# Why is Tanzania Becoming More Democratic?

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## Introduction

The process of democratisation in sub-Saharan Africa has produced an explosion of scholarly interest as political scientists have taken aim at bettering their understanding of the factors that promote or constrain democratic trends in this region. The literature on the topic is driven by a number of questions, but two stand out. The first is causative: what are the causes of the transition from authoritarian governance toward more democratic forms of rule? The second is more evaluative: how enduring are the new democratic tendencies likely to be? The two issues are closely intertwined. The sustainability of the new democratic trend depends heavily on the factors that are producing it.

## Afro-Pessimism

The literature on African democratisation has been largely dominated by the sceptics, a group of scholars who, despite divergent theoretical perspectives, share a conviction that Africa's democratic prospects are poor. The members of this school of thought, generally labelled "Afro-Pessimist", believe that democratic political institutions and practices are not likely to become very widespread in Africa. The basic reason for this, the Afro-pessimists believe, is that in a majority of African countries the most basic preconditions for democratic politics are still absent. There is a presupposition that the

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democratic initiatives of the early 1990s are seriously imperilled by the inauspicious circumstances in which African politics takes place.

The Afro-pessimists express concern, for example, at the lack of critically important socio-economic requisites. Levels of education and literacy are low, rendering voters amenable to demagogic politicians and irresponsible movements. Africa lacks a sizeable and stable middle class that could anchor the political system through its support of centrist and moderate parties. There are wide and sometimes growing disparities between wealth and poverty, with vast potential for triggering urban discontents. And, finally, Africa's private sector is not sufficiently large to afford political leaders an opportunity for horizontal mobility out of the state, thereby reinforcing their interest in maintaining political control.

Afro-pessimists also express concern about a number of cultural factors, such as a weak sense of nationhood, low levels of leadership commitment to democratic processes, and a seemingly all-pervasive tendency toward ethnicity as a basis of political identification. Ethnicity is widely believed to prevent the sort of cross-cutting group ties that have produced a politics of political moderation in successful democratic systems. In a number of countries religious divisions, including the rise of political Islam, have also begun to intrude the political process. Religion, like ethnicity, appears to lend itself to extreme rather than moderate political attitudes.

Among the most outspoken of the Afro-pessimists is Christopher Clapham, who has described himself as "extremely sceptical" about "whether the current democratic process is likely to lead to the creation of a reasonably stable democratic order."[1] Clapham believes that African societies lack certain of the most fundamental requisites of a successful transition toward stable democracy such as a democratic consensus. This results from the fact that African states are artificial creations encompassing historically and culturally diverse peoples. Clapham also points to the fact that the policy framework of most African countries has been dominated by a statist tradition of economic management that provides an inhospitable environment for pluralist politics. Since material rewards are available only through control of state institutions, African leaders are reluctant to abide by political rules that provide for orderly succession.

These views are shared by Rene Lemarchand, who has suggested that "the movement toward democracy may contain within itself the seeds of its own undoing."[2] Lemarchand believes that autocratic African leaders have devised an array of strategic countermeasures to resist and defeat the democratic impulse; they have become adept at practising the form but not the content of the democratic idea. In addition, opposition political forces lack the degree of unity that would enable them to present a credible challenge to incumbent regimes; both political leaders and political followers exhibit a scarcity of civic values that promote political tolerance and compromise. Necessary economic conditions are also absent, specifically a minimal level of socio-economic well-being. For Lemarchand, Africa is so lacking in the minimal requisites of democratic politics that dismantling its authoritarian states may produce not democratic politics but the convulsive warlordism or political thuggery of recent episodes in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Somalia.

One of the most influential of the Afro-pessimists is Thomas Callaghy. His widely cited essay, "Political Passions and Economic Interests", has become a classic statement of the incompatibility of simultaneous economic and political reforms.[3] Callaghy stresses the fact that democratic political reforms are being set in place at the same time as needed economic reforms, which tend to accentuate destabilising political discontents. Callaghy's pessimism extends to both directions of the economic liberalisation - democratic liberalisation relationship. He is doubtful that transitional democracies are likely to perform very well as economic liberalisers, especially in comparison to more authoritarian forms of government. And he is even more doubtful that economic reform is likely to produce democratic politics.

The reason for this incompatibility is that economic reform does not generate winners who not only support on-going economic reforms but democratic politics as well. Rather, "the winners of economic reform in Africa are few, appear only slowly over time, and are difficult to organise politically".[4] Since economic losers are both more numerous and better organised, some form of authoritarian or semi-authoritarian control is required to sustain the needed economic changes.

The Afro-pessimists can cite abundant evidence for their position. The list of Africa's long-standing political disasters is all too familiar, and a number of the countries that once seemed to hold out some promise as "transitional" democracies seem hopelessly mired in authoritarian rule, astride a shallow and mostly meaningless framework of multi-partyism. Among the countries once considered promising democracies but presently governed by leaders

who resist political reforms that might dilute their control are Ivory Coast, Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

The confounding aspect of modern Africa, however, is that it also includes examples of meaningful progress toward pluralistic politics. Such countries as Senegal and Botswana have long ranked in this category, to be joined there more recently by South Africa, Ghana and Zambia. Tanzania belongs in this category. And although the presidential and national assembly election of 1995 did not gain the internationally coveted "free and fair" designation, owing principally to irregularities in the election of the President of Zanzibar, few would argue that discrepancies on mainland Tanzania had any significant impact on the outcome of the election.

What conclusion can be drawn from this mixture of democratic failure and success? The answer cannot be a simple one. On the one hand, it is evident that the Afro-pessimists have a powerful theoretical position that is abundantly supported by empirical evidence. On the other hand, it is equally evident that the Afro-pessimist arguments fail to explain the success of democratic trends in a number of cases. At the very least, the Afro-pessimists' theoretical convictions must be revised to provide theoretical space for those instances where democratic governments appear to be taking root. The Tanzanian case demonstrates that the absence of seemingly essential historical, cultural or socio-economic requisites does not portend inevitable doom for Africa's democratic reformers. For there are other factors at work that propel some African countries in a democratic direction. This case study may help to shed light on some of these.

## The Tanzanian Case: Historical Background

Tanzania's transition toward democratic politics provides an excellent basis from which to examine the concerns raised by the Afro-pessimist scholars. If Tanzanian democracy proves to be both real and sustainable, buoyed by forces that are likely to continue, it provides at least one case that is exceptional to the pessimists' bleak prognosis. If the stresses, strains and shortcomings of its early transition augur poorly, it would appear to sustain their conviction.

## Democratic History

One of the more important sources of democratic politics in Tanzania is an early history of democratic politics. The Afro-pessimists have underestimated the importance of the fact that the transition from colonial rule to independent politics, a period that lasted roughly from the late 1950s to the early 1960s, was characterised by an emerging democratic order. This included an elected National Assembly, multi-partyism, a free press, a neutral civil service, free trade unions, and open contestation for public office. Callaghy refers to this period as "brief, vivid and a failure." But the fact is that in some very important ways it helped set the stage for the present process of democratic transition.

Tanzania's present efforts toward democratisation help illuminate the importance of this early phase. To understand its current transition, it is vitally important to recall that Tanzania began its independent political history as a democratic society, having made the transition from colonial status to independence with a set of institutions that included a freely elected National Assembly, a multi-party system, and a history of highly contested multi-party elections. Although one party—the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU)—towered over all others in the extent of its organisation and in the breadth of its popular support, there was effective separation of party and state. At its independence in late 1961 and for several years thereafter, Tanzania was an open and pluralistic democracy.

This fact requires a reinterpretation of the Afro-pessimists' view of the colonial impact. Scholars such as Clapham see the colonial legacy almost entirely in negative terms, stressing the "artificiality" of colonial boundaries, which encompass ethnic communities that lack a history of common politics. While this is true, it is only a partial perspective. It is also true that Africa's major colonial powers, Britain and France, sought to nurture democratic institutions during the final years of their presence on the continent. Because the institutions they introduced were largely modelled on European lines, the Afro-pessimists have sought to shed doubt on the viability and appropriateness of European-style parliamentary systems. They are joined by a number of African leaders who, seeking to justify authoritarian measures, have also criticised European institutional models. This matter could be debated endlessly and fruitlessly. The important point is that virtually every anglophone and francophone African country had several years of experience of some sort of democracy as a part of its transition toward national independence.

In countries such as Tanzania, where democratic processes are gaining a foothold, this is of considerable importance. The earlier democratic experience, however brief, is a part of a common political memory that plays

a role in promoting today's democratic transitions. This is no vague abstraction. Rare is the African democratic transition in which some important portion of the present opposition is not supplied by political leaders who were active in opposition movements during the democratic period of the 1960s. Equally rare is the transition in which the issues that create political divisions were not first a part of the political agenda during that earlier democratic era. Indeed, one of the most striking aspects of Africa's contemporary democratic transition is the extent to which today's political alignments resemble those of the early 1960s.

The relevance of the democratic past is striking in Tanzania. To understand the roots of Tanzanian democracy today, it is essential to begin with the pluralistic patterns of the early post-independence period. Any number of Tanzania's present opposition parties harken back to opposition figures or movements of that period. Tanzania's principal opposition party as measured by parliamentary representation, the Civic United Front (CUF), has its historical roots and strength in Zanzibar politics and reflects internal historical divisions within Zanzibar.[5] Other opposition parties are the products of early (1960s) fissures within TANU itself. The Tanzanian Democratic Alliance (TADEA), for example, was founded by former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Oscar Kambona, a highly popular TANU political figure during the 1960s, but one known to be opposed to President Nyerere's determination to transform Tanzania in a socialist direction.

Other aspects of contemporary Tanzanian politics also resonate deeply with the issues of the 1960s. One of the clearest examples is the Democratic Party (DP) of the Reverend Christopher Mtikila. This party, known principally for its virulent anti-Asian sentiments, has a direct antecedent in the [Tanzanian] African National Congress (ANC) of the late 1950s and early 1960s, which also sought to gain support on the basis of anti-Asian sentiments. Another resonance with the past was the CUF presidential campaign for the office of President which, in its explicit effort to draw political support from Tanzania's large Muslim population, was practically identical to the political campaigns waged during the late 1950s and early 1960s by the All Muslim National Union of Tanzania (AMNUT).

How, then, can the relevance of the democratic past best be stated? It is self-evident that a democratic past did not prevent a thirty-year or more interlude of authoritarian rule. The lingering influences of the earlier democratic experience, therefore, cannot be credited with having initiated the country's democratic momentum. But they do play a role in sustaining it. It is, therefore, essential to restate the nature of the colonial legacy, for interpretations of that legacy which cast it entirely in negative terms are missing the fact that it created political memories which continue to provide a measure of impetus and inspiration for democratic politics.

## The Authoritarian Era

Despite a democratic beginning, during the mid to late 1960s Tanzanian politics was marked by an authoritarian transition. Its pluralistic democracy was replaced by a "One Party Democracy" that bore the unmistakable features of authoritarian rule. Opposition parties were eliminated first on a de facto basis and then de jure. Candidacy for national and local office was limited to carefully screened members of the governing party who had to be approved by the highest levels of the party apparatus. Campaigns were strictly regulated and non-socialist viewpoints proscribed. A variety of laws, including a Preventive Detention Law, were passed to enable the government to repress dissent and eliminate even the final vestiges of opposition. The media were nationalised and became monopolistic outlets for official viewpoints, utterly devoid of critical content. And the party and the state became so inextricably intertwined that for many Tanzanians TANU was the government and the government was TANU.

During the authoritarian period, party membership was, for all practical purposes, a requisite of appointment to the civil service, military, leadership in the trade union movement or to an administrative position within one of the country's innumerable parastatal institutions. It was also a criterion in the allocation of other opportunities such as promotion within these institutions, especially to high-ranking positions, study fellowships abroad, and eligibility for state-owned housing and bank loans. In the rural areas, the party-state organised the political dimension of the lives of its citizens through its formidable "ten house cell" system in which each ten houses were a unit in the party hierarchy. The purpose of this hierarchy was less to facilitate participatory activity from below than to serve as a vehicle for the top-down dissemination of the party's ideological beliefs.

The government's frequent use of its preventive detention authority greatly restricted the realm of political discourse. Not only were political dissidents and disbelievers routinely arrested, tried for treason and imprisoned, sometimes for lengthy periods, but the very existence and use of the oppressive legal apparatus of the state had a chilling effect on the

willingness of ordinary citizens to speak out against the system. There was an atmosphere of fear and anxiety compounded by the knowledge that any person might be acting covertly as a government informer. Journalists learned to be cautious in what they published; teachers and university lecturers learned to be guarded in what they said to their students; and ordinary citizens generally avoided political conversations except among their most trusted friends.

## Contemporary Democratic Reforms

This system remained in place until the early 1990s when a series of far-reaching political reforms restored Tanzania to a degree of political openness it had not enjoyed for almost thirty years. Multi-partyism has once again become legally sanctioned; an opposition press has proliferated and become ever more vocal; and elections at both the local and national level have been opened to candidates of opposition political parties. Candidates of both the governing party and opposition groups are free to espouse the merits of market-based as well as state based development strategies.

Multi-party elections for the presidencies and legislatures of both Tanzania and Zanzibar were held in late 1995. Although electoral observers, such as those from the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the locally based Tanzania Election Monitoring Committee (TEMCO), did not designate these elections as fully "free and fair", those who complained of rigging and other forms of manipulation did not suggest that these practices fundamentally altered the election results, except for the Zanzibar Presidency. After the 1995 General Elections, the Tanzanian National Assembly had a substantial multi-party opposition that accounted for approximately 50 of the total of 250 seats. Tanzania is once again, as it was in the early 1960s, on the road to a democratic society.

What has produced this dramatic changeover? The political science literature on democratisation is staggering in its proportions and theoretical diversity. The methodologies that have been applied to this subject span an intellectual gamut that ranges from in-depth case studies to rigorously quantitative, cross-national comparisons. Despite this vast outpouring of research, virtually all of the key questions, including the basic question of democratic causality, remain in dispute.

To cut into the literature on democratisation, it is useful to begin with a broad distinction between approaches that emphasise the exogenous (external) roots of the process versus those that emphasise its endogenous (internal) roots. Each of these broad categories can be further sub-divided into roughly three discrete explanatory approaches as follows.

### 1. External Approaches.

A. *End of the Cold War.* The end of the cold war, commonly dated from the dismantling of the Berlin Wall in 1989, has been seen as undermining the international leverage, especially on aid resources, of authoritarian regimes.

B. *Donor Conditionalities.* Donor insistence upon democratic as well as economic reforms has been widely cited as a source of political transformation, especially among governments that are particularly dependent upon donor finance.

C. *The "contagion" Effect.* This factor refers to the globalisation of the democratic idea, suggesting that democracy results principally from a diffusion of democratic values across national boundaries.

### II. Internal Approaches.

A. *Group Dynamics.* Group approaches, which include the widely cited "civil society" paradigm, stress the importance of group actors pressuring the state for democratic reforms. Group actors may be economic in nature, such as trade unions or agricultural co-operatives, or non-economic, including religious bodies and ethnic groupings.

B. *Political Economy.* Approaches based on the discipline of political economy lay stress on the primary importance of underlying economic factors, including an economic crisis, and the importance of economic liberalisation as a necessary precursor of political liberalisation.

C. *Personal Agency.* An individual political leader or group of leaders becomes convinced of the importance or necessity of democratic institutions. They then use their influence to press forward with democratic reforms.

Each of these approaches helps to shed some light on Tanzania's democratic transition, which defies single factor analysis. Some of these approaches,

however, are stronger and more persuasive than others. The challenge of a case study is to attempt to sort out one group from another. A case study can at most suggest that, within a specific political environment, one explanation or a combination of explanations appears to work better than others. That is the purpose of this article.

## 1. External Factors

### A. Collapse of the Soviet System

The collapse of the Soviet system, generally dated from the dismantling of the Berlin Wall in 1989, has been widely credited as an important exogenous source of the democratic process in Africa. Broadly speaking, there is some merit in this argument. The collapse of the Soviet system eliminated an alternative political-economic model that, throughout most of the post-independence era, had enormous appeal for political leaders seeking to aggrandise economic resources at the level of the state. It also deprived numerous African countries of much of their bargaining leverage in their relations with western donors, thereby enhancing the influence of exogenous diplomatic pressures toward democratic reforms. And, in a number of specific cases (Ethiopia, Guinea-Conakry, Angola, and Mozambique) the collapse of the Soviet Union also deprived authoritarian African governments of the material resources necessary to sustain them. Authoritarian governments could no longer count on western support simply because of their geo-political importance, supplies of strategic materials, or votes in international fora.

As important as these arguments may be in some cases, the collapse of the Soviet system does not provide a significant explanation of Tanzania's movement toward democracy. At most, its effect has been weak and indirect. Unlike the African countries named in the previous paragraph, Tanzania never had a particularly strong relationship with the Soviet state, either in economic or military terms, and the Russian political model never enjoyed intellectual currency within the Tanzanian elite. In addition, Tanzania has never been a significant recipient of Soviet military assistance and the Soviet Union's diplomatic presence in the country has been practically invisible.

If Tanzania has had a vitally important relationship with any major country in the communist world, it has been China. China, after all, constructed the Tanzania Zambia Railway (TAZARA) in the early 1970s, and returned in the late 1980s to reconstruct it. China's approach to collective villagization, not Russia's, was widely considered the model for the early phase of Tanzania's Ujamaa Village Programme and, indeed, China's ideological commitment to the concept of peasant involvement in socialist liberation has been widely considered a principal source of inspiration for much of Tanzania's official ideology throughout the 1960s and 1970s. To the extent that external "role models" have any influence, then, China's influence should have been in exactly the opposite direction. China stood out among Tanzania's influential donors for having refrained from pressuring Tanzania to agree to IMF and World Bank conditionalities in the 1980s. And, since the Tien An Men square events of June 1989, China has presented itself to the world as a model of economic liberalisation under strong state auspices. Its catchword, the need for "social stability" during the economic changeover, is widely understood as a euphemism for governmental license to suppress democratic forces.

### B. Western Donor Influence

The effect on Tanzania of the collapse of the Soviet system has been at most indirect. It has paved the way for an enlargement of influence on the part of western and multinational donors. The collapse of the Soviet model enhanced their leverage considerably and, after 1989, donors seemed more prepared to add political conditions to the economic reform agenda.

This pressure has undoubtedly had some effect in Tanzania as it has in innumerable other African countries. Indeed, since Tanzania is widely considered to be among the most aid-dependent of African nations, the factor of western influence could well have counted for more than in numerous other societies. A major portion of Tanzania's development budget and a large share of its recurrent budget are made up of donor funds; its infrastructure, health, and education systems are heavily dependent upon various forms of donor support. The impact of donor pressure was undoubtedly heightened by the fact that it came from so many different sources, undoubtedly creating the accurate impression that the donors were to a large degree acting in concert in imposing democratic conditions on their financial assistance. Among countries exerting pressure for democratisation were Tanzania's traditionally most important donors, including the Scandinavian countries, Britain and the United States.

This argument contains a hypothesis that would lend itself readily to broader comparative analysis. Aid-dependence is easily quantified as a percentage of budget accounted for by donor funds and, since donor

commitments to democratisation do not vary greatly across countries, it would be possible to measure whether the more aid-dependent nations should presumably have moved further in this direction than others. That research, however, is beyond the scope of this contribution. What can be said with some confidence is that Tanzania is highly aid-dependent, that its most important donors have explicitly raised the question of political liberalisation alongside economic liberalisation in their conversations with Tanzania's political leaders, and that Tanzania's leaders have been highly sensitive to donor pressure.

In a fuller consideration of the influence of donors on Tanzania's movement toward democracy, the exact timing of mounting donor pressure for political reform would require a more detailed treatment. It appears that the onset of donor pressure did not begin until after Tanzania had already begun to take important steps toward political liberalisation. For nearly the entire period between independence and the early 1990s, western donors refrained from attempts to influence Tanzania's internal politics. The 1980s disagreements between the Government of Tanzania and its principal donors, especially the World Bank and the IMF, focused almost exclusively on economic issues. The large national donors, especially the United Kingdom, Germany (then West Germany) and the United States, only insisted that Tanzania meet the IMF and World Bank economic conditionalities.

Donors did not begin to become involved in a significant way in the issue of political reform until the early 1990s. Even those who argue that donor influence was strong date it only from late 1991. Mwesiga Baregu, for example, cites as the opening of donor political pressure an October, 1991 statement by the Norwegian Embassy insisting on human rights and multi-partyism.[6] But former President Julius Nyerere had called for an open debate on multi-partyism as early as February of 1990, and President Ali Mwinyi had agreed to this as early as September that year, appointing a Presidential Commission on the subject in early 1991, eight months before the Norwegian statement. Indeed, by early 1991, opposition groups were already operating openly. Thus, while donor influence has had an undeniable influence on Tanzania's movement toward democracy, it cannot be assigned credit as a causative factor.

### C.  Contagion Effect

Of the three external factor arguments, that based on the contagion effect is by far the weakest and least satisfactory. If the notion of a contagion effect

means anything at all, it is that the leaders of a particular country feel a need to conform to broad regional trends. But as the opening paragraphs of this article suggested, the Afro-pessimists have a strong case when they assert that regional trends throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa are far from democratic. The evidence for the Afro-pessimist case does not need to be repeated. Suffice it to say here that regional political trends in Africa are so mixed that a "contagion effect" could as easily be cited for authoritarian rule as for democratic.

## II.  Internal Approaches

### A.  Group Dynamics

The theoretical point of departure for many studies of democratisation in contemporary Africa is the trend toward a renaissance of civil society. Civil society can be broadly defined as the entire complex of groupings or associations, both formal and informal, organised and spontaneous, that lie somewhere between the family and the state.[7] Civil society is coterminous with the group life of a society. Its scope includes large, relatively well-financed and potentially powerful groups such as trade unions, churches, agricultural co-operatives and chambers of commerce and industry, and small groups lacking in organisational or financial resources. Civil society is thus bewildering in its complexity. It encompasses not only those groups that are self-consciously organised to act politically but also those that consider themselves outside the political arena.

Although the idea of civil society has intellectual roots that extend through several centuries of western political philosophy, it has had a revival in recent years owing to the role of the Polish Worker's Movement in helping to bring economic and political reform to that country during the 1970s. As Adam Seligman notes, thinkers have employed the concept of civil society in a variety of intellectual traditions.

> In its different interpretations, it has been central to the development of both the liberal-parliamentary tradition and the socialist, Marxian one ... Although the concept of civil society was defined differently by the different theorists of the French, Scottish and German Enlightenments, what was common to all attempts to articulate a notion of civil society was the problematic relation between the private and the public, the individual and the social, public ethics and individual interests...[8]

Despite its breadth and seemingly all-inclusive quality, the idea of civil society has been highly appealing to scholars of development because of its

intellectual proximity to the well-established pluralist approach. Political scientists concerned with the western world have long believed that democratic political institutions are brought about and sustained by the process of interest groups seeking to assert their will on the political arena.[9] It seemed only natural to extend this line of inquiry to the developing world, including Africa.

Tanzania provides an excellent opportunity to do so. For it exhibits both political trends: first, the rise, or more accurately, the re-birth of greater associational autonomy; second, the re-emergence of political democracy.

The recent flourishing of Tanzanian civil society has been breathtaking. After nearly a generation during which the one-party state minimised the political autonomy of groups vital to the democratic process, associational actors of widely varying types have begun to assert themselves. Indeed, the present vitality of Tanzania's civil associations is the most concrete demonstration of the new atmosphere of political freedom. Since the late 1980s a host of politically important organisations, once subordinated to the state through its hierarchical and corporatist system of authority, have become free-standing.

The most dramatic examples are the country's trade union movement, the Organisation of Tanzanian Trade Unions (OTTU), and its once flourishing but long politically repressed agricultural co-operatives. In addition, a formidable range of other associations has also arisen from the corporatist grid. These include professional groups such as journalists and lawyers; business organisations, including separate interest groups representing manufacturing and trading interests; and a proliferation of gender-based organisations representing women's interests.

The counterpart trend at the governmental level has to do with the movement toward greater political democracy, and features the emergence of democratic governmental institutions such as multi-partyism, open elections, and a far greater latitude for political opposition.

The civil society paradigm views the relationship between these two trends largely as one of cause and effect. Civil society actors arise and, by occupying or asserting themselves in the political space between the state and the individual, contribute first to heightened political freedom and, more gradually, to democratic political institutions. The politically independent groups perform classic democratic functions. They defend individuals against the intrusive and potentially repressive political authority of the state and they articulate the economic and political interests of their members. Democracy is born out of the interaction between free associations, on the one hand, and the state apparatus, on the other.

This theoretical approach has enjoyed great scholarly appeal owing to several important features. First, it conforms closely to the way western pluralists have classically viewed the origin of the democratic process; namely, first the groups, then the democracy. For centuries, political scientists have believed that an independent group life is both precondition and causal force for democratic political institutions. This understanding has dominated American political thought since the publication of the Federalist papers in the late 18th century and culminated in the tradition of pluralist thought that has informed scholarly studies of the political process since the turn of this century.

The civil society approach also seemed to correspond closely to the facts, especially the spontaneous rise of informal group activity during the period of Africa's economic crisis of the *late 1970s* and early 1980s. And, perhaps most importantly, it conforms to the liberal ethos that democratic political processes arise from below, percolating upward from the tendency of individual citizens to form groups to assert their views and interests.

Despite these important advantages, the civil society approach suffers from a major weakness. It cannot explain how it was that the seemingly dynamic civil society of the early 1960s — which also included a free trade union movement, robust local authorities, and a co-operative movement with deep roots in the countryside, as well as a strong private sector — could have been so thoroughly subordinated to the interests of the socialist state. Tanzania's experience gives rise to doubts about the conventional wisdom which holds that civil society provides both the point of origin and a sustaining basis for democratic politics.

The principal source of that doubt is the ease with which civil society was suppressed between 1965 and 1975. Following the publication of the *Report of the Presidential Commission on the Establishment of a Democratic One-Party State* (which contributed one of the great oxymorons to the vocabulary of modern African political discourse), the Tanzanian government took steps to eliminate any and all organised centres of political opposition. If political democracy at the level of the state is the outcome of vigorous group life at

the level of society, it becomes difficult to explain how the state could so easily have suppressed civil society during an earlier era.

The government's agenda, a part of which had actually preceded the *Report of the Presidential Commission,* included the following:

> the formal dissolution of traditional chieftaincy in the early 1960s;

> the passage of legislation which gave the government extensive power to suppress political opposition. This legislation included the Preventive Detention Act of 1962, which enabled the government to detain political opponents without trial and the Newspaper Act of 1976, which included such a broad definition of sedition that virtually any criticism of the government or its leaders could be legally construed as seditious conduct;

> the dissolution of the country's independent trade union movement, the Tanganyika Federation of Labour (TFL) and the creation of a new governmentally controlled union organisation, the National Union of Tanganyika Workers (NUTA), renamed Organisation of Tanzania Workers (JUWATA) in 1977, and renamed the Organisation of Tanzania Trade Unions (OTTU) in 1993;

> the formal dissolution of democratically elected district councils in the early 1970s, following a process the government termed the "decentralisation exercise";

> the dissolution of autonomous producer co-operative societies perceived as sources of resistance to the government's attempt to introduce collective villages from 1967 to 1974;

> passage of a constitutional provision in 1965 that diminished the elected National Assembly to the status of a committee of the party apparatus, reducing the role of elected representatives to translating the political will of the party into legal acts;

> the banning, in 1979, of the Dar es Salaam University students union (DUSO) and its replacement by a party-controlled student organisation, the Union of Tanzanian Students (MUWATA).

By the end of the 1970s, Tanzanian civil society had all but disappeared insofar as this term connotes the existence of politically autonomous groups outside the state.

A few brief examples may help illustrate the extent to which the organisations of civil society had lost the capacity to assert the interests and protect the rights and freedoms of their members. During the authoritarian period, party membership was practically a requisite of appointment to the civil service, military, leadership in the trade union movement, or to an administrative position within one of the country's innumerable parastatal institutions. It was also a criterion in the allocation of other opportunities such as promotion within these institutions, especially to high-ranking positions, study fellowships abroad, and eligibility for state-owned housing and bank loans. In the rural areas, the party-state organised the political dimension of the lives of its citizens through its formidable "ten house cell" system in which each ten houses were a unit in the party hierarchy. The purpose of this hierarchy was less to facilitate participatory activity from below than to serve as a vehicle for the top-down dissemination of the party's ideological beliefs.

Civil associations were systematically denied the opportunity to participate in the political process. This was accomplished principally through the establishment of an election system that, while permitting some degree of nomination from below, restricted actual candidacy to those given formal approval by the highest level of the party hierarchy, the National Executive Committee. Not only was the right to stand for public office limited to members of the party, but campaigns were subject to considerable restriction; only two candidates per constituency were allowed and, even for these, non-socialist ideas were proscribed. In all these ways, Tanzania's electoral system systematically prevented any effective intervention in the process by groups or associations organised outside the party apparatus.

The government's liberal use of its preventive detention authority also greatly restricted the realm of political discourse. Not only were political dissidents and disbelievers routinely arrested, tried for treason, and imprisoned, sometimes for lengthy periods, but the very existence and use of the oppressive legal apparatus of the state had a chilling effect on the willingness of ordinary citizens to speak out against the system. There was an atmosphere of fear and anxiety compounded by the knowledge that any person might be acting covertly as a government informer. Journalists learned to be hyper-cautious in what they published; teachers and university lecturers learned to be extremely guarded in what they said to their students; and ordinary citizens generally avoided political conversations except among their most trusted friends.

The theoretical implication of this experience is clear: if it happened once, why couldn't it happen again? How is it possible, in other words, to credit civil society for the re-birth of Tanzanian democracy in the 1990s when it was so demonstrably unable to protect political freedom in the 1960s?

This is no idle concern. Doubts about the civil society paradigm arise on at least two grounds. First, on the eve of the rebirth of multi-partyism in Tanzania in 1990, the major organisations of civil society were still under the control of the party or, at best, in only an embryonic state of independent existence. The workers' organisation, OTTU, for example, became semi-autonomous only in November 1991, to be followed later by rural co-operative organizations.[11] The country's associations of youth, women and parents were still under the control of the party as its mass membership organisations. And local government, though nominally reconstituted in 1984, was still centrally controlled from Dar es Salaam.

The second source of doubt is the fact that, as late as 1990, the state's capability and willingness to clamp down on democratic expressions arising from civil society was still great. When students at the University of Dar es Salaam demonstrated against corruption and poor conditions at the university in the early 1990s, the oppressive apparatus of the Tanzanian state came once again into play. The students were "sent down" to their villages and the university was closed for a year. In sum, the Tanzanian government's ability to suppress civil society was still very much intact at the very time when the first important democratic reforms were being implemented.

In the end, the conventional wisdom about the direction of causality -- namely, that civil society gives rise to democratic politics — must be called into question. The Tanzanian experience suggests instead that associational freedom may arise from democratic tendencies stimulated principally by other factors. Civil associations may, to borrow an economic terminology, be benefiting from an externality; that is, they may be enjoying a renaissance of freedom that they have not themselves brought about.

As a result of doubts such as these, Africanist scholars who employ the civil society approach have become increasingly cautious about its explanatory power. One example is Michael Bratton, among the most influential exponents of this approach. Bratton sees the influence of civil society as limited to a very brief period of time during the early moments of a democratic transition.

In sum, the role of civil society in political transition is circumscribed to a short-lived interlude: from the time immediately before the "opening" to the convocation of competitive elections. It is during this period, which may last months rather than years, that civil society is ascendant, in the sense that civic political actors are taking the initiatives that are driving forward a political transition.[12]

If this reasoning is correct, or even partially correct, it raises a host of fundamental questions not the least of which is the validity of donor approaches to African democracy that seek to build it by first strengthening the civil society system.

### B. Political Economy

The political economy approach to democratisation emphasises the importance of economic decline as a trigger mechanism for political change. Its essential presupposition holds that the authoritarian model of governance was built upon an economically unsustainable foundation. The foundation was an unworkable development strategy that, within two decades of its introduction, had produced ubiquitous and severe economic decline. In the political economy model, Africa's authoritarian regimes gradually lost the economic resources they needed to sustain themselves. Political liberalisation was therefore born in the context of their growing inability to sustain or implement repressive policies.

Tanzania's contemporary experience appears at first glance to lend strong support to this model. Its economic decline has been so well documented that it need not be elaborated in detail. The decline had the following principal characteristics:

(a) declining industrial production as state-owned industrial enterprises suffered from severe problems of inefficiency and spiralling shortages of vital inputs of all kinds, most notably replacement of the capital stock and raw material inputs;

(b) stagnating production of exportable agricultural commodities and a declining share of world markets for these goods;

(c) falling *per capita* production of food staples with sharply rising real food prices as staple items were increasingly available only in informal markets;

(d) severe trade imbalances, scarcities of hard currency and, as a result, increasing shortages of imported goods, both consumption goods and production goods;

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(e) rising rates of inflation caused principally by spiralling deficit budgeting that was handled through monetization of the money supply (the printing of more money);

(f) all-pervasive political and bureaucratic "rent-seeking", i.e. the tendency of governmental officials at all levels, to exploit their positions for personal financial gain; and

(g) a dramatic surge in informal economic activity, including parallel production and parallel markets.

The political ramifications of economic decline were considerable. Those that made some contribution to the renaissance of democratic politics include the following: (1) the shrinking writ of governance, (2) an atmosphere of political cynicism, and (3) policies of economic liberalisation.

## Shrinking Writ of Governance

Economic decline shrunk the writ of governance both spatially and functionally. The most conspicuous effect of economic decline on political life was to greatly reduce the scope and impact of governmental authority. For growing numbers of Tanzanians, central authority was only intermittently present in daily life and its presence, when it was felt, typically assumed a negative form such as rent seeking bureaucrats or abusive police and military personnel. Tanzanian national politics became confined to leaders of the governing single party, the "mass" organisations formally associated with the governing party, and those few individuals still able to receive state largesse in the form of rents, jobs, or lucrative contracts. In its first reincarnation, political freedom consisted simply of the diminution of state power. The shrinking writ of governance set the stage for a revival of democratic politics by making it both possible and necessary for Tanzanians to assume greater responsibility for their own lives.

The signs of this process were everywhere to be seen. In many major cities, there was a rise of spontaneous settlements where social, economic, and even political organisation was based principally on self-help principles, an ironic rebuttal of founder-president Nyerere's conviction that self-help would thrive best under a benevolent state. An even more dramatic indicator of the diminution of state control was the spectacular rise of the informal economy as a source of both essential goods and material livelihood.

Poor economic performance contributed to political democracy by robbing the Tanzanian state of resources it needed to maintain the monolithic state. Authoritarian systems are expensive to maintain and require a continuing outlay of resources. It is highly costly, for example, to maintain police, intelligence and informal surveillance networks; to build, staff, and provision a system of prisons; to maintain politically dependable courts; and to ensure the continuing political loyalty of the military. Without the economic resources to fund these institutions, the structural foundations of the authoritarian state begin to crumble.

This is what happened in Tanzania. As the government's economic base shrank, so did the real purchasing power of governmental revenues. The government could simply afford less and less of the goods or policies it valued. The casualties of the poor economy included treasured areas of public policy, such as educational and health services, as well as the day-to-day operational stock of government, including vehicles, telecommunications equipment and office supplies. But most importantly, the economic decline undermined the authoritarian apparatus of the state. Over time, the Government could afford less and less in the way of the financial resources necessary to provision the police, the army and the internal political intelligence units. Thus, Tanzania came to typify the great political paradox of modern Africa: an authoritarian regime characterised by glaring institutional weaknesses and a growing inability to assert its control over the vast majority of its citizens.

The relationship between the shrinking state and a re-emergence of democratic politics has both tangible and intangible aspects. The tangible aspect is fairly obvious: with its bureaucratic and institutional resources diminished by economic collapse, the government was simply in a less effective position to sustain its systems of political control. The intangible aspect, which is less obvious, has to do with attitudes toward political authority. The question that grew larger and larger in the minds of many Tanzanians had to do with how a state that could not provide even the most elemental of life's necessities for its citizens could justify the controls the Tanzanian government wished to impose.

Economic decline also fostered attitudes of political cynicism and mistrust. Tanzanians in all walks of life tended to become more and more sceptical of the capacity of political leaders to improve their lives. The early popularity of the nationalist movement was replaced by a very different attitude

toward authority. At the heart of the new political culture was the attitude that political leaders were motivated principally by selfish elite concerns and narrow material interests. The atmosphere of cynicism was self-reinforcing: the erosion of popular legitimacy, arising from poor economic performance and pervasive corruption, meant that the government became more and more dependent upon manipulation and raw coercion for its political survival. This tendency bred further cynicism and disillusionment.

Tanzanians drew two conclusions from the shrinking writ of governance. First, that the formal state could not be depended upon to improve their lives and, second, that the state was powerless to sanction individuals or organisations that sought to do so on their own.

Tanzania's economic decline contributed directly to the re-emergence of civil society. As the political space occupied by the state shrank and as Tanzanians became more and more disillusioned about the capacity of government to improve or guard their lives, the first glimmerings of this rebirth became discernible. One of the earliest indicators had to do with the innumerable survival strategies that were adopted at the level of the household, farm, firm and neighbourhood. As often as not, these survival strategies required new forms of voluntary association.

In every imaginable walk of life, Tanzanians devised forms of association that would enable them to cope with difficult living conditions. One example was the birth of neighbourhood organisations, which Tanzanians formed, in large numbers to provide services that the government seemed unable to make available.[13]

Quite often the newly formed civil society associations did not have a high degree of formal structure, they often lacked administrative headquarters, they did not formulate by-laws or institute regularised means of selecting leaders, the collection of dues was rare and financial accounting was even rarer.

Nevertheless the new associations appeared to provide some of the more important building blocks of democratic politics. They enjoyed a high degree of trust from their members, they were formed independently of state auspices and thus were not a part of the formal corporatist environment, and those that were functional seemed to represent the beginning of patterns of cross-cutting social cleavages.

It would be a mistake to confuse the first glimmerings of civil society with the beginnings of democratic politics. During the early stages of recreating an independent group life, the basic issue was sheer survival. Political influence was a different matter altogether.

### Economic Liberalisation

Among the most important forces for the renaissance of democratic politics was the process of economic liberalisation that began in the early 1980s. Economic pluralism is the indispensable precondition for social pluralism. Just as state monopoly created the political inclination toward hierarchical corporatism - free associations could not easily survive when the state was monopoly producer, source of lending, and employer of labour—economic liberalism has contributed to the new environment of social pluralism.

Tanzania's growing private sector has provided expanded opportunities for business entrepreneurs outside the state. The new structure of opportunity is one in which the state is no longer the sole provider of protection, contracts and monopoly status. Liberalisation has also stimulated the revival of independent trade unionism, partly by giving rise to booming economic activity in labour-intensive sectors, such as export agriculture, transportation, and construction, and partly by causing the unions to become involved in negotiations over the effects of industrial closures and civil service cutbacks.

There is also an increasing plurality of elites as the new private business elite contests with the bureaucratic elite that manages the state sector. Since the economic interests of the new business elite are distinct from those of the state, it has begun to seek its own institutional vehicle for their political expression.[14] The same is true of the new middle and working classes that are based in the private sector. They, too, have an impetus and an opportunity to form voluntary associations, a tendency that can be readily discerned with respect to Tanzania's attorneys, journalists and medical doctors. The professional associations of these groups have already become important forces for sustaining the new democratic political institutions.

The political economy approach suggests the following sequence of causality for the democratic transition: economic liberalisation contributes to social pluralism, at least as a facilitating condition. And social pluralism, in the form of a renewed and reinvigorated civil society, becomes a constitutive

force for the re-creation of democratic institutions. The policy implication of this approach is unmistakable: sustain the economic liberality; sustain the democracy.

The history of economic reforms in Tanzania appears to sustain this line of argument if for no other reason than that of time sequence. Economic reform began in the mid-1980s and, thus, preceded political reform by approximately 5 to 7 years, just enough time for renewed associational life to begin to take root. But time sequence alone does not establish an unambiguous case for causality, and firm conclusions about this relationship would be premature. Bear in mind that Tanzania's economic transformation was barely underway when the major political and constitutional changes of 1990-1992 were implemented. Agriculture and trade had been substantially (but not entirely) liberalised and the Tanzanian shilling was radically devalued. But the country's industrial and financial sectors were still predominantly under state control and the country's legal system continued to be based upon the repressive, highly statist legislation of the previous thirty years.[15]

In sum, it would be appealing but probably premature to suggest that the modest and partial economic liberalisation of 1984-1990 accounted for the dramatic and far reaching political liberalisation of 1990-92, such as the Political Parties Act that restored multi-partyism and ended the CCM's constitutional status as the country's supreme political institution. At the time of the most important constitutional reform, major areas of the country's economic life continued to be under the jurisdiction of the Tanzanian state.

The most reasonable interpretation is that the economic crisis, followed as it was by economic liberalisation, helped set the stage for political reforms. It shrunk the state, changed the political culture, and created the open space within which civil society began to re-group. Economic crisis also led to the reforms that helped to reinvigorate the country's trade unions, agricultural co-operatives and its associations of private entrepreneurs. These were undeniably important contributions that, in time, would inevitably have produced a freer political environment. But at the moment of its political transformation, Tanzania's economic transition was still incomplete; so incomplete, in fact, that a fully rounded theoretical explanation would need to take other important factors into account. Elite preferences are among these.

### C. Elite Preference

The concept of personal agency, sometimes termed elite preference or leadership choice, is generally regarded as among the weakest in the conceptual lexicon of modern social science. Its weakness is especially obvious when it comes to explaining why countries do or do not become democratic and has to do with the fact that the category of leadership choice lends itself to circuitous, post hoc reasoning. If a given country becomes democratic, this must be because a particular leader or leaders chose to implement democratic reforms. If a country does not become democratic, this is because its leader(s) chose not to do so. Nigeria is authoritarian because its head of state, Sani Abacha, had chosen this course; Ghana became democratic because its head of state, Jerry Rawlings, decided to do so. By extension, Nigeria will become democratic again when Abacha changes his mind. This line of reasoning provides little opportunity for generalisation across countries, sheds little light on deeper systemic forces at work, and, therefore, does not produce powerful theoretical insights.

The concept of elite choice cannot be dismissed entirely, however. One reason is that, despite being such a weak category of explanation, it may contain an important element of truth. Moreover, a lack of generalisability is less of a shortcoming in country-specific case studies such as this than in broader comparative research. A case study such as this one, for example, simply seeks to set forth and evaluate the factors that were operative in Tanzania during the late 1980s and early 1990s. And, among scholars intimately knowledgeable of Tanzania's movement toward democracy, there is a consensus that one of the more consequential factors at work was former President Julius Nyerere's personal decision to urge that course of action on the governing party.

It is widely believed among Tanzanian political scientists that had Nyerere not adopted a highly visible public posture urging this course of constitutional change upon the party, the process might not have occurred at all or, more likely, would be occurring much more slowly. The line of reasoning underlying this conviction is as follows. Nyerere is a person of towering political stature in Tanzania. He was among the founder-members of its nationalist movement, the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), and was the country's first president, holding this office for nearly 25 years. He was the philosophical force behind Tanzania's distinctive elaboration of a socialist development program. He continued to be widely revered for his powerful intellect and personal integrity. Indeed, despite

nearly universal rejection of the socialist development strategy, Nyerere's personal stature increased in later years, not only because of his willingness to acknowledge publicly the failure of the socialist strategy, but because of his willingness to step aside to allow liberalising leaders to take his place.

Evidence of Nyerere's influence over Tanzania's political life is everywhere to be seen. He played a decisive role in the intra-party political process that led to the CCM's selection of a presidential nominee in 1995. He played an active and highly influential role in the presidential campaign, touring the country to lend his personal support to the candidacy of Benjamin Mkapa. And he continued to be widely revered by many Tanzanians who kept referring to him as "Mwalimu" (Teacher). Indeed, large numbers of Tanzanians who have little sympathy for Nyerere's socialist ideas express deep regret at their country's lack of "vision", a kind of political shorthand for admiration of the person and what he tried to do, if not his specific views. And virtually all Tanzanians admire the idealism he injected into the political process.

There is little doubt, then, about the facts. Nyerere continued to wield a great deal of influence over the Tanzanian political process and, beginning in early 1990, after he left the position of head of party, he began openly to urge the CCM to implement democratic reforms. Given his political prominence, on-going stature with the people of Tanzania and his great influence within the party's elite, his insistence upon democratic reforms became one of the more consequential factors leading to their adoption.[16] The only question that remains is why he would have chosen to do so.

There are numerous possible answers. A most attractive one is to personalise the issue and view Nyerere's sudden conversion to pluralism as a personal campaign against his successor, Ali Hassan Mwinyi. This line of argument is given credence by Nyerere's numerous public disagreements with Mwinyi, and his public descriptions of him as "a good man but a weak leader.[17] The above argument has one main shortcoming. It is doubtful if Nyerere then or until his death in 1999 was a converted believer in pluralism. This is evidenced by his refusal to endorse a referendum to decide the issue of the union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar, an issue that he insisted was for the party, not the people, to decide.

More likely, Nyerere's reason for supporting multi-partyism has less to do with his support for political freedom than with his concern for the well-being of his party, the CCM. Nyerere first expressed doubts about single parties in 1987 when on a visit to Lusaka, Zambia, he said single parties tended "to go to sleep", a sentiment which he later repeated on a number of occasions during the following two years. His personal doubts about the direction and health of the party appear to have grown considerably after the changes in Eastern Europe.

Nyerere himself attributed his support for multi-partyism to two broad factors. First, circumstances were now different from those that obtained in 1965 when mono-partyism was introduced. People were now better educated and more confident of themselves, economic conditions had worsened, corruption had increased, and people had started losing confidence in their leaders. In a 1992 address to the party, he argued that if these problems persisted, people would start blaming the one party system "in the belief that it cannot throw out bad leaders."[18] Secondly, Nyerere alluded to external reasons. Tanzania had to deal with global changes and pressures. As these increased, so did differences of opinion within and outside the party on how to deal with these changes. A multi-party democracy was the only way that these differences could be resolved.

Nyerere may also have wished to be certain that after he stepped down as party leader, the party would have other sources of stimulus. It is instructive to recall that shortly after Tanzania became independent in June 1961, Nyerere resigned his position as Prime Minister to spend a year in the single role of head of party. His intention then, as it was following his return to private citizen status, was to find a means to invigorate the party organisation. Throughout this period, then, Nyerere was consistent and clear in his major objective: namely, to ensure that CCM continues its domination of Tanzanian politics in the years to come.

Whatever the reason, the fact is that after 1988, Nyerere became one of Tanzania's most visible and vocal voices for political democracy. And, given his influence on Tanzanian politics, that voice was a force of considerable importance in moving the country in that direction.

## Conclusion

Tanzania's democratic transition is the product of multiple factors. But some are more consequential than others are. This article has reviewed six potential causes of the democratic transition: three internal, and three external. Of the three internal factors—re-emergence of civil society,

economic crisis and personal agency—the re-emergence of civil society appears to have had the weakest political effect in either stimulating or sustaining a democratic transition. Civil society actors are largely the beneficiaries of Tanzania's democratic transition, not its authors.

The effects of the country's economic crisis, on the other hand, have been considerable. Economic decline weakened the institutional structure of the authoritarian state, diminishing its scope of effective authority to the point where the majority of Tanzanians were living outside the writ of the state. The economic crisis also created an atmosphere that combined cynicism toward the central government with the need for self-reliance and individual initiative at the village and local level. The crisis also gave rise to far-reaching economic reforms that, in turn, have helped to restore freedom of association, especially to the country's trade unions and agricultural co-operatives.

Personal influence has also been critically important. There is no doubt that a major part of the difference between Tanzania and Kenya, for example, lies in the very different attitudes toward politics on the part of Julius Nyerere and Daniel arap Moi. Nyerere's personal conversion to the principle of multi-party government, combined with his extraordinary on-going influence on Tanzanian political life, may well have provided the margin of difference between Tanzania and the host of other African countries where the democratic trends are weaker.

External factors are so imponderable that their impact on democratic transitions is virtually impossible to assess with any degree of precision. An explanation based principally on such factors, therefore, would be lacking in persuasive power. Despite this limitation, both academic and journalistic observers continue to cite the importance of external influences, sometimes attributing great importance to such factors as the collapse of the Soviet system, the role of western donors or even the "contagion" effect (imitation of other democratic experiments) as important influences on Africa's democratic transition. The paragraphs that follow seek to provide a brief assessment of these factors on Tanzania's democratic transition.

Of the external factors cited in this essay—the collapse of the Soviet system, western donor influence and the contagion effect—only donor conditionality appears to have played a significant role. But its role has been considerable. Thus, in the final analysis, Tanzania's democratic transition has been the product of three factors; a severe economic crisis, the personal influence of the country's founder-president, and the influence of western donor countries acting, for the first time since independence, in a unified fashion.

But the impact of these factors must also be understood as important in the historical context of a country that enjoyed a period of democratic politics during the first years of its independence and where the memories of that early democratic era have also helped to provide a basis for contemporary democratisation.

## Notes

1. Christopher Clapham, "Democratisation in Africa: Obstacles and Prospects", in *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 1993, p. 423.

2. Rene Lemarchand, "Africa's Troubled Transitions" in *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 3, No. 4, Oct. 1992, p. 98.

3. Thomas Callaghy, "Political Passions and Economic Interests: Economic Reform and Political Structure in Africa." This essay is Chapter 12 of Thomas M. Callaghy and John Ravenhill, eds., *Hemmed In: Responses to Africa's Economic Decline* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

4. ibid., p. 483.

5. It was the defeat of the CUF candidate, Seif Shariff Hamad, in the election for President of Zanzibar, which led to the reluctance of Tanzania's electoral observers to designate the 1995 elections as "free and fair."

6. Mwesiga Baregu, "The Rise and Fall of the One-Party State in Tanzania" in Jennifer Widener, ed., *Economic Change and Political Liberalisation in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), p. 169.

7. The outstanding collection of theoretical essays on the civil society approach for Africa is John Harbeson, et. al, eds., *Civil Society and Political Transitions in Africa* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1994).

8. Adam B. Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 5.

9. David B. Truman, *The Governmental Process* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959).

10. Government of Tanzania, *Report of the Presidential Commission on the Establishment of a Democratic One Party State* (Dar es Salaam: Government Printer, 1965).

11. Other vital associations were also barely underway at this time. The Tanzanian Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (TCCIA), for example, was newly formed and undergoing internal division. The Tanganyika Law Society, often cited as a powerful civic force for reform, held its initial seminar only in September 1990.

12. Michael Bratton, "Civil Society and Political Transitions", in Harbeson, et. al, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

13. For an excellent case study of this process, see Aili Mari Tripp, *Changing the Rules: The Politics of Liberalisation and the Urban Informal Economy in Tanzania* (Unpublished ms., December, 1993).

14. This draws upon Robert Pinkney, *Democracy in the Third World* (Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1993), p. 104.

15. See Naaman Mkemwa, "The 40 Oppressive Laws" in *Weekly Mail* (Dar es Salaam), August 16-22, 1993, pp. 15-16.

16. Several leading political scientists at the University of Dar es Salaam believe that without Nyerere's intervention, democratic reforms might not have taken place or might have taken place much more slowly.

17. Julius K. Nyerere, *Uongozi Wetu na Hatima ya Tanzania* (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1994).

18. Julius K. Nyerere, "Address to the Party National Conference of CCM", February 18, 1992. (Mimeo).

# Legal and Regulatory Influences on Party Competition in Botswana and Zimbabwe

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## Introduction

The Encyclopaedia of Democracy's definition of a country's electoral system addresses only the issue of how the votes of citizens become transformed into legislative office.[1] However, the electoral system also has a significant influence on a country's party system, a fact that has interested many scholars.[2] Whether or not proportional elections generate multi-party systems while majoritarian elections generate two-party systems has been a subject of serious debate ever since Duverger presented his 'laws' in the 1950's. What have been addressed less often by political scientists, however, are the effects that a country's electoral system has on the degree of competition between parties during campaigns, despite the existence of an awareness of such effects. Electoral systems exist to structure competition among parties.[3]

Some argue that an electoral system cannot be constructed or altered to favour certain actors in the struggle for power.[4] This assertion has not gone unchallenged, however. Sartori (1994:27-9) directs sharp criticism toward this view, and points to both methodological shortcomings in the studies drawing such conclusions, as well as examples in which such changes have in fact taken place. Whether or not it is possible to change an electoral system depends, among other things, on the scope of the changes. If it is merely a question of either minor alterations or introducing supplementary laws, legislative majorities are relatively easy to bring about. If, on the other hand, it is a matter of amendment or revision, which of course requires considerable unanimity among the parties, then the situation is significantly different.

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