

**SHOCKS OF MULTI-PARTY DEMOCRACY IN
TANZANIA SINCE 1995: POLICY IMPLICATIONS- A
LESSON OF DODOMA URBAN CONSTITUENCY**

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Abstract

This study was carried out to identify the shocks that have been facing the practice of a multi-party democracy since the dawn of the first general elections in 1995 and the subsequent periods. A number of respondents were obtained using both random and purposive sampling. The respondents were representatives from the public, academic institutions and political offices that made a total of 103 within Dodoma Urban area which is a political center of Tanzanian Politics. The study found that the practice of a multi-party democracy in Tanzania encounters a number of shocks that range from corruption issues and lack of voters' education. However, the study also found that the need for clear policy on voters' education has been overlooked and consequently resulting into a variety of political irregularities and misconducts in the electoral process. This study recommends that voters' education should be given due weight and should not wait for election phases. The tightening of electoral regulations should be given serious eye and those found guilty should seriously be taken to court. These shall enhance positive practice of a multi-party democracy in Tanzania.

Key words: multiparty system, policy, democracy, politics, voters, political shocks, electoral commission

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1.0 Introduction

Historically, until 1940s the African continent had never conducted her traditional politics in the framework of any political party. Foreign international influence and the struggle to regain the continent's lost sovereignty under colonial rule led Africa to formally adopt a new form of political organization. That is, democratic processes in Africa, after 1940s, were elsewhere going to copy the Western form of democracy that entailed the formation of political parties.

The contention above does not intend to insinuate that Africa before colonial rule had no any form of organized politics. On pointing out the developments achieved by African continent up to the 15th century and the period of colonization, Walter Rodney argues,

It is also essential to recognize the process of dialectical evolution from lower to higher forms of social organization; and, in looking at the most advanced social formations; one would appreciate the potential of the continent as a whole and the direction of change (Rodney 1972, p.41).

In Tanzania, multi-party democracy system was abolished in 1965 on the grounds that the unmodified Western system of democracy did not suit Africa (Kaniki, 1974). Such was the general idea of Julius Nyerere, the founding father of the nation (Tanzania). In the mid 1980s both internal and external pressure began to mount on Africa in regard to the reintroduction of multi-party politics to replace the military regimes and the practices of a one-party system.

With reference to Tanzania, there were some concerns amongst the elite class that it was a high time for the country to adopt a multi-party democracy. In addition, the economic crises which had struck the country in 1970s through 1980s were associated with the failures arising from the practices of one-party system as far as economic management and accountability are concerned (Msekwa, 2006, p.5).

Externally, the collapse of the Soviet Union Bloc in the late 1980s had consequently resulted into the Western Capitalist Bloc remaining the only influential power that dictated on the direction of global politics. The period beginning from 1990s onwards, in this case, was characterized by the reintroduction of a multi-party political wave of change in the entire continent (Mmuya, 1998) with few exceptions such as Uganda and Libya. However, Uganda adopted a multi-party system later in 2005.

For the case of Tanzania, therefore, the government and the ruling party *Chama Cha Mapinduzi* (CCM) had in the first place resisted the transition to a multi-party democracy. With the intervention of the late ex-president Nyerere, a Presidential Commission popularly known as the Nyalali Commission (named after Chief Justice Francis Nyalali who chaired the commission) was then set up in 1990 with essentially one term of reference – to inquire whether the majority of Tanzanians preferred the continuation of a single-party system or the establishment of a multi-party system. Despite the fact that many of those who made verbal or written submissions (around 80%) preferred the continuation of a single-party system, the major recommendation made by the Nyalali Commission was that Tanzania should abandon the single-party system and adopt a multiparty system. Three arguments were made to support this anti-majority recommendation. One argument was that many of those who expressed a preference for a

single-party system however insisted on major reforms. The second argument was that the 20 per cent who preferred a multi-party system were a substantial minority whose discontent could negatively affect a democratic political system, yet they had a genuine reason. The third argument was that the 80 per cent was made by the Tanzanians below the age of 40 who had known no other political system. This was encapsulated in the popular contention that “if one CCM has brought us such misery, many CCMs will finish us off” (Baregu, 2003).

The Nyalali Commission’s recommendation to abandon a single-party political system was finally adopted by the government and the ruling party, CCM. In July 1992 the Political Parties Act was passed by the Parliament and the country officially recognized the practice of a multi-party democracy.

The assumption underlying multi-party democracy is that the scope of democracy would be widened (Held, 1993). However, elsewhere in Africa, donor pressure played a significant role in political transition to the multi-party democracy. With this wave of change, Tanzania was by no means an exception in the whole process of reintroducing a multi party-system. That is why Michael Chege writes, “Tanzania’s slow-paced movement towards political liberalization has coincided with threats of aid withdrawals by donor countries if political reforms were not implemented” (Chege, 1995).

With the fact that Africa, and Tanzania in particular, has succumbed to multi-party politics, there are some shocks that still adversely affect the practice of a multi-party democracy in its full sense. This study endeavors among other things to find out the challenges or shocks that multi-party politics in Tanzania has been facing since its re-introduction 1990s. This will, in turn, be useful to devise some solutions necessary for improvement of the multi-party democracy in Tanzania.

2.0 Materials and Methods

This study was conducted in Dodoma urban Constituency. Dodoma is a legislative capital of Tanzania and is the designated (future) national capital. Given the political context and importance of Dodoma as a center of Tanzania politics, it was considered wise to choose the city for this study as it would be much easier to collect the required data. It is important to note that Dodoma municipality is currently a centre of both academic and political institutions in Tanzania.

A case study research design was used in this study so as to acquire in-depth and contextual analysis of a variety of factors that have a negative influence on multi-party politics in Tanzania. The design involved different categories of people comprising of ordinary respondents, institutions (academic and non academic), political offices and the local councils. This approach was cost effective in terms of data gathering and gaining a rich understanding of the political context for this study.

Both purposive sampling and simple random sampling were used as methods of sampling respondents. Purposive sampling was used when dealing with the members of parliament, the office of the Registrar of political parties and the educational institutions. Ten members of parliament, and 1 official from the Registrar’s office, 15 officials from registered political parties

and 30 academicians were interviewed. Simple random sampling was used when dealing with the public. A section of the public was interviewed (About 47 people were interviewed). This made a total number of respondents successfully interviewed to reach 103.

In this study, data collection was done through the use of voters interviews with aid of structured questionnaires. The documentary review was used to supplement data from the interview.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Shocks of Multi Party systems

In the course of carrying out the task intended in this study, it was considered wise to begin, from the onset, with the inquiry whether the targeted sample population understood and agreed with the idea that the practice of a multi-party democracy encounters challenges. Having this kind of information from the respondents would put the researchers in the position to determine whether to proceed or not to with the subject matter in question. From the answers of the respondents, it was discovered that 93.2% agreed that there were potential challenges since multi-party democracy was introduced in 1990s. The rest of the respondents, that is, 6.8% gave a response that there were no any challenges that face multi-party democracy in the country.

Those who felt that there were no any challenges, were clear on the grounds that Tanzania entered multi-party competitive politics without shedding blood like other African countries. Taking into consideration the percentage of the responses, the study inferred that it was crucial, given this big difference, to carry out a further interview. This is because 6.8% was an insignificant figure compared to 93.2% of those who thought that there were challenges facing multi-party politics in Tanzania.

3.2 Corruption and the Practice of Multi-Party Democracy

Most of the respondents interviewed in this study agreed that there have been dishonest or illegal behaviors by the contestants during election campaigns. Such behaviors had intended to influence the voters' preferences to a particular contestant. About 75.7% of all respondents agreed that most elections have been corrupt. Only 24.3% gave a negative response to the question regarding corruption. This section of the respondents explained that the notion of corruption was difficult to prove especially when it comes to political matters.

Table 1 below differentiates the percentages of those who either agreed or disagreed that most elections have been corrupt.

Table1: The Extent of Corrupt Elections

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	78	75.7
No	25	24.3
Total	103	100.0

The above responses are supported by a number of reasons. Most of the respondents in this question relied on the empirical evidences. For example 41.7% of the respondents argued that the gifts offered during election campaigns and the use of oppressive forces to threaten the voters were enough to infer that most elections were corrupt. Another percentage of the respondents (16.5%) explained that the large number of filed lawsuits in the courts and those already ruled or

at least pending decisions regarding illicit behaviors during elections were enough to judge that most elections have been corrupt.

Another percentage (17.5%) of the respondents remained undecided whether elections were corrupt on the grounds that it was difficult to prove. On the other hand, 8.7% of the respondents complained that lack of sufficient civic education among voters was a major reason that exposed them into accepting bribes during elections.

In order to grasp the extent to which respondents agreed that there have been acts of corruption or bribery during elections, the following terms were used to describe the respondent's degree of response: very often, often, not often, I do not know, never contacted.

In this study, about 74.8% of the respondents agreed in principle that they have been contacted by contestants in terms of bribery while 28.2% of the respondents agreed that they have been contacted in terms of bribery by contestants *very often*, 25.2% agreed that they have been contacted though *not often*. However, 21.4% of the respondents agreed that they have been contacted *often*. These findings concur with the argument of Adalgot Komba who writes that:

During the 1995 general elections, corruption emerged as top of the social and political agenda. It was then felt that corruption in its various forms was threatening to tear apart the fabric of Tanzanian society if no immediate measures were taken to curb its growth and spread (Komba, 2002).

Those respondents who agreed that they have ever been bribed during election campaigns had affirmed that the bribe was in form of gifts such as T-shirts and Kanga (type of clothing in East Africa, especially worn by women) or in form cash. The respondents further explained that the ruling party was the chief culprit of this illicit bribery since the party had resources at the disposal of its members. Only 8.7% of the rest of respondents denied that they have ever been contacted by contestants in terms of bribery. However, 16.5% of the respondents were undecided whether they have ever been contacted in terms of bribery by contestants.

These findings therefore imply that the question of bribery is undeniable during election campaigns. It is also proper to conclude that the opposition is the most affected since it still has limited resources to direct upon the voters in form of gifts or cash. However, it is also proper to conclude that the electorate is likely to be affected to a great extent if cash or gifts play a major role in the electoral process to obtain the people's political representatives.

3.3 Factors Influencing Election Corruption

In order to elaborate the theme of corrupt elections, it was equally important to establish why most elections become corrupt. A variety of responses were given during this study. Some factors were economic; others were social while some were purely psychological.

With regard to the question "why do most elections become corrupt," about 48.5% of respondents believed that poverty and ignorance among voters were the major factors that

encourage corrupt behaviors. This percentage of respondents believed that most of the voters were at risk of being corruptible either because of lack of civic education or because of their marginalized economic conditions. Regarding civic education, it is clear that a little has been done to make sure that the voters are provided with sufficient education on the practice of a multi-party democracy. According to Harrison Mwakyembe, the provision and exposition of voters' education have been generally left upon personal endeavors of the media. This, in turn, has proved failure because of the conservative and strict nature of defamation laws in Tanzania (Mwakyembe, 2000). On the other hand, it is obvious that when it comes to the practice and electoral process of a multi-party democracy, there is no an explicit policy that clearly insists on the provision of the voters' education.

Some respondents however, believed that individualism and desire for power as a source of material acquisition (among politicians) were the major factors that encourage corruption. The respondents in this category were 31.1%. Inferiority of contestants made another important percentage of the respondents. About 11.7% of the respondents made their comments that some of the contestants were too inferior to compete and therefore resorted to the acts of offering bribe in order to win acceptance from the voters. About 6.8% of the respondents believed that since the National Electoral Commission was not free in its dealings, it was exposed to corruption especially by the ruling party, CCM.

However, one of the respondents from a political party had a rather different opinion arising from his personal observation. According to him, most of the citizens in this country were cultured in terms of bribery or rather corrupt. He made some comments that some people regarded bribe as their right and in some instances they even challenged the contestants to offer them something in return for their votes.

Table 2 below indicates different opinions of the respondents with regard to the question why most elections become corrupt.

Table 2: Why Most Elections Become Corrupt

Reasons	Percent	Frequency
Incompetent leaders	2	1.9
Inferiority to compete	12	11.7
Desire for power as source of income/ individualism	32	31.1
Electoral commission is not free hence corruptible	7	6.8
Poverty and ignorance among voters	50	48.5
Total	103	100.0

3.4 Institutional Weakness and the Practice of Multi-Party Democracy in Tanzania

This subsection of the study explains the weaknesses of the National Electoral Commission and the role played by the Union Constitution in the course of transition to a multi-party politics in Tanzania. The two organs are vital with regard to the matters related with democracy, the electorate and the electoral process.

Composition of the National Electoral Commission

The composition and structure of the National Electoral Commission of Tanzania is another main variable that affects the electorate and the practice of a multi-party politics in Tanzania. It is assumed that for a multi-party system to function effectively there should be an independent National Electoral Commission that reflects equal representation of all registered political parties. Since this is contrary to what is expected, then the electorate and the multi-party system in general are likely to be adversely affected. This in turn may result into flawed elections.

Specifically, Article 74(6) (a-e) of the Union Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania defines the responsibilities of the National Electoral Commission as:(a) to supervise and co-ordinate the registration of voters in presidential and Parliamentary elections in the United Republic(b) to supervise and co-ordinate the conduct of the presidential and parliamentary election(c) to review the boundaries and demarcate the United Republic into various areas for the purposes of parliamentary elections(d) to supervise and co-ordinate the registration of voters and the conduct of the election of Councilors(e) to perform any other functions in accordance with a law enacted by Parliament (URT, 1977).

When it comes to the matters of defining the availability of the members of the Electoral Commission or regulation of the behaviors of the contestants and the electorate and the electoral process; both the Constitution and the National Electoral Commission regulate such matters. During this study, when it came to the questions regarding the National Electoral Commission, the respondents were in the first place tested with a question to identify some of the roles of the National Electoral Commission.

The majority of the respondents seemed to clearly understand the role of the National Electoral Commission. For example, about 69.9% of the respondents replied that the National Electoral Commission was responsible for monitoring or overseeing elections and announcing the results, while 23.3% of the respondents replied that the commission was responsible for ensuring free and fair elections.

Another section of the respondents, 5.8% had a rather contrary response. This section of the respondents replied that the National Electoral Commission was there to make sure that the ruling party, CCM does not fail in elections. When interviewed further why they gave that kind of response, the respondents argued that the Commission was under the control of the President who was also a Chairperson of the ruling party. The commission was therefore expected to work by observing the interests of the ruling party or of the President.

Despite the responses of the respondents, the roles of the National Electoral Commission as mentioned by the respondents (except that the Commission ironically supports the ruling party, CCM) did not so much differ from those outlined by the Union Constitution of the United Republic, 1977 and the Elections Act 1985 (with miscellaneous amendments). The functions of the Commission according to the Elections Act include the following: (i) to prepare and maintain a register of voters (ii) to oversee and co-ordinate the registration of voters, and disqualification to register as a voter (iii) to oversee the nomination of presidential and vice-presidential candidates, in case of presidential elections (iv) to oversee proper procedures for the nomination

of parliamentary candidates, and (v) to appoint a day for nomination of candidates, verify compliance with the law by candidates and adjudicate nomination disputes.

Other functions of the NEC include the task to divide the United Republic of Tanzania into election constituencies. The function of counting votes and announcement of results are among the responsibilities that the NEC is charged with (ibid). After the task of establishing whether the respondents knew any roles of the National Electoral Commission, another task was to sort out their views with regard to the weaknesses of the Commission. While 40.8% of the respondents had the views that the Commission was not independent since it had the hand of president in it, about 35.0% of the respondents replied that the Commission was biased or controlled by the ruling party. Another 13.6% of the respondents replied that the commission was not free as it lacked equal representations of political parties and civil organizations. Another section of the respondents, about 6.8% argued that the commission has not been working hard enough to educate the electorate on the practice of a multiparty democracy. Only 1% of the respondents commented that the commission had no enough material resources and manpower. Therefore, taking the percentage of the respondents who responded that the commission was not independent as it had the hand of president in it and those who said the commission was controlled by the ruling party, CCM; it is possible to conclude that 75% of the respondents agreed in principle that the National Electoral Commission is not free or independent. The weaknesses of the National Electoral Commission have been summarized in the table 3.

Table 3: Weakness of the National Electoral Commission

Weaknesses	Frequency	Percent
Biased/controlled by the ruling party	36	35.0
Unequal representation of parties and civil Organizations	14	13.6
Not independent	42	40.8
Does not work hard to educate voters on Democracy multiparty	7	6.8
None	3	2.9
Lack of resources and manpower	1	1.0
Total	103	100

4.1 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the challenges of multi-party democracy in Tanzania since 1995, taking Dodoma Urban Constituency as a study area. This was done by finding out the shortcomings that multi-party politics faced and the extent to which those shortcomings have been affecting negatively the efficacy of multiparty democracy in Tanzania since 1995.

In doing so, much of the inquiries in this study concentrated in examining the relationship that existed between the voters, the contestants and the institutions responsible for overseeing smooth running of the electoral process.

This study discovered that despite many shocks that multi-party system faces in Tanzania, there were some shocks that put democracy in danger and therefore needed immediate review.

First, the current structure and appointment of the members of the Tanzania National Electoral Commission does not suit the political environment of a multi-party democracy. That is, the structure and appointment of the members of the National Electoral Commission does not guarantee genuine political competition under multi-party democracy since the opposition is not represented in the structure of the commission.

Third, the study concludes that lack of voters' civic education which encourages such illicit behaviors like bribery has been common in the practice of elections. In addition, the belief that the voters have the right to receive bribe in order to vote for a particular candidate is growing. Lastly, fear not to win among the contestants has been common and this consequently resulted into practice of corruption. It is important to note that such shocks are likely to contribute to flawed electoral process thereby negatively affecting the practice of a multi-party democracy.

This study strongly recommends that apart from the policy review on voters' education, the Union Constitution should be reformed in order to eliminate the sections which create ambiguity when it comes to the relationship that exists between the president and the National Electoral Commission, on one hand, and the ruling party and the president on the other hand. In other words, this would resolve the dilemma of the so called 'Party of the State' to refer to the ruling Party, C.C.M. Constitutional amendments will further help to readdress the Articles that still ignore the fact of the existence of multi-party democracy in the country. This will, in turn, give room for effective practice of multi-party democracy in Tanzania.

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