

Why Are Elections Not Democratic in Africa? Comparisons Between the Recent Multi-party Elections in Zimbabwe and Tanzania

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INTRODUCTION

Today 36 states in sub-Saharan Africa have multi-party systems. Their actual functioning, however leaves many to wonder, whether the introduction of multi-partyism means democratization. The purpose of this article is to discuss some institutional aspects that contributed to the undemocratic character of recent elections in two African countries, Zimbabwe and Tanzania. Zimbabwe and Tanzania are taken as two similar cases and compared with each other so that their differences became observable. While the fourth multi-party elections in Tanzania were in many areas chaotic. In Zimbabwe the opposition was not able to challenge the ruling party due to many direct and indirect constraints on its organization, stemming from the long-term government policy of strengthening the position of the ruling party. In Tanzania the ruling party was in command of the transition process. It arranged the elections merely in order to ensure that its position would remain intact despite of a growing international pressure to introduce multi-partyism. The main difference between the cases was the novelty of the multi-party elections in Tanzania and the fact that the opposition parties in Tanzania had many more expectations than the opposition parties in Zimbabwe. If the ability of the state to manipulate the political, legal and administrative framework of the elections is not checked, the multi-party elections in Tanzania, as in many new multi-party systems in Africa, will probably develop into the same kind of well-organized but meaningless exercises seen in contemporary Zimbabwe.

At the end of the cold war the dominant type of political system in Africa was the one-party state. In 1989 only five sub-Saharan states, namely Botswana, Gambia, Mauritius, Senegal and Zimbabwe, had governments elected in multi-party elections with universal franchise. Today 36 states in sub-Saharan Africa have multi-party systems, and it is easier to list those that do not. Eritrea, the newest state in Africa, is currently the only one-party state, Uganda and Swaziland have non-party systems, whereas Nigeria, Gambia, Liberia, Sudan, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire and Angola are either under military rule, in civil war, or they hardly exist as political entities. Even in these states the governments have announced their intention to restore or to proceed towards multi-partyism.

This development notwithstanding enthusiasm for multi-partyism and democratization in Africa has gradually turned into caution, if not scepticism. An article published in **The Guardian** soon after the Tanzanian elections exemplifies this current attitude: "Political parties, independent newspapers and other seedlings of the promised freedom have sprouted across the continent. Elections abound. But all too often they are not signs that democratic concepts, such as freedom to criticise, are taking root. Instead they are merely a price Africa's old autocrats can afford in an effort to ward off foreign criticism and keep the aid flowing. And they have learned that the West is not interested in much more than a facade democracy so long as economic reforms are on track" (**The Guardian**, London, Nov. 4th 1995).

The purpose of this article is to discuss some institutional factors that contributed to the undemocratic character of recent elections in two African countries, in Zimbabwe and in Tanzania. This is not to suggest that institutional aspects were the most crucial ones as to their explanatory power, but it is to say that there are areas where explicit choices are made and that these choices directly affect the democratic character of the electoral process and therefore also the prospects of democratization.

Tanzania and Zimbabwe as two similar cases are compared with each other so that their differences became observable. "Most comparative studies take as their point of departure the known differences among social systems and examine the impact of these differences on some other phenomena observed within these systems" (Przeworski and Teune 1970: 31). More precisely these two countries chosen are regarded as typical of a group of countries constituting the "most similar systems." In other words, Tanzania and Zimbabwe are taken as examples of African countries with multi-party systems. Theoretically most similar systems constitute optimal samples for comparative research focusing on concomitant variation. If important differences are found in systems that have many similar characteristics, then also understanding these differences in a sense requires analysis of a smaller number of differences between them (ibid. p. 32). By the same token one is able to draw generalizations and reconsider the presumed similarity of the cases.

1. SIMILAR SYSTEMS

Zimbabwe and Tanzania are alike in many important respects. Both are classified by the World Bank as low-income economies, whose national products are not growing enough and where creation of employment has therefore become increasingly difficult. Between 1980 and 1992 Zimbabwe experienced a negative, -1 percent, annual growth of GDP per capita; in Tanzania that figure was zero. In both countries income distribution seems to be highly uneven: in 1991 the consumption of the highest 10 percent of the Zimbabwean and Tanzanian populations covered about 47 percent of the total consumption in those countries. In

both countries about one third of the adult population is illiterate. Urbanization is relatively rapid so that between 1980 and 1992 the urban population was growing annually by 7 percent in Tanzania and 6 percent in Zimbabwe. Nevertheless, in 1992 most of the population - 78 and 70 percent respectively - lived in the rural areas (World Bank 1994). In accordance with modernization theories empirical studies have cited all these socio-economic factors to explain political instability or authoritarianism in the Third World countries.

As far as the assumptions of the dependency school are concerned that democracy is unlikely without self-reliance, both Zimbabwe and Tanzania can be regarded as having a peripheral position in the world economy. In both countries agricultural products and minerals are the main sources of export earnings, the bulk of which is generated by cash crops which are very sensitive to weather and price fluctuations. In 1991 tobacco accounted for 27 percent of the export earnings of Zimbabwe and in 1990 coffee over 20 percent of the export earnings of Tanzania (European Intelligence Unit 1993: 31; Africa South of the Sahara 1994: 897). As is typical of many post-colonial states, the Zimbabwean and Tanzanian economies are disarticulated and technologically very dependent on industrialized countries. In addition, both countries are dependent on official development assistance (ODA). In 1994 ODA in Zimbabwe came to 10 percent of its GNP and in Tanzania as much as 30 percent (World Bank 1996).

Both Zimbabwe and Tanzania were under British colonial influence before their independence. Tanzania, which consists of the mainland Tanganyika and the Zanzibar Islands, was directly under British colonial administration. Tanganyika, however, was a German colony until the World War I. Zimbabwe, the southern part of former Rhodesia, was first colonized by the British South Africa Company. It was ruled from 1923 by British settlers, who in 1965 unilaterally declared the country independent. Tanganyika received its independence in 1961, Zanzibar in 1963 and Zimbabwe in 1980. The influence of British traditions in both countries' public administration and legislation is extensive, their current electoral laws included. Most significantly this concerns the implementation of majoritarian, first-past-the post electoral systems. Both in Zimbabwe and in Tanzania, as elsewhere in multi-ethnic and multi-religious states in Africa, there have been more than two parties contesting the multi-party elections, which means that a proportional system would have given a much fairer outcome than the majoritarian system. In addition, in both countries the need to for voters to be registered makes the electoral process unnecessarily complicated due to long distances and poor communication facilities.

In Zimbabwe and in Tanzania the currently ruling parties have retained power since independence. Both parties have their history in the anti-colonial struggle and liberation movement. In contrast to the Eastern European vanguard parties, these ruling parties, as is typical in Africa, are mass parties which penetrate the whole populations. This penetration is most effective in the rural areas and contributes to ethnic and regional balance in party leadership and in the clientelist means of bringing the masses into the political arena. Before the current phase of political liberalization both parties were committed to one-partyism. Zimbabwe is ruled by

the Zimbabwe African Nationalist Union (Patriotic Front), ZANU(PF). In Tanzania, Tanganyika was ruled by the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), which in 1977 united with the ruling party of Zanzibar, the Afro Shirazi Party (ASP), and formed the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM). Although Tanzania was in practice ruled by two parties before 1977, it formally introduced a one-party state already in 1965. Zimbabwe was on a firm course towards a de jure one-party state until 1990. Paradoxically, 1990 was the year when the Zimbabwean government, according to the 1979 peace agreement, could have changed its constitution in this respect, but this was also a year when the rest of Africa started to move away from one-partyism. Under internal and international pressure ZANU(PF) had to abandon its long-term goal.

Socialism was another common commitment of both parties. In both countries the transition from that commitment and state control over the economy to the liberalization of markets and privatization during the 1990s has taken place because of the pressure of international financial institutions without any apparent need to change the ruling party. The parties have been able to stay in power irrespective of major ideological modifications in their economic policies.

Due to the powerful position of the ruling parties, it is somewhat difficult to distinguish between the ruling party and the state in both countries. Most importantly state power over development manifests itself as the monopoly of the ruling party. In spite of the multiplicity of community-based activities for development there are virtually no organized alternatives to the government control over education, health care, delivery of fertilizers, drought relief, etc. When these state functions are exercised as services provided directly by the ruling party or its leader, the voters' ability to choose between it and other parties is seriously constrained. In their election campaigns, the ruling parties frequently used their control over development to thwart the opposition. People were explicitly told that there would be no development in their home areas if they voted for the opposition.

Furthermore the fusion of the ruling party and the state also affects the way the administration and the electoral officials treat the different parties. Both in Zimbabwe and in Tanzania, election monitors noted the fact that many formalities, for example in the registration of the candidates, were required in detail only when the opposition parties were concerned. Similarly, in both countries government resources were used in the election campaigning of the ruling party. In both countries the elections were monitored by independent local observers. In Tanzania international observers representing the donor countries were also allowed to monitor the elections.

2. ELECTIONS IN ZIMBABWE

The fourth parliamentary elections since the Lancaster House peace agreement were held on the 8-9 April 1995. Contrary to the previous elections these elections were

conducted in a very peaceful and regulated manner. However, even according to the ruling party, ZANU(PF), it was merely a matter of "a Constitutional necessity" (*Zimbabwe News*, 26(2): 2). The ruling party was assured of a majority, 85 seats out of 150 seats, in Parliament even before the polling started. The opposition or independent candidates contested only 65 seats out of the 120 seats open for competition while the President had the right to appoint 30 MPs, including 8 provincial governors and 10 chiefs.

Opposition parties were not satisfied with the legal framework of the elections, which they saw as not giving them an equal status vis-à-vis the ruling party. The Electoral Act gave the president the power to appoint the electoral officers and contained a provision for voting by mail of which the opposition was very suspicious. The Political Parties Financing Act stated that parties entitled to state funds had to have a minimum of 15 seats in Parliament, thus restricting the funds in practice only to the ruling party. The Broadcasting Act ensured the government a monopoly in national radio and TV. The Law and Order Maintenance Act inherited from Rhodesia gave the government the power to prevent public meetings (*The Herald*, March 31st 1995). As far as boycotting the elections was concerned, the opposition, however, was divided. The Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM) led by former Minister and a long-time ZANU(PF) official Edgar Tekere; the Democratic Party, an offshoot from ZUM; and the United Parties led by Bishop Abel Muzorewa, who was the head of the country without international recognition during the "internal settlement" in 1979, were the most significant parties boycotting the elections.

The most important opposition parties participating the elections were the Forum party, often connected to the liberal white minority, academics and critical intellectuals, and ZANU(Ndonga), the parochial party of Ndabadangi Sithole, who had led the liberation movement ZANU before Robert Mugabe. ZANU(Ndonga) had 31 contesting candidates, Forum had 25. In addition there were three small parties having only one candidate each. However the most exiting competitions were taking place between the official candidates of ZANU(PF) and the 27 independent candidates. These independent candidates were members of ZANU(PF) who were dissatisfied with the ZANU(PF) primaries. ZANU(PF) threatened to suspend all of them.

Not surprisingly ZANU(PF) won 63 of the 65 contested seats with more than 82 percent of the valid 1.4 million votes. ZANU(Ndonga) with 7 percent support got the 2 opposition seats from Chipinge based on its support among the Ndau, an ethnic group in the eastern districts. Forum, with 6 percent of the vote but a more widely dispersed support, was not able to get a single seat. The officially announced turnout was 1.5 million voters, representing 55 percent of the registered electorate in the 65 contested constituencies. More than 100,000 attempted to vote but were not allowed to do so. Most of them crossed the border of their constituency, as there were no elections in their own constituencies. Due to irregularities in the voters' roll and extension of the registration until the polling, this percentage should be taken with a grain of salt. However, one can get a rough

idea of the relative voter activity by looking at the total number of valid votes at the constituency level. Clearly there was more apathy in the urban areas: lowest turnouts were around 13,000 votes in Bulawayo North, Harare South and Mutare North; and the highest above 28,000 in Rushinga, Bikita, Shamva and Zvishavane (**The Herald**, April 11th; 12th 1995). During the delimitation of the constituencies in November 1994 the number of registered voters in every constituency should have been $40,000 \pm 20$ percent (Delimitation Commission 1995).

The president appointed only one person outside the ruling party among the 30 non-elected MPs. She represented the National Council of Disabled. The president reappointed 7 provincial governors, who are MPs as well, to a two-year terms of office. The term of the eighth governor was not to end in January 1996. The Council of Chiefs' elected president and his vice-president were nominated as MPs as well, as were 8 more chiefs representing each province.

The 29 independent candidates polled together 5 percent of the votes, but none of them was nominated. In June, the Central Committee of ZANU(PF) expelled 4 of its 27 members who were among the independents. One of them was an outspoken former MP, Margaret Dongo, who stood in the Harare South constituency. After a controversial delimitation of the constituency Dongo decided to boycott the primary election and Vivian Maswhita from the President's Office was nominated as an official candidate of ZANU(PF). According to the announced results, Dongo lost by more than one thousand votes. However, she claimed that a lot of voters came from outside her constituency (**The Herald**, April 11th 1995). Dongo appealed for a fresh election and won her case in the High Court. In November she won the by-election in Harare South becoming thus the third opposition MP in Parliament (**Africa Confidential**, Feb. 2nd 1996).

The only opposition party in Parliament is thus ZANU(Ndonga), but even its existence seems to irritate the government. During the election campaign Ndabadangi Sithole was several times invited to join the ruling party. He did not and was later detained and accused of plotting the assassination of President Mugabe.

If the general elections in Zimbabwe were a non-event from the point of view of electoral competition, the presidential elections of 16-17 March 1996, were no more exciting. Incumbent President Robert Mugabe had two rivals: Ndabadangi Sithole (still awaiting trial) and Abel Muzorewa. Mugabe won with 93 percent of the valid votes. Sithole got 2 percent and Muzorewa 5 percent. About 1.5 million valid votes were cast, suggesting that the turnout was less than 31 percent. However, many rural areas saw turnouts close to 60 percent. In urban constituencies turnouts were often less than 20 percent. For instance, in Harare South less than 3,500 votes were cast when the number of registered voters there was above 37,000 voters (**The Herald**, March 20th 1995; **The Chronicle**, March 20th 1996; Delimitation Commission 1995).

3. ELECTIONS IN TANZANIA

When *Mwalimu*, Tanzanian ex-president and a theorist of one-party democracy in Africa, Julius Nyerere, initiated in 1990 a debate on multi-partyism in Tanzania, it was only a question of time that the one-party state would be abolished. Like so many other African one-party states Tanzania was under increasing pressure from international financial circles, including Nordic donors. In 1991 President Ali Hassan Mwinyi established a 20-member Commission, under the chairmanship of Chief Justice F. L. Nyalali, to investigate public opinion about one-partyism.

The Nyalali Commission found that a majority of Tanzanians favoured the retention of the one-party state. Some observers have claimed that as a governmental body the Nyalali Commission was not able to get honest opinions from the people. However, independent surveys seem to confirm the same result. According to one survey conducted in 1994, about 60 percent of Tanzanians regarded the multi-party system as a threat to national unity and not beneficial to the country (Erdmann 1995: 8-10). Yet the Nyalali Commission decided to recommend the introduction of a multi-party system, saying that "although the majority of Tanzanians wanted the one-party system to continue, they proposed very many modifications, some of which, in the Commission's view, could only be effectively introduced under a multi-party political system" (Wiseman 1996: 103; Ngasongwa 1992).

In 1992 the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania was amended by removing the one-party rule. At the same time the law on multiple parties was passed, legalizing the founding of new parties. Consequently, the parliamentary and presidential elections in 1995 were the first national multi-party elections since 1962. However, it has to be noted that Tanzania had normal elections according to the constitution under the one-party system. Despite the party executive's influence in the nomination of candidates the elections were competitive and often contributed to change in the composition of the personnel of the ruling elite.

The 1995 elections, initially scheduled for 29 October, witnessed the participation of 13 registered political parties in the parliamentary elections and four political parties in the presidential elections. Those four parties were also among the five largest ones when considering the number of candidates running in the parliamentary elections. They were the ruling party, CCM, with Minister Benjamin Mkapa as presidential candidate and 232 parliamentary candidates covering the whole country; the National Convention for Construction and Reform (NCCR-Mageuzi) with former Minister Augustine Mrema as presidential candidate and 196 parliamentary candidates; Civic United Front (CUF) with Professor Ibrahim Lipumba as presidential candidate and 177 parliamentary candidates; Chama Cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (Chadema) with 157 parliamentary candidates only; the United Democratic Party (UDP) with businessman John Cheyo as presidential candidate and 125 parliamentary candidates.

While CCM's manifesto was still advocating socialism and self-reliance, the opposition parties were highly populist, mainly concentrating in criticizing the ruling party. Mrema, then Minister of Labor and the Youth, was dismissed from CCM in March 1995 after being a vocal critic of corruption at the government level. His decision to join NCCR-Mageuzi gave that party a surge of popularity, which, however, was very much restricted to urban areas and his home area in Kilimanjaro and the Chagga ethnic group. According to a survey made before Mrema joined NCCR-Mageuzi, Chadema was the best-known opposition party and its leader, Edwin Mtei, former Minister of Finance also from Kilimanjaro, was the best-known opposition leader (Erdmann 1995: 17). CUF and Lipumba, who is known as a pious Muslim, had their base in Zanzibar and Zanzibarian nationalism. While all the opposition parties considered restructuring the relationship between Tanganyika and Zanzibar to be necessary, CUF's political programme was the most "radical" in the sense that it was promoting the creation of separate National Assemblies in both parts of the country.

Currently Zanzibar has a semi-autonomous status. Although represented in and ruled by the national bodies, it has also its own House of Representatives and its own President. Another peculiarity is that if the presidential candidate in the national elections comes from the mainland, he or she must have a vice-presidential running mate from the islands, and vice versa. The President and House of Representatives of Zanzibar were elected on a multi-party basis on 22 October, a week before the national elections. These elections, which were also observed by international and local observers, were very important, since it was already known beforehand that CUF had strong support there, particularly on Pemba, while Unguja, the other main island of Zanzibar, was controlled by CCM. The political division between Pemba and Unguja was evident already during the first years of independence. It can be understood as reflecting the peripheral position of Pemba vis-à-vis Unguja, which has been the administrative centre since colonialism.

It took several days before the official results of the Zanzibar elections were announced. During this time intense negotiations were conducted between the party leaders to make sure that the results would be respected by both CUF and CCM (**The Guardian**, Dar es Salaam, Oct. 26th 1995). The official figures were announced on 27 October, but they differed substantially from those registered by observers in agreement with the polling officials. This discrepancy was also widely published in the international media (**The Guardian**, London, Nov. 4th 1995). The official results gave CCM's Salim Amour a 0.4 percent victory over CUF's Seif Hamad in the presidential elections. In the House of Representatives CCM won 26 seats and CUF the remaining 24 seats. As expected Unguja gave a majority to CCM but Pemba voted for the CUF (**Africa Confidential, December 1st 1995**). All the donor countries, financing up to half of the elections budget, expressed their concern and demanded a recount, which was not done.

The aftermath of the Zanzibar elections hardly contributed to the best possible atmosphere for the national elections. Distrust and rumours of vote rigging were

rampant in the campaign of the opposition parties, leading to last-minute threats of boycotting the whole process. Finally, however, all parties participated.

The list of practical problems observed in the national elections was surprisingly long. Tanzanian government was used to arranging elections during the era of one-party rule and it had had three years time to prepare these elections. Still, there were a lot of problems ranging from the fact that some polling stations did not open, to the lack of material, to the fact that two ballots were to be cast (both of which were white), to difficulties in following the unnecessarily complicated procedures. The departure statement by the Chairman of the Commonwealth Observer Group in Tanzania concluded that "the chaos and confusion" on election day was something they had "not witnessed before when observing elections in other Commonwealth countries" (Commonwealth 1995).

The first reaction of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) was to extend the polling hours. This message, however, was unevenly received and followed by the polling stations. In some rural areas it was simply not possible, because some polling stations were not provided with light. During the night of 29 October the NEC decided to annul the vote only in the seven constituencies of Dar es Salaam. The reasons given by the Commission were shortage of election materials and late opening or non-opening of the polling stations. Observers also reported security problems. It is doubtful that the Commission had received accurate information from the up-country regions at that time. Thus the Commission had to reschedule elections later in some constituencies for the following four days (30 October to 2 November) as reports of problems similar to those encountered in Dar es Salaam were received.

Unofficial results published by the NEC on 8 November showed that CCM had received 60 percent of the votes and therefore already won 167 seats. CUF had only 5 percent of the votes but 24 seats, all from Zanzibar. NCCR-Mageuzi, with more dispersed support, received 22 percent of the votes but only 15 seats. Chadema and UDP showed 6 and 3 percent support respectively, which was allowed them to claim 3 seats each. Naturally completing elections in the rest of the country affected the rescheduled Dar es Salaam elections. Although NEC had persuaded the voters to preserve their registration cards in case there would have been a second ballot in the presidential elections, many people were also in practice disenfranchised in Dar es Salaam, because they had destroyed their voting cards after the first voting and new registration was not arranged.

New elections in Dar es Salaam were finally held on 19 November. The opposition parties first said that they would boycott the whole exercise, but from the beginning there were disagreements inside the parties, and most candidates encouraged their supporters to cast their ballots. All three opposition candidates in the presidential elections (from CUF, NCCR-Mageuzi and UDP) decided to withdraw from the competition. This withdrawal was not legal according to NEC, but it apparently affected the voters' behaviour. Otherwise this "second round" in Dar es Salaam was very well conducted. The opening and closing of the polling stations and the counting of votes happened as intended. The general atmosphere

was peaceful. Also the number of security personnel was much larger than on 29 October. However, the voter turnout was very low, estimated to be between 30-40 percent of the registered voters. The Dar es Salaam elections were, in fact, very similar to elections in Zimbabwe: well-organized but trivial.

According to the final results, voter turnout for the entire country was 77 percent of the registered voters.¹ In the presidential elections Benjamin Mkapa of CCM won with 62 percent of the votes, while Augustine Mrema of NCCR-Mageuzi got 28 percent, the CUF's Ibrahim Lipumba 6 percent and UDP's John Cheyo 4 percent. In the parliamentary elections CCM got 186 seats, CUF 24, NCCR-Mageuzi 16, Chadema 3 and the UDP 3. Thirty-six seats were reserved for female representatives, which were appointed according to the number of seats won by the contesting parties: 28 for CCM, 4 for CUF, 3 for NCCR-Mageuzi, 1 for Chadema and 1 for the UDP. Five members of the House of Representatives of Zanzibar were appointed all representing CCM. Thus, CCM has 199 out of the 274 seats, giving it 73 percent of the seats.

The opposition parties have only 27 percent of the seats although they collected nearly 40 per cent of the votes. Most importantly the opposition is very divided, also in its relation to the ruling party, to which many opposition MPs once belonged. As in Zimbabwe the opposition parties are often not only off-shoots of the ruling party but also riven by further splits between their leaders. Observers were soon speculating about a possibility that some opposition MPs would join the ruling party - a phenomenon not so exceptional in Africa (**Africa Confidential**, Nov. 17th 1996; Dec. 1st 1996; **New African**, Feb. 1996).

After the elections the High Court of Tanzania received 128 election complaints from the mainland and six from the islands, most of them affecting CCM MPs. Dar es Salaam was leading the list, as all its seven MPs were taken to court. By the following spring, however, already 64 petitions had been withdrawn, while only one had been rejected (**Africa Confidential**, April 12th 1996). Still the work load placed at the High Court judges by the petitions was enormous and time-consuming.

But if the mainland is gradually recovering from the chaos of the elections, Zanzibar is not. On 21 November ten donor countries issued an official statement saying that "the figures announced by the Zanzibar Electoral Commission do not always correspond with the figures recorded at the polling stations." Therefore "the results of the Presidential election declared by ZEC in Zanzibar may be inaccurate" (Belgium et al. 1995). Not surprisingly, CCM's Chief Minister in Zanzibar, Mohammed Bilal, is accusing foreign embassies of fuelling the confrontation between the ruling party and CUF. There has been an attempt to burn down the House of Representatives in Pemba. Two schools have been burnt and students have been striking after CUF launched a school boycott. There have been violent pro-CUF demonstrations and known supporters of CCM have seen their property

¹ The estimates of registration ranged between 70 and 81 percent of the eligible voters.

being destroyed by mobs. CCM officials have been harassed. Two CUF members of Parliament have been detained for holding illegal meetings. A public meeting proposed by CUF in Pemba was banned. Journalists cannot work freely. A critical Dar es Salaam newspaper **Majira** has been banned. In Zanzibar a person having three copies of that paper was sentenced to jail. CUF MPs are boycotting Zanzibar's House of Assembly and they have effectively prevented the setting-up of parliamentary committees, stating openly that they will do all they can to remove the current president from office (**Africa Confidential**, March 1st 1996; April 12th 1996).

4. DIFFERENCES

In both Zimbabwe and Tanzania the ruling parties won the elections, neither of which was very democratic. Yet there are differences. While Zimbabwean elections were relatively well organized, the elections in Tanzania were chaotic, at least in some areas. While there was no real competition in Zimbabwe, elections in Tanzania were characterized by an intense struggle between the parties, especially in Zanzibar. While there was no need for the ruling party to rig the elections in Zimbabwe, there are good reasons to believe that it happened in Zanzibar.

On the bases of the comparative research design, these differences can be approached by analysing known differences in the electoral processes in these two countries. As far as factors, that have been emphasized by the modernization school are concerned, the countries were relatively similar. Thus these factors can be excluded from the following analysis as well as the disarticulation of their economies, their dependency on international financial institutions and donors, the British and socialist inheritance, and the impact of independent observers, monitoring of the elections. This, of course, does not mean that these aspects were irrelevant when understanding the level of democracy or the holding of elections in any country, but it means that they cannot explain why elections were chaotic in Tanzania and a non-event in Zimbabwe.

The main and obvious difference between the electoral processes concerns, of course, the newness of multi-partyism in Tanzania. Whereas Zimbabwe had experienced regular multi-party elections during its 15 years of independence, Tanzania was doing it for the first time since 1962. This observation, however, becomes sensible only after clarifying the role of the state in the electoral competition in both countries.

5. WHY WERE ELECTIONS A NON-EVENT IN ZIMBABWE?

Zimbabwe had had 15 years of experience in arranging multi-party elections according to internationally acceptable standards. However, all of the Zimbabwean

elections, four parliamentary elections and two presidential elections, have been very different. Since the first elections, which preceded Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 and were actually organized by the Rhodesian administration under British supervision, Robert Mugabe's ZANU(PF) has ruled the country. Due to time constraints the 1980 elections were held according to a proportional electoral system. The elections gave ZANU(PF) 57 seats out of the 80 seats reserved for Africans,² while Joshua Nkomo's Patriotic Front - Zimbabwe African People's Union (PF-ZAPU) won 20 seats.

Soon the dispute over the leadership of the country between these two liberation parties³ led to conflict in Matabeleland. The general elections in 1985 were thus overshadowed by several allegations of intimidation and harassment of the voters, candidates and supporters of PF-ZAPU. Still the voters had an opportunity to choose between two parties all over the country, although their choice was usually determined by their ethnic identities: ZANU(PF) representing Shona and PF-ZAPU Ndebele identities in accordance with the home areas of Nkomo and Mugabe. Zimbabwe had then been divided into single-member constituencies, which proved to be harmful to ZAPU, which got only 15 seats while ZANU got 64 seats.

Ending the conflict in Matabeleland was not possible until the 1987 Unity agreement between ZANU and ZAPU, or rather until ZAPU was taken over by ZANU. This was the first step towards the establishment of a one-party state. This possibility, however, was ruined by the simultaneous emergence of open criticism of the government, which earlier had been constrained by the security problems in Matabeleland. The disclosure of large corruption scandals provided the basis for a new party, ZUM, led by Edgar Tekere, who was expelled from ZANU after criticizing the government in Parliament.

Tekere's story, in fact, is very similar to the story of the most popular opposition leader Mrema in Tanzania in 1995. Especially students and workers in the urban areas were mobilized against the ruling party. The 1990 elections, with ZUM putting up its candidates almost all over the country, provided the people at least an opportunity to vote against the ruling party. ZUM was able to score as much as 18 percent of the total vote. However, the majoritarian electoral system reduced the number of ZUM MPs to 2 out of the 120 contested seats.⁴ Before the 1995 elections the party disintegrated, giving further impetus for new opposition parties. These have been gathering around political leaders instead of growing from grassroots organizations.

² According to the peace agreement, 20 seats were reserved for the white minority at least for a period of seven years.

³ Initially there was only one liberation movement, ZAPU, which was under the moderate leadership of Nkomo. In 1963 a group of more radical ZAPU executives, Mugabe and Sithole among them, left ZAPU and formed ZANU.

⁴ The white seats were abolished in 1987. For the 1990 elections the total number of MPs was increased to the present 150.

This political development was accompanied by consolidation of state power into the hands of ZANU(PF). After independence was achieved, the security apparatus, including the feared Central Intelligence Organisation, was effectively employed by the new ruling party instead of being depoliticized. This explains, at least partly, the government's overreaction to the post-war security problems in Matabeleland. The independent state also inherited the Rhodesian control over the media, which by indirect means extends also to media not owned by the government. Repressive legislation inherited from Rhodesia has been frequently used by the government against its potential critics. The president has used amnesty when party activists or government officials have been condemned by the still independent judiciary. Instead of providing a steady framework for power-sharing or separation of powers, the Constitution agreed on in the peace negotiations was amended as soon as it became possible, in 1987, in order to concentrate power into the executive.

In 1987, after the Unity agreement between ZAPU and ZANU and the end of the conflict in Matabeleland, the Zimbabwean civil society started to create more space for itself. The trade union and the university were at the core of this struggle for a "second independence." The state response was to harass trade union leaders and to tighten its legal control over the university through the University of Zimbabwe Amendment Act of 1990. The latest example of the tightening of state control over the civil society is the Voluntary Organisations Act, which gives the government the power to remove non-governmental organizations' board members it does not like and to appoint new ones it finds acceptable (**Facts and Reports**, August 1st 1995).

The trivialization of elections in Zimbabwe can be understood only in the context of the institutional continuity and evolution of the colonial state apparatus. That state, in fact, was already a *de facto* one-party state during Rhodesian rule (Leys 1959). After independence a genuine sharing of powers between the two liberation parties proved to be impossible, therefore violent conflict ensued in Matabeleland, where thousands of civilians were killed. Although the literature has emphasized the role of apartheid South Africa in that conflict, the immediate cause was the necessity to stifle dissent and to bring the repressive state under the nearly total control of one political organization.

6. WHY WERE ELECTIONS CHAOTIC IN TANZANIA?

The salient point in the introduction of multi-partyism in Tanzania was that right from the beginning all aspects of it were organized and controlled by the ruling party, which still enjoyed legitimacy in the eyes of the majority. Contrary to what happened in neighbouring Zambia and Malawi, where the one-party state had to "surrender," due to growing opposition not only among educated urban people and workers but also among the rural majority, in Tanzania there was very little internal

pressure towards that transition. A case in point is that the first mass demonstration of the opposition took place only after opposition parties were legalized in December 1992.

Thus Nyerere's initiative, rather than being an attempt to create space for opposition and alternative political coalitions to compete for the state power, was an initiative to safeguard CCM control in a development which was almost certainly spilling over to Tanzania. Nyerere stated: "[A] multi-party system is inevitable [...] CCM must be at the forefront of bringing about those changes - including CCM overseeing change to multi-party politics" (**Daily News**, June 27th 1990). Besides, Nyerere's public concern for corruption and the need of political reform in Tanzania was more restricted to internal problems within the party than to the reorganization of the party's position vis-à-vis the state (Erdmann 1995: 3).

The fact that the multi-partyism was not introduced as a sincere effort to improve the electoral process in Tanzania, was then reflected in the practical organization of the elections. From the point of view of the civil servants the whole exercise was particularly ambiguous. Over 30 years of one-partyism had made sure that the Tanzanian administration consisted of the supporters of the ruling party. In the administration of the elections this ambivalence to multi-partyism was accompanied by bureaucratic inflexibility. Although the organization of the elections on multi-party basis for the first time required a lot of planning and preparations, there were no mechanisms to control or correct possible shortcomings in this effort. Even the international observers were allowed to monitor the elections merely due to the donors' pressure and not because of any Tanzanian initiative.

The reports of the observers pointed to inadequate preparations as the main reason for the chaos on the polling day. Inadequate preparations contributed to the delays in election materials arriving at the polling stations and to a shortage or absence of ballots in a number of constituencies. Because of a delayed training schedule, extending to the eve of elections and late payments of funds, voting started behind time. The polling officials and party agents complained about their unpaid allowances to everybody, including observers, journalists, poll watchers and even the voters. There were cases where the polling personnel spent the whole voting day trying either to get paid ahead of their work or to secure a guarantee that they would be paid after they had done their work.

Training, often superficial, was conducted with groups that were too large. The training manual was difficult to understand and contained information that conflicted with other guidelines. As a result, procedures around the country were not uniform. Polling stations were often in dark surroundings, which made identification of candidates' pictures, and marking of the ballots slow and difficult. Slowness was also a result of ballots all being white on the reverse side. Specific measures to preserve the secrecy of the vote, such as provision of privacy and sealing of numbered counterfoils in envelopes before counting, were not carried out effectively. Especially in Dar es Salaam the voters were concerned about the security of the election material, including lack of locks or seals of ballot boxes or

official transport arrangements. Also, the decision of the Commission to extend voting hours on Sunday caused confusion in vote counting.

That the reasons behind the chaos were bureaucratic is evident, as the situation was worst in towns and urban areas. In many isolated areas voting started in time, whereas the situation in Dar es Salaam was the worst. In his Monday statement on the Dar es Salaam elections, the Chairman of National Electoral Commission, Judge Lewis Makame, said that the Commission had supplied all the necessary materials, and even a bit extra, to all the constituencies, and that it must have been the recklessness at the constituency level that had led to the shortages. This then opened up all sorts of speculations and theories, including charges of planned recklessness that benefitted one party or another. The general distrust was especially rampant in the urban centres, which were also the main basis of the opposition parties.

As in Zimbabwe, the elections in Tanzania were a "constitutional necessity" from the point of view of the ruling party. What was different, however, was that in Tanzania the elections were held on multi-party basis for the first time in decades and that there were opposition parties that took the game quite seriously. Whether deliberate or not, the chaos and the way in which the results of the Zanzibar elections were announced frustrated the opposition. When all this is added to CCM's well-established patronage of ethnic and regional elites, which guarantees its support among the rural people virtually all over the country, the only exception being Pemba, there is very little the opposition can expect from the future. Therefore it is not unlikely that multi-party elections in Tanzania will develop into similar non-events as they are currently in Zimbabwe.

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Although the Tanzanian and Zimbabwean elections differed from each other as far as their appearance is concerned, the result was the same: trivialization of the electoral competition, which deprived the elections of their meaning. Still the participation of the voters in the Tanzanian elections and in the pre-1995 multi-party elections in Zimbabwe show that there is potential for political pluralism in Africa. With continuous voter education and strengthening of the civil society, elections in Africa could become an important means to check the state power and to increase its accountability to the people. This, however, has not happened in Zimbabwe, and the Tanzanian example is not more promising.

Although the immediate reasons behind the trivialization of the Tanzanian and Zimbabwean elections were different, they stem from same grounds: from the particular character of the post-colonial state and its interaction with the society. In both countries the ruling party has been able to use the legislative, administrative and coercive power of the state to make the electoral process less effective. In Zimbabwe the ruling party has been able to gradually consolidate its power over the

state apparatus in spite of the multi-party framework. In Tanzania the ruling party accomplished that during the one-party era. The transition to multi-partyism merely marked its ability to protect that power.

The dilemma is that development of an institution that could check the state power is constrained by the very same state power. In this respect Tanzania and Zimbabwe are similar cases and exemplify typical multi-party systems in Africa. Countries like Zambia or Malawi, where the ruling parties have been defeated in the first multi-party election are not exceptions to this pattern, since the new ruling parties are using the state in the very same way to thwart their opposition.

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