

SINGLE-PARTY RULE IN A MULTIPARTY AGE:  
TANZANIA IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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A Dissertation  
Submitted to  
the Temple University Graduate Board

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in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirement of the Degree  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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by  
Richard L. Whitehead  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Title: Single-Party Rule in a Multiparty Age: Tanzania in Comparative Perspective

Candidate's Name: Richard L. Whitehead

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Doctoral Advisory Committee Chair: Richard Deeg

As international pressure for multiparty reforms swept Africa during the early 1990s, long-time incumbent, such as UNIP in Zambia, KANU in Kenya, and the MCP in Malawi, were simultaneously challenged by widespread domestic demands for multiparty reforms. Only ten years later, after succumbing to reform demands, many long-time incumbents were out of office after holding competitive multiparty elections. My research seeks an explanation for why this pattern did not emerge in Tanzanian, where the domestic push for multiparty change was weak, and, despite the occurrence of three multiparty elections, the CCM continues to win with sizable election margins.

As identified in research on semi-authoritarian rule, the post-reform pattern for incumbency maintenance in countries like Togo, Gabon, and Cameroon included strong doses of repression, manipulation and patronage as tactics for surviving in office under to multiparty elections. Comparatively speaking however, governance by the CCM did not fit the typical post-Cold-War semi-authoritarian pattern of governance either. In Tanzania, coercion and manipulation appears less rampant, while patronage, as a constant across nearly every African regime, cannot explain the overwhelming mass support the CCM continues to enjoy today.

Rather than relying on explanations based on repression and patronage alone, I locate the basis of post-reform CCM dominance in a historical process whereby a particularly

unique array of social and economic policies promulgated during single-party rule culminated in comparatively affable social relations at the onset of multiparty reform. In Tanzania, this post-independence policy mix included stemming the growth of vast regional wealth differentials, a rejection of ethnicity as a basis for organizing collective action, and the construction of a relatively coherent national identity. By contrast, in most other African cases, policies under single-party rule acted to reinforce many of those economic and ethnic divisions inherited at independence. These divisions in turn, acted as material and moral capital for organizing dissent against incumbency, and the consolidation of opposition parties following political reform.

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