoral dispute is sitting with the courts, the ordinary court, for as long as the tenure of that government. You tried to resolve it at the end of the tenure of parliament, but what difference does it make? It doesn't make any difference.

MAWSON: And in Lesotho—.

MATLOSA: *So Lesotho needs to actually look at that.*

Finally, then the constitutional court, that's ultimate recourse. The constitutional court in exists in South Africa. The constitutional court is the one, in fact, that allowed South Africans living abroad to vote for the first time during the recent general elections in April 2009. That was wonderful. That was wonderful. That was fabulous. Lesotho could learn another important lessons from the way the South African constitutional court handles electoral disputes.

MAWSON: In Lesotho the last court case was not even really resolved.

MATLOSA: *Exactly. In fact, the irony is that instead of the court case resolving a conflict, it generated more conflict. You don't want that. The judgment left a lot to be desired.*

MAWSON: Do you think that's because—?

MATLOSA: *That is not to be desired. Now you can also tell that there was a lot of political influence there as well, political manipulation of the judicial system.*

MAWSON: I was going to say, my impression when I was there from hearing the story about what had happened with that court case was that the judiciary was quite weak as well.

MATLOSA: *Judiciary is quite weak and highly politicized, there's no doubt about it. That's where we are. What I'm saying to you, in a nutshell therefore, we need those kinds of mechanisms in Lesotho. In fact, in principle, we need to balance what we term alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and judicial approaches. In other words, alternative dispute mechanisms which emphasize negotiation, mediation, arbitration, compromise by the people themselves as against litigation. But in Lesotho, unfortunately, we emphasize more litigation. Litigation doesn't take you far in resolving conflicts. In a way it's not sustainable, because you resolve adversity through adversarial approaches. It's not sustainable.*

MAWSON: Also then when that does not work—.

MATLOSA: *It's not sustainable. When that does not work, then conflict is still with us.*

MAWSON: Or what I have noticed is that they seem to bring in religious leaders as a sort of measure of last resort. When I was speaking to Bishop (Philip) Mokuku, I was asking him what sort of terms of reference do you have?

MATLOSA: *Nothing.*

MAWSON: And he said, "No, they just bring us in and we do things in our own way." That seems, maybe it's good to have a flexible approach but at the same time it seems very weak that you don't give your mediate a term of reference. They're just there and you do whatever you can.

MATLOSA: *In fact, I've just written a paper, we had a conference last year in November on elections and conflict prevention, management of resolution in Africa. So I wrote about my country. I was comparing Lesotho and Zimbabwe. Exactly what you were saying. In fact, I was probably even more ruthless than what you are saying because my argument was that to even have this current mediation process in Lesotho, it's a farce. It's a farce because it's like putting the cart before the horse. You cannot try local remedies after external remedies have failed. You get my point. We were supposed to have started there, that's my argument. If we got our act together, if we had dispute resolution mechanisms solidly institutionalized, we were supposed to have started with local remedies. Just try to resolve our problems first before we call our neighbors. There's a saying, charity begins at home. Yes, charity begins at home. You resolve your own problem, you try and resolve your own problem first before I call Amy to come and assist me. You get my point.*

Now here we are. We tried, it failed to work and then we called in SADC. SADC came through Sir Ketumile Masire, who tried to mediate, he did a fantastic job. I have the full report of the work that he has done and I've talked about that in my paper that I told you about of last year. Now we don't want to accept what Masire is saying, because what the recommendations he is making threaten certain political interests.

Now in order to deflect attention to Masire's recommendations we then create this so-called local mediation arrangement and put the poor Bishop on the spot, a man of the cloth. I know him personally. He means well, by the way, I know he means very well, personally. He's like my father, really.

MAWSON: When I met with him, he was—

MATLOSA: *He's like my father.*

MAWSON: Very, very kind. Very nice.

MATLOSA: *Very nice, very kind, you know, very good intentions. What's the word? Well intentioned. Is that the phrase to use?*

MAWSON: Yes.

MATLOSA: *Yes, well intentioned, good faith.*

MAWSON: And he's working very hard.

MATLOSA: *Yes, and committed and that's I'm sure free of charge, by the way, because there's no money supporting that process even through the UNDP. The UNDP does provide facilities and venue for meetings, but that is about all really. Now to go put him in that kind of awkward predicament is really 'ungodly' for the good Bishop. It's ungodly on the part of the politicians to do this, because they know there's no agenda, for example. They know the thing will not work. It's just a question of buying time. You know why? Because the idea is that okay, let's just stall the process, the SADC process, and deflect attention from Masire's*

recommendation so that we don't implement them. Focus on this yet we know it won't work. In the mean time, our tenure in office—yeah.

MAWSON: Till we get to the next election.

MATLOSA: *And watch this space. Watch this space. It'll open up in 2011. You said our next election is 2012, right?*

MAWSON: Yes.

MATLOSA: *It'll open up in 2011. I know that. I've worked with my political leaders for ages now. I know them perfectly well. I know their mindset. They'll start opening up in 2011 when they know that now whatever change will happen, whatever agreements we will make on the electoral reforms they will no longer affect the government much since tenure of parliament is about to expire anyway.*

MAWSON: My last, my very last question before I will let you get back to your normal workday. It's been an absolutely fascinating interview, so maybe my last question. I just had a question about the voters roll in 2007, for the 2007 elections. My understanding was that there were a lot of problems when the list was first displayed on the 25th of December. There was something like 30,000 dead people on the voters roll and also many of the people that had been trying to sign up to register to vote did not appear on that first list.

It appears there was some sort of technical problems in the system, the computer system crashed, they weren't registering the information as they should have been at the IEC. They have admitted that themselves. But what I wonder is, my impression was that they are not very active when it comes to registering voters. They are very passive. I was speaking to the Chair, Mokhothu, and she was saying, "Well, nobody comes to register until the last minute." Do you think, is the IEC, to your knowledge, are they making more efforts to be a bit more active about registering voters now?

MATLOSA: *I think it goes back to our earlier point, around what I was saying that the IEC really needs to, what's the word now? They really need to be more proactive in a number of areas in managing elections. They should pay particular attention to the electoral cycle in doing that. The IEC needs to be more proactive in dealing with all aspects of the seven stages of the electoral cycle. And registration is one of those early stages of the electoral cycle.*

Now, my sense is that the IEC tended to be relaxed, you might put it that way, complacent, should I say, too satisfied and rather comfortable, if I may say so. It seems to come to life around elections and I think they need to really change tact, and be more proactive in dealing with issues much, much earlier than it's too late really close to the election. The registration is one such activity.

If I recall, the registration process in Lesotho is continuous, right? It's continuous, but the fact that it's continuous does not mean that people are registering as such. The IEC needs to engage with the public to make sure that they register, people register. All eligible voters register continuously. In fact, the IEC in this country, in South Africa, they even have what they call, it's also called continuous registration, but they also have what they call targeted registration. So they have certain weeks where that they will say, these are weeks that we'll dedicate to targeted registration, where people are mobilized to register and exercise their right to vote. That's one.

The second aspect of this is the management of the voters roll. I think it's still a big challenge in Lesotho, there's no doubt. That's why one of the issues that the political parties are raising now as we prepare for the local government election, is that the voter registration process has to be more transparent, more clearer, and the voters roll itself, has to be a credible roll. So I think there is a big challenge facing Lesotho.

You don't want to go the route of Malawi in 2004. We went to observe the Malawi elections in 2004 as the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa. As we were there, our observers were already there on the ground, and other observers from other countries, the Commonwealth, you name them, EU (European Union), etcetera. We were already on the ground to observe the elections. The election had to be postponed for a week because of contestation over the voters roll. Can you imagine? Observers are already in the country. We had to wait for a week. We couldn't send our observers back because that's expensive. They had to stay put. And consultants had to be commissioned from South Africa to go and assist Malawi with the voters roll. You know what? Close to 100,000 people were taken out of the roll, then and there.

MAWSON: In the last week?

MATLOSA: *Yes. As ghost voters. Close to 100,000 people taken out of the roll. Now you don't want a situation like that in Lesotho to happen, so you have to be careful how you deal with this.*

In fact, there's a regional body, this is my last point, there's a regional body called the Electoral Commission Forum of SADC countries which comprises all the electoral commissions in SADC. The Lesotho IEC is a member of that regional forum. We used to be, as EISA, we used to be the Secretariat of that forum, but now they have their own offices in Gaborone, Botswana. They have just adopted a very important document, a very important document on guidelines for the independence of electoral commissions. Fantastic document.

MAWSON: Is this—this is the framework?

MATLOSA: *That's the framework.*

MAWSON: Right, Mokhothu was talking about that.

MATLOSA: *I'm sure Mokhothu talked about it. It is a framework that guides how Election Management Bodies (EMBs) can ensure that they are independent and protect their independence. One of the issues here is how you deal with the voters roll, because that's also an image thing. Even much as it's an aspect of managing elections efficiently, transparently, and ensuring that the process is credible and its outcome legitimate. But it's also an image thing as well, so that the public out there and the political parties have confidence in the IEC. So if you mess up the voter registration process, you'll mess up the roll. And your independence is tainted, your independence is tainted. You will end up by messing up the entire electoral process in the final analysis.*

MAWSON: Okay. I think, maybe we'll leave it there. Is there anything else that you would like to add that you think is important about the Lesotho case that we haven't touched on during this interview?

MATLOSA: *Yes, maybe the last thing that we should actually highlight about the Lesotho case is that the country is a homogeneous society, which is very interesting. Homogenous, that's the right word, yes?*

MAWSON: Yes. Homogenous.

MATLOSA: *Homogeneous, yes. Let me use the right English. Homogenous. Which is fascinating, because the usual assumptions, conventionally, that we have is that if a country comprises of a single ethnic group, primarily Basotho, one language (Sesotho), basically, one identity, you know, common history, we don't have different historical backgrounds, then conventionally it is assumed that a site like that would not experience violent conflicts of the proportions that we've seen in the country. We have now come to realize that that theory is probably not apt, looking at Somalia for example. Lesotho is a case in point.*

I think a country like Lesotho, we need to be looking at a number of triggers of violence. If we are to resolve the violence, go to the structural roots of violence, not just dealing with symptoms. I suspect that all of these have been dealing with symptoms, not the actual structural roots of violence. In Lesotho, like elsewhere in Africa, three major sources of violent conflict are (a) power, (b) resources and (c) identity, specifically lineage and religion in Lesotho. These three elements get magnified during electoral contests.

The country is deeply divided, by the way. On the surface you may think this is a united nation. It's one country, one language, one people, one nation, one ethnic group, etcetera. It's deeply divided. It's divided around lineage, lineage issues. In Lesotho you have different lineages, you have Bakoena, Bafokeng, Batlokoa, Barolong, Bataung etcetera. This divisions tend to run deep, yet most people don't really appreciate this.

MAWSON: I've never heard anybody talk about this.

MATLOSA: *People from outside country don't appreciate that. It's deeply divided, but it's hidden, it's hidden. But then it get's amplified around elections. That's one fissure.*

The second fissure, or cleavage, you may call it that, is religious cleavage. That country outwardly may seem unified but it's highly divided around religious affiliations. The dominant religious denominations are the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and the Lesotho Evangelical Church. They're the mainstream religious cleavages.

MAWSON: And parties assume.

MATLOSA: *Oh, yeah. Make no mistake. The parties in a sense much as they're also influenced by lineage, but much, much, much more, much, much, much more so by religious cleavage. So religious cleavage then takes a political character in the political market place and helps politicians contest state power. Then upon elections, oh yeah, it get's amplified.*

MAWSON: When I was speaking to Bishop Khoarai he was talking about how the churches actively played up this competition in the sort of '70s, sort of '60s, '70s. But then when it got to '75, they, the religious leaders came together and realized that they shouldn't be, they shouldn't be encouraging these divisions. That they should actually, as religious leaders should be coming together.

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- MATLOSA:** *Absolutely.*
- MAWSON:** So he said from then onwards the church leaders were trying to encourage people to not divide up along these religious divides. But you're saying it's still there.
- MATLOSA:** *But the perception is still there. Oh yeah.*
- MAWSON:** The perception is still there.
- MATLOSA:** *The perception is still there and the politicians are still behaving the same way. You see, the politicians are still behaving the same way.*
- MAWSON:** So when the politicians are campaigning—.
- MATLOSA:** *This is why I was saying to you, in fact that this local mediation arrangement may not succeed precisely because of that, because it's headed by the Anglican Church. The Anglican Church, historically, is linked to the Marematlou Freedom Party, which is the monarchist party.*
- MAWSON:** And the BNP—.
- MATLOSA:** *And then, so then you had to bring the other religious affiliations to neutralize that. So you have the Roman Catholic Church which historically is linked to the BNP, Basotho National Party, and the Lesotho Evangelical Church which is historically linked to the BCP (Basutoland Congress Party) political tradition in the country, which is the LCD. So you have a problem now for those people to agree there. It's like sucking blood out of a stone. It's like trying to suck blood out of a stone, a dry, dry stone. What blood are you going to suck out? It may not succeed.*
- Now, my last point is that the other problem that often times we don't see because the focus is so much on the election and we then risk what in academia we call the fallacy of electoralism, because we tend to associate all problems with elections and we also tend to associate solutions to all these problems to elections, then it's a fixation.*
- Another problem facing that country is poverty, sheer poverty. You must have seen it while you were driving around, particularly outside Maseru. Sheer poverty compounded by HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus)/AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), you know, unemployment, you know. You name it. Pure social problems.*
- MAWSON:** And it's likely to get much worse with all the mines.
- MATLOSA:** *It's getting worse, oh yeah, it's getting worse with the massive retrenchments of Basotho migrant labor on the South African mines. It's getting worse. The global crisis, it's compounding that problem. But we never see as often as easy a scapegoat is elections, elections, elections all the time. This is a fallacy. We are simply dealing with symptoms and avoiding structural root causes of our problems.*
- What I have said to you now is my last point. The root causes of the problem which get amplified during election contests, in a sense that elections probably may not necessarily be a major problem as such. It's probably a symptom. The root cause is there: lineage, religion, poverty, unemployment, HIV/AIDS. Those*

are the real problems. Even as we embark on electoral reforms, we need to be tackling those real issues. In that way we'll be dealing with the structural roots of the conflict rather than the symptoms.

MAWSON: Okay, I think we will leave it there. That was great. Thank you very much.

MATLOSA: *You're most welcome Amy.*