

This thesis deals with the question of how people in rural areas have perceived the change of political system from one-party to multi-party during the 1990s in Tanzania. Tanzania has to this date performed three general elections but still the ruling party CCM has a strong grip over politics in the country. With landslide victories in the Presidential elections 1995, 2000 and 2005 the party has reinforced its position in the Parliament. With over eighty percent of the seats in the Parliament, the elections illustrate the failure by the opposition to attract voters and to create an alternative political platform to CCM.

This thesis explores the challenges of consolidating multiparty democracy in Tanzania leading to the overall question of this thesis: What are the possibilities and constraints for consolidation of multiparty democracy in Tanzania? Using an anthropological and inductive method, this question is approached by exploring how villagers in two separate villages in rural Tanzania understand and respond to the question of multiparty democracy. As a complement and a parallel set of information, literature and newspapers covering the political development in Tanzania has been used to be compared and analysed for enhanced understanding of the transition process and the consolidation of multiparty democracy in Tanzania and what factors might be important in a consolidation. The focus of the thesis is on the local/village level, primarily on the marginalised pastoralist group of Maasai. As the Maasai has a customary leadership structure that is still strongly manifested in their society and culture, the consolidation of multiparty democracy has therefore direct impact on their society and the system of electing political leaders.

The thesis is divided into three parts. Part I, the arena, is an ethnographic and empirical presentation of the local setting. Part II, towards democracy, is of theoretical character and part III, democracy in local practice, has close relation to the empirical material, leading forward to three main hampering factors working against or making the consolidation of multiparty democracy not as straightforward as intended. I have categorised these factors into three themes: stability, cultural and educational and logistical and practical. One of the main arguments made is that the ruling party and its leaders on both national and local levels are frequently using the concepts peace, unity and harmony as prime values and existing conditions in the country created by the ruling party CCM and its founding father, Julius Nyerere. The usage of these concepts becomes at the local level arguments against multiparty system. Thus, the multiparty system has been met by people with caution; a political form that must be entered into carefully while keeping a watchful eye on the (still) unknown opposition parties and their qualifications.



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Under the Same Shade

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**Popular Perceptions of Political Change
and the Challenges of Consolidating
Multiparty Democracy in Tanzania**



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