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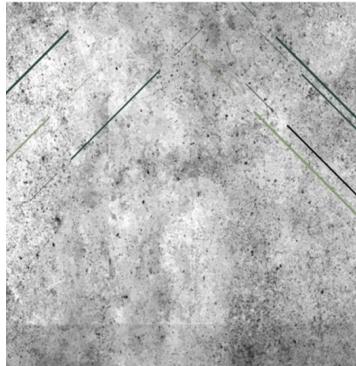
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CHADEMA's 2020 Presidential Election Defeat: Opposition Challenges and CCM's Dominance in Tanzania

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Abstract

This study examines the structural obstacles and strategic weaknesses undermining opposition parties in Tanzania, focusing on CHADEMA's defeat in the 2020 presidential election and the enduring dominance of the ruling CCM. Using a qualitative approach, the research highlights how state-controlled institutions, biased electoral processes, media partiality, and bureaucratic hurdles systematically disadvantage opposition groups. Internally, opposition parties like CHADEMA suffer from poor organization, weak grassroots mobilization, and inadequate strategic planning, further diminishing their competitiveness. The central question explores how institutional barriers and opposition deficiencies contribute to democratic erosion in Tanzania. Empirical evidence, including electoral data, voter behavior, legal frameworks, and interviews with political officials, reveals that CCM's control over state machinery and electoral authorities creates an uneven playing field. Regional voting patterns reflect disparities in opposition support, exacerbated by institutional biases and uneven campaign efforts. The study enriches theoretical debates on democratic backsliding by demonstrating how incumbents exploit institutional resources to entrench power (Mettler & Lieberman, 2020). To counter Tanzania's democratic decline, the analysis proposes three reforms: electoral system overhauls, capacity-building for opposition parties, and robust international election monitoring. These findings have broader implications for political systems where weak oppositions struggle against dominant ruling parties. By exposing the interplay between institutional manipulation and opposition failures, the study underscores the need for systemic reforms to safeguard multiparty democracy.

Keywords: CCM Dominance; Democratic Backsliding, Electoral Authoritarianism, Opposition Parties; Tanzania

Introduction

The 2020 Tanzanian presidential election reaffirmed the dominance of Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) as Tanzania's ruling party, while exposing the persistent challenges opposition parties, particularly Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA), face in competing against CCM's entrenched political control. CHADEMA sought to position itself as a credible alternative but fell short of its electoral ambitions due to systemic disadvantages, institutional constraints, strategic missteps, and internal organizational weaknesses.

Given Tanzania's long-standing political landscape, CHADEMA's defeat was largely anticipated by analysts and the public, as CCM benefits from overwhelming institutional advantages, including control over state resources, media, and electoral mechanisms. However, the significance of studying this loss lies in understanding *why* opposition parties like CHADEMA continue to struggle despite widespread dissatisfaction with governance issues. This analysis not only highlights the structural barriers to democratic competition in Tanzania but also examines CHADEMA's internal failures, such as factionalism, weak grassroots mobilization, and inadequate voter outreach, that hinder its ability to capitalize on anti-CCM sentiment.

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Researching an "expected" defeat remains valuable because it reveals the mechanisms of authoritarian resilience and the limitations of opposition strategies in semi-competitive electoral systems. By dissecting CHADEMA's shortcomings alongside CCM's institutionalized dominance, this paper contributes to broader debates on opposition viability in dominant-party states and the conditions necessary for meaningful political alternation.

The political structure of Tanzania shows an unbalanced playing field because its authoritarian system causes problems for opposition parties through manipulative legal provisions and biased election oversight bodies as well as the ruling party's abuse of public resources. While CCM's use of state machinery to suppress opposition and manipulate elections, such as during the 2020 polls, is well-documented, the more pressing question is how the party has maintained its undemocratic grip on power for so long. Tanzania's political landscape has been shaped not only by CCM's coercion and institutional control but also by the persistent weaknesses of opposition parties, which have struggled to consolidate broad support, present cohesive alternatives, and withstand state repression (Whitehead, 2000). CHADEMA encountered multiple issues including structural flaws within its organization coupled with weak local support networks while lacking a capable leadership team to enhance their electoral capacity (Katundu, 2018). This article investigates structural factors along with institutional elements that sustain CCM's dominance through an assessment of internal CHADEMA challenges.

The evaluation of CHADEMA's defeat in the 2020 elections enables better understanding of Tanzania's democratic stability challenges. The election delivered evidence about difficulties in establishing genuine political competition when operating under an authoritarian-leaning system that prioritizes state-backed methods over democratic values. This research explores the influences which led to CHADEMA's defeat in detail while assessing institutional obstacles alongside the operational limitations of opposition parties and CCM's calculated strategic maneuvers. The study contributes to ongoing discussions about Tanzanian democratic growth and opposition party existence parallel to other political systems undergoing similar developments.

The findings from this research offer significant practical value to policymakers, electoral reform advocates, and civil society organizations working to create equitable political fields in Tanzania. The study reveals the crucial need to address legal obstacles and institutional problems, including restrictive laws, biased electoral systems, and unclear state campaign funding, all of which undermine voting fairness.

For opposition parties like CHADEMA, this research provides essential insights into structural flaws, enabling them to refine their campaigning strategies and strengthen grassroots networks. Building political organizations capable of challenging dominant parties such as CCM requires sustained effort, particularly in advancing democratic governance practices.

Academically, this study contributes to research on democratic regression and opposition party restrictions, particularly in East Africa and similar regions (Fombad & Steytler, 2021). It offers analytical frameworks for scholars examining dominant party systems and practitioners studying the persistence of such parties in semi-authoritarian contexts.

Opposition parties face significant challenges in disseminating their messages about democratic reform and political inclusivity (Paget, 2023). This research highlights these barriers, serving as a foundation for democracy advocates seeking to improve electoral fairness, political inclusivity, and governance practices in Tanzania and beyond.

The conclusions of this study advance academic knowledge while providing actionable recommendations for meaningful political reform. By examining Tanzania's 2020 presidential election, the research underscores CCM's enduring dominance and analyzes the struggles of CHADEMA as the primary opposition party. Scholarly and political analyses demonstrate how CCM maintains power through institutional control, resource allocation, and structural advantages that create uneven electoral conditions.

Studies indicate that CHADEMA faces numerous challenges, including restrictive laws, biased electoral bodies, and organizational weaknesses (Titus, 2024). This review explores these dynamics, helping readers understand the factors behind CCM's victory and CHADEMA's defeat in the

2020 election.

Levitsky & Way (2010) explains that dominant authoritarian parties maintain power using state coercion as well as co-optation and election manipulation practices. The ruling party of Tanzania known as Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) maintains total institutional control which allows them to suppress opposition while securing their political dominance through state agencies including the electoral commission and security forces and judiciary (KINABO, 2021). The institutional strength of CCM helps it reform voting systems in ways that bar significant entry for opposition parties such as CHADEMA from taking power (Weghorst, 2022). The combination of intimidation tactics against opposition members and economic incentives for potential challengers enables CCM to eliminate threats against their authority (Tripp, 2012).

Tanzania illustrates how semi-authoritarian political systems establish their survival. Through its control of essential institutions CCM manages biased electoral procedures alongside dissent suppression to sustain democratic pretense without real political competition (Weghorst, 2022). The political dominance of Tanzanian politics by the party has persisted for numerous decades because of its capabilities to control elections, along with elite co-option a strategy that neutralizes potential challengers by absorbing them into the ruling party's patronage network. For instance, opposition leaders and influential figures are often offered government positions, business opportunities, or other incentives in exchange for loyalty, as seen in the defection of several CHADEMA members to CCM before the 2020 elections (Muhi & Sambo, 2021). Similarly, civil society actors and local elites are co-opted through appointments to state-affiliated bodies, ensuring their alignment with CCM's interests. These tactics, alongside structural barriers like restrictive party registration and uneven media access, have marginalized opposition parties such as CHADEMA, contributing to their presidential electoral defeat in 2020. Analyzing CCM's authority maintenance and the opposition's struggles requires a thorough understanding of these dynamics within Tanzania's authoritarian-leaning system.

The legal structure of Tanzania receives criticism because it gives the CCM party leadership dominance in fundamental laws. Under National Electoral Commission (NEC) oversight of Electoral Laws, opposition parties experience discriminatory treatment through candidate nomination procedures and campaign limitations, which biases toward CCM as exemplified by NEC's function of approving candidates but lacking internal party oversight capabilities.

The nomination process for candidates under NEC review imposes stringent bureaucratic requirements, demanding significant time and resources from paper-submission organizations. Even minor technical errors in submissions can lead to disqualification, a vulnerability frequently exploited by opposing parties to eliminate competitors (EISA, 2020). These bureaucratic hurdles are part of a broader legal framework that disadvantages opposition groups. For instance, the Political Parties Act restricts foreign funding, limiting opposition resources, while the Public Order Act allows the government to deny permits for opposition rallies, stifling mobilization. Meanwhile, state media dominance, reinforced by laws like the Cybercrimes Act (2015) and Media Services Act (2016), further skews the playing field in favor of the ruling party, CCM. Together, these measures create an uneven electoral system where opposition groups struggle to meet nomination requirements, organize effectively, or compete fairly. As a result, voters perceive elections as predetermined, leading to political apathy and eroded trust in democratic processes (O'Gorman, 2012). By layering legal and administrative barriers, the system entrenches CCM's dominance while suppressing pluralism.

CCM maintains fundamental superiority over CHADEMA because it controls state assets, including financial resources and media platforms, and institutional machinery (Baregu, 2003). Through this monopolistic control, CCM maintains operational superiority through broad campaign funding and rally organization, and supporter mobilization, which grants the party an overpowering financial advantage that exceeds opposition spending (Lofchie, 2014). The reliance of the ruling party on state resources, coupled with alleged corruption, strengthens its dominance while it leaves opposition parties with limited funding and no ability to deliver effective campaigns or viable alternatives to voters (Makulilo, 2012).

When resource concentration exists between political entities, it negatively affects fundamental democratic practices of balanced political competition and plurality of voices. Political monopolization of resources by one party reduces voter selection options so citizens stop voting due to perceived lack of election impact (Sørensen, 2014). Democracy faces severe challenges as trust between voters and their government declines which leads to weakened political engagement and undermines the democratic process resulting in extended CCM control and delayed opposition party growth in Tanzania.

CHADEMA shares the struggle for African opposition parties to build strong organizational infrastructure which results in poor national-local level connections and ambiguous governing methods and restricted operational capabilities. The financial support system of the party depends heavily on moderate member donations and small contributions but fails to align with the state resources available to CCM. CHADEMA fails to progress its organizational infrastructure and staff training and campaign effectiveness because of its insufficient financial resources (Awinia, 2021).

The voting base of CHADEMA includes predominantly urban voters who are mainly young and educated and middle-class citizens but its power remains weak in rural areas (Hutton, 2015). Rural Tanzanians who make up most of the population frequently see CHADEMA's information as distant from their key matters including local infrastructure and agricultural improvement (Coulson, 2013). The widespread rural support for CCM exists because of its patronage networks with development projects and grassroots backing which makes it difficult for CHADEMA to expand its influence (Bakari & Whitehead, 2013).

CHADEMA faces steep challenges in elections because of poorly developed organizational frameworks combined with limited reach to rural voters. The party faces electoral challenges because it fails to build proper organization structures and establish connections with rural voters which makes them unable to compete effectively against CCM's well-funded and strategically established operations.

The political dominance of CCM extends through its historical legacy because it emerged from the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) which was instrumental in leading Tanzania's independence struggle against British colonialism (Malipula, 2014). Through its historic ties CCM acquires moral strength to govern Tanzania since it remains the liberating force that fought for national unity. The appeal of CCM grows stronger from its foundation by Julius Nyerere who ruled Tanzania as its first president following his leadership of TANU. Through his role as the "Father of the Nation" Nyerere had established a reputation for promoting African socialism (Uhuru) and national unity and self-reliance which continue to inspire Tanzanians (Bjerk, 2017).

CCM uses the country's historical background to market itself as Tanzania's stabilizing force which unites the nation. Since independence Tanzania has remained free from constant upheaval as a result of coups or civil wars because CCM has governed the country with stability (Rwengabo, 2016). The party maintains voter loyalty through its successful creation of national unity while also leveraging efficient network systems to distribute resources throughout the population. The combination of historical background together with ideological principles and practical electoral strategies has allowed CCM to preserve its political leadership for many decades thus becoming a major power within Tanzanian political structures.

Ongoing democratic erosion throughout East Africa presents a major impact on Tanzania by causing opposition parties to weaken while political freedoms decline and democratic institutions deteriorate. Governments throughout the region have put into practice authoritarian methods which combine election tampering with media restrictions and limitations to citizens' rights thus generating an unfriendly situation for opposition politicians (Schedler, 2013).

The growing dominance of regional campaigns has limited the abilities of Tanzanian opposition parties like CHADEMA to thrive due to their existing organizational weaknesses. The combination of regional opposition disconnects and authoritarian governance keeps CHADEMA cut off from its support base rendering it impotent against the leader CCM party (Asante et al., 2021). The government of Tanzania implemented similar restrictive legislation as its neighbors by passing the Press Services Act alongside the Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulati-

ons to restrict political dissent (Cross, 2021).

The decline of democratic principles has led Tanzanian citizens to develop both political apathy and fears toward their political system. People believe political involvement brings no change because CCM holds a strong hold on power and the failure of other regional countries to transition to democracy. The combination of weakened opposition groups with restrictive laws and widespread disillusionment among citizens has permanently fixed CCM's control over the country thus becoming a major obstacle to democratic progress across East Africa.

The 2020 Tanzanian presidential election exposed fundamental barriers against opposition parties in hybrid political systems according to the research framework of Political Opposition and Democratic Backsliding theories (Mettler & Lieberman, 2020). The ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) secured a landslide victory during the election although opposition parties such as CHADEMA faced multiple obstacles that weakened their ability to compete evenly. The National Electoral Commission and Tanzania's electoral laws together with constitutional provisions promote the incumbent party thereby undermining fair competition. Political gatherings face restrictions while media censorship and state control over security forces and judicial institutions work together to suppress dissent thus securing CCM's dominant position. Authoritarian regimes prevent true political competition through institutional mechanisms that construct democratic appearances while actively denying actual opposition parties.

The 2020 elections experienced increased opposition challenges due to media bias and disinformation because state-controlled media promoted CCM strongly without giving proper coverage to CHADEMA. Social media manipulation involved creating fake content which produced incorrect public awareness while destroying belief in democratic systems. Opposition parties need to address their internal weaknesses by improving campaign strategies and developing more effective grassroots outreach programs to better engage rural voters while simultaneously combatting media biases and disinformation. CHADEMA made strategic errors by focusing mainly on urban areas thus losing touch with essential populations that needed more attention. The effectiveness of opposition groups in semi-authoritarian systems depends on their ability to unite organizationally and offer powerful alternatives alongside their capacity to navigate state institutions through propaganda resistance and institutional barriers.

Method

The study employs qualitative research to understand intricate social phenomena better based on empirical evidence (Cresswell, 2013). Using descriptive analysis as an approach, this article seeks to create a thorough explanation of social phenomena according to Neuman (2014) while using interpretive method to study CHADEMA's 2020 defeat because it helps analyze both strategic and structural challenges facing Tanzanian opposition parties. Qualitative research techniques serve best for identifying core elements that boost CCM's constant electoral achievements as well as revealing issues hindering its competitors' performance because of institutions' power dynamics and strategic frameworks' complex linkages. Data for this study derives from multiple sources consisting of peer-reviewed publications and governmental and NGO reports in addition to media accounts and electoral results which gauge electoral integrity measures and opposition barriers to field against institutional prejudice. The research spanned from 2021 to 2023 through analysis of three temporal stages starting with pre-election and proceeding through the election sequence up to the post-election phase.

This study analyzes documented evidence using process tracing alongside thematic analysis. The study used inductive coding methods to identify and study recurring patterns which involved media bias alongside legal restrictions and opposition disorganization. Process tracing was used to trace major moments like voting disputes and election limitations which exposed how CCM maintained its electoral superiority. Different source materials were used for triangulation purposes to validate the research findings which included academic literature together with institutional reports and news media sources. The qualitative method proved suitable due to its ability to reveal complex power structures and historical details while respecting the ethical and safety requir-

ements of data collection under Tanzania's political constraints.

The study advances understanding about electoral authoritarianism and democratic regression through analysis of how political incumbents utilize institutional advantages to suppress opposition political parties. The research data highlights how Tanzania needs electoral reforms together with enhanced opposition mobilization along with international oversight to stop democratic decline in Tanzania and similar countries. The study draws criticism because it relies on secondary data which potentially conceals grassroots perspectives and potential media biases affect interpretation but these issues were addressed by using diverse sources and rigorous methodological approaches. The research delivers an analytical system to examine opposition party survival dynamics within semi-authoritarian political environments.

Results

The study presents results from a systematic data analysis which identifies important thematic patterns in the gathered information through descriptive methods supported with visual aids to maintain report transparency. The study organizes evidence about institutional barriers and opposing weaknesses and ruling party strategies to establish a comprehensive framework that explains CHADEMA's defeat during the 2020 election within Tanzania's political environment. Through its rigorous methodological approach, the research delivers both academic strength and practical policy insights about electoral trends that provides beneficial perspectives toward democratic backsliding inquiries and electoral reform activities across semi-authoritarian systems.

Structural and Institutional Barriers

The National Electoral Commission of Tanzania demonstrates inside Political Opposition and Thank you for the valuable feedback. The study's rigor stems from its methodological transparency, multi-faceted analysis, and dual academic-policy contributions, setting it apart from research that is narrower, less systematic, or less grounded in empirical evidence. Its focus on Tanzania's semi-authoritarian context further ensures that its findings are both nuanced and Democratic Backsliding that institutional tools can become manipulated to restrict democratic competition while ensuring authoritarian control. The constitutional assurances (1977 Article 74 and Section 4(1) of the 1985 Elections Act) for NEC independence are contradicted by operational weaknesses which compromise this independence. The combination of presidential commissioner appointments and NEC's heavy dependence on regional and district government staff who are frequently affiliated with ruling party CCM compromises the commission's impartiality. Local election management falls on NEC through staff who depend on CCM cadres from district governments preventing the implementation of an unbiased election process.

The legal framework including Article 41, section 7 and 74 section 12 presents additional court supervision limitations during NEC decision processes and throughout election result assessments. The commission's protected status through weak accountability measures gives lobbyists along with insider members both the power and the ability to maintain their consolidated hold on influence. Public trust in NEC continues to diminish since 1993 because of multiple structural problems that include partial appointment procedures and funding issues and nonexistent local staff and restricted judicial oversight. The political party CHADEMA faces additional discrimination through discriminatory election commission structures because of their unfair political game plan in Tanzania. The atmosphere becomes hostile to free and fair elections since such events seem nearly impossible to achieve. The modification of electoral institutions demonstrates how nations regress in their democratic framework called "Democratic Backsliding." Using state tools authoritarian regimes suppress political opposition while breaking democratic principles and maintain a permanent grip on power.

Opposition party members claim officials hold personal stakes in ruling party wins because the Electoral Commission used its power to give CCM backing during voter registration and result reporting despite official reports from EISA and AU that revealed irregularities. Tanzania's Political Parties (Amendment) ACT 2019, suspension from conducting political activities 21E. The authori-

zation given in Paragraph One maintains its application. This Act grants the Registrar authority to suspend political members who break any Act provision from engaging in political conduct. A party member who performs party activities or electoral participation or leads anyone into conducting party activities during an election period will face legal consequences in Tanzania. Participating in an election throughout the time when a political party remains suspended leads to an offense according to this law. Restrictive laws enforced by the government created obstacles for CHADEMA's campaign activities through limitations of opposition rallies. Although CCM continues to operate nationwide through government provisions the party implements their election strategy across the nation. State resources including financial funding and public transportation were misused by CCM to create unbalanced campaigning opportunities during elections. Restrictions implemented in combination worked against CHADEMA's competitive potential and favored CCM's dominance over elections.

Role of State Machinery

The analysis shows that state institutions formed a crucial foundation for CCM to maintain its control during Tanzania's 2020 presidential poll. Jointly with state resources such as funds, administrative systems and public infrastructure CCM organized rallies and funded campaigns while utilizing civil servants to merge state operations with party infrastructure effectively. The government's improper use of public assets including vehicles and facilities alongside personnel for campaigning purposes gave ruling parties an unbalanced advantage compared to opposition parties while the administration also prevented CHADEMA along with other opposition groups from equal access to resources through legal limitations on their political activities (Magolowondo et al., 2012). CCM maintained its political dominance by such unlawful methods but these practices at the same time damaged democratic values that resulted in declining voter participation and reduced electoral process confidence (Mtani & Ngohengo, 2023). Multiple authoritarian elements throughout the government system give regimes power to block opposition groups and maintain their dominance thereby undermining democratic progress in Tanzania.

After multipartyism began the governing Chama cha Mapinduzi [CCM] party maintained its connections between state institutions and political organizations and it expanded its control over civil service while dismissing separation between state and party operations. The ruling party Chama cha Mapinduzi utilizes regional and district administration together with police forces and state security [Usalama wa Taifa] to run events that benefit only the party including elections while managing party funds through state resources (Shaba, 2007). The territorial administration under CCM implements party decisions and facilitates leader meetings since numerous top officials maintain dual roles between state positions and party offices like Regional and District Commissioners and Cabinet Ministers. The state shoulders expenses to support many expensive party activities that the party would normally pay. The standard statement asserts "Hii ni Serikali ya CCM" [this is CCM government] and also "Hiki ni Chama chenye Dola" [it is the party in power].

Media Coverage of CCM vs. CHADEMA

This research studies state-run media's coverage behavior through an analysis of the positive and negative press coverage of the political parties CCM and CHADEMA in the 2020 election. In March 2020 there were 183 radio stations which represented an increase from 98 stations in 2014 while broadcasting services grew from 36 to 43 and newspaper and magazine numbers reached 229 on Tanzania Mainland from 216 in 2018 according to Tanzania Information Service Department data. A report from the National Bureau of static (NBS) shows that by march 2019 a total number of 25,794,560 Tanzanians accessed internet services through mobile wireless networks. The movement of media toward digital platforms mainly impacts urban areas however it creates new avenues for people to read news online using their gadgets while participating in web-based community dialogues to create space for grassroots journalism to flourish.

The study found that professional journalism standards require multiple sourcing for balanced reporting yet the analysis showed 55% of stories used multiple sources but 41% depended

on one source and 3% omitted source information completely (Media & In, 2020). Journalistic impartiality suffers because state-funded media tasked with maintaining neutrality during elections depends on limited source diversity for reporting content.

The Elections Act (1985) of Tanzania through Section 53(1) dictates that state-owned media outlets must give presidential candidates and political parties equal coverage during official campaign times. Government print media must practice fairness according to subsection 3 of the restrictions by preventing candidate discrimination in content production along with space distribution. The National Electoral Commission receives Section 53(4) powers to enforce the stated directives. The media provides abundant evidence that CCM receives preferential coverage in both public and private media since the implementation of multiparty politics despite existing legal provisions. Identification of systemic failures to maintain fair electoral balance in media coverage reveals how state media prefers the governing CCM party above CHADEMA and other opposition parties. The research demonstrates how media outlets funded by taxpayers provide the ruling party CCM with continuous support at the expense of democratic regression and equal electoral competition.

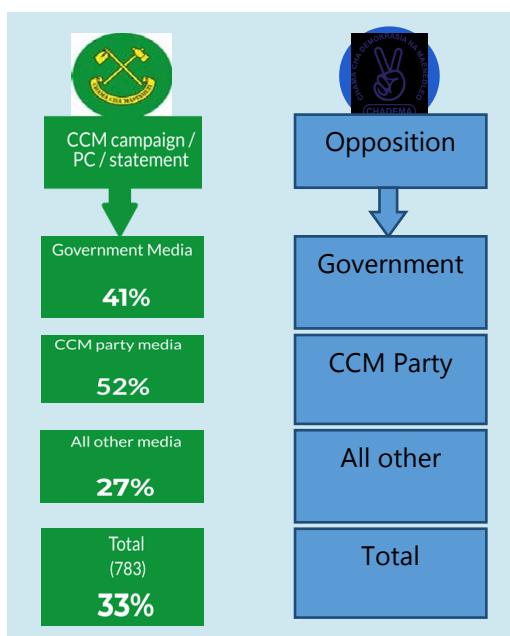


Figure 1. Media Coverage
(Source: Media & In, 2020)

Organization challenge within CHADEMA

The study exposed internal weaknesses which prevented CHADEMA from obtaining successful results in the 2020 election. A breakdown in communication between national and local party systems created Organizational Inefficiencies in CHADEMA according to both officials and documented party information. Research in African political formations indicates that parties deploy authoritarian methods for gaining backing and managing premeditated governmental shifts while minimizing democratic opportunities. The national chairperson since September 14, 2004 of CHADEMA asserts that his ongoing leadership enables the party to expand while competing against the CCM party's dominance. CHADEMA's vice chairperson (Tanzania Mainland) finds the continuous leadership of the party to create an authoritarian single-person control system which hinders party evolution. The debate begins about whether CHADEMA's leadership structure faces similar authoritarian tendencies it commonly accuses the governing party Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) of maintaining.

When Lissu declared his candidacy for CHADEMA leadership he emphasized the need to introduce term limits as his main platform according to The Chanzo INITIATIVE. The position as chairperson has been held by Mbowe for twenty years which made him direct target of Lissu's challenge. Lissu stresses the importance of term limits because they help develop fresh leadership which he believes will combat "uchawa" the Kiswahili name for political sycophancy. The inability to mobilize rural supporters disclosed a key obstacle which prevented CHADEMA from establishing grassroots initiative according to an analysis of their campaign strategies and voter data (Babeiya, 2021). The lack of effective campaigning by CHADEMA against CCM resulted from organizational weaknesses that divided the party internally and impeded their ability to reach the grassroots population. For a Tanzanian opposition party to succeed in the political landscape it requires a united party leadership alongside broad community backing.

CHADEMA's Campaign Strategy and Messaging Challenges

The 2020 CHADEMA campaign concentrated its efforts on dealing with corruption alongside reform implementation. The impact of those complaints resounded with most inhabitants of educated and well-to-do residential communities (Paget, 2023). An investigative team from the country produced no results when they analyzed presidential speeches since the investigation hit a complete stalemate. The Voter Outreach operations of the party faced constraints because they showed inadequate support towards rural and marginalized communities based on voter analysis and campaign activity data reports. CHADEMA faced major difficulties in developing an alternative storyline compared to the dominant narrative of the ruling CCM party (Makulilo, 2014). The ruling party succeeded in presenting stable development as their narrative which remained strongly visible in media reports and field observations. CHADEMA encountered major difficulties when trying to promote their message because the campaign had limited success in expanding their public support and reversing the dominant position of CCM. The presence of these obstacles highlights numerous challenges which CHADEMA encountered.



Figure 2. Descriptive model for strategic political communication on multiple arenas.
(Source: Strömbäck & Kioussis, 2014)

To achieve campaign targets political organizations, implement multiple communication approaches through different domains including parliamentary proceedings internal networks electoral frameworks and news media platforms by leveraging tools that include email programs social media outlets and media outlets while simultaneously managing feedback connections mainly from media entities. The 2020 Tanzanian presidential election posed major difficulties for CHADEMA's support mobilization through its communication networks due to laws restricting their freedom and biased electoral bodies and resource limitations (Chikohomero & Mjenga, 2020). The party tried to use social media for urban and youth voter engagement yet faced both network interruptions and operational problems which created weakened internal connections as well as external impact limitations. Media outlets supporting the ruling CCM party used their control over broadcasts to establish damaging feedback loops which decreased CHADEMA's reach to potential voters. CHADEMA's communication strategies suffered disastrous results due to both structural barriers and organizational inefficiencies, alongside an unbalanced political playing field (Paget, 2019). This analysis shows that political communication and campaign effectiveness requires examination of internal processes along with external limiting factors.

Implications of CCM's Continued Dominance

The 2020 election further established CCM's Hegemonic control which maintained its dominance while significantly restricting political competition in Tanzania through examination of election statistics and party performance. This entrenched dominance generates major obstacles for Opposition parties thus making it harder for parties like CHADEMA to successfully compete in future elections according to political analysts and civil society representatives (Makulilo, 2009). The election results indicate Democratic Backsliding through the deterioration of democratic norms and institutions which stands out when comparing Tanzania's political evolution to regional trends. The research outcomes demonstrate major structural obstacles that prevent Tanzania from establishing a consolidated democracy and demand quick political reforms which should eliminate irregularities in electoral procedures and level the field for political competition.

Table 1: Trends in Opposition Party Performance (2005–2020)

Election	Party	Presidential	Parliament
2005	CCM	80.03%	88.8%
	CHADEMA	5.88%	8.2%
2010	CCM	62.8%	77.8%
	CHADEMA	27.05%	23.86%
2015	CCM	58.5%	73.4%
	CHADEMA	39.97%	31.75
2020	CCM	84.4%	97.0%
	CHADEMA	13.04%	13.04%

Source: Tanzania's National Electoral Commission

The data demonstrates presidential voting patterns across the nation along with directly elected parliamentary seats without considering the distribution of special seats based on national vote proportions. Parliamentary representation features both directly elected parliamentary seats together with the special seats which mirror the national vote proportions. The percentage distribution of votes received by CHADEMA party appears in the figure above for better understanding. This report rounds all numbers to the nearest whole number.

Discussion

The findings from this study are essential for understanding democratic regress and electoral authoritarianism along with opposition party survivability in semi-authoritarian governance systems. The study examines the structural alongside institutional and organizational components of CHADEMA's 2020 electoral loss to improve scholarly understanding in three main aspects. The analysis supports previous studies about powerful political parties that exploit electoral regulations to preserve their control (Levitsky & Way, 2010) while showing how the NEC functions as an instrument for CCM rather than remaining independent. This study delivers additional insight into opposition challenges within hostile conditions through a detailed presentation of the joint impediments imposed by restrictive laws together with biased state machinery and imbalanced media access. Internal problems at CHADEMA adversely affected its ability to overcome external challenges because its leadership conflicts and poor connectivity to rural areas and inconsistent communication plan worsened the opposition party's ability to combat external constraints. The results support African electoral authoritarianism research (Bogaards, 2018) yet they highlight how opposition groups and institutional limits affect election results together.

The study demonstrates strong methodological integrity through its integration of descriptive analysis with legal review and media data yet various limitations remain unresolved. Analysis of official electoral returns and media reports may fail to identify hidden political factors below the surface (including secret coercion or grassroots dissent). Expanding the study to include comparisons between CHADEMA and other Tanzanian opposition parties like ACT-Wazalendo would showcase whether opposition complications stem from systemic issues or tackle specific party difficulties. The study's findings have constrained value of transfer for systems with comparable hybrid governance patterns but do not reflect the distinct Tanzanian model (Hydén, 2008). The researcher faced ethical concerns when obtaining data about state repression thus requiring usage of public records and anonymized interview responses but future studies should use participatory methods with opposition actors to resolve this issue.

CHADEMA's loss in the election cannot be fully explained by either voter disengagement or the ruling party's developmental agenda. The findings demonstrate that CCM's dominance proved structurally unstoppable because CHADEMA could not overcome the built-in institutional advantages. The findings suggest that electoral reforms including NEC autonomy and equitable media access would help create a level playing field in elections. The analysis reveals CHADEMA's shortcomings to adapt to the situation as a key factor that led to their defeat while highlighting the necessity of both political institution reforms and opposition reinvention through new leadership and network expansion efforts in rural areas.

Future studies should conduct comparative research on opposition resilience strategies within similar government systems such as Rwanda and Uganda. Public officials need to protect systems from government resource abuse and media bias but party professionals should maintain electoral strategy equilibrium with essential party institutional growth. The essential takeaway from this study confirms democratic backsliding can be reversed through collective efforts from legal defenders supporting reform alongside unified opposition forces striving to dissect authoritarian fundamentals. The current electoral landscape of Tanzania will continue to favor CCM's dominance unless proper reforms are put in place to safeguard democratic possibilities.

Conclusion

This study analyzes the combination of structural problems along with organizational weaknesses which led CHADEMA to lose the 2020 election in order to show how Tanzania's uneven electoral conditions support the dominant role of CCM. Competitive democracy suffers from institutional control which combines with resource imbalances along with organizational deficiencies in opposition groups leading to fragmented leadership, operational limitations and limited reach in rural areas. Electoral authoritarian systems persist because they create barriers that harm opposition groups simultaneously with the vulnerabilities of these opposition organizations according

to democratic backslide and political opposition theories.

Democratic progress needs multiple reform approaches to deliver substantial advances in the future. CHADEMA alongside other opposition parties must address their internal fragmentation along with community-based organizing and effective campaign messaging to boost their chances of success. Preserving democratic progress requires electoral reforms which guarantee institutional neutrality as well as transparent procedures along with equal media accessibility for all. Civil society groups and international organizations should advance their political support for these reform measures while encouraging citizens to participate in democratic processes. This research advances understanding of democratic erosion through a tool for studying challenges faced by opposition parties in hybrid systems while offering concrete guidance for policymakers and scholars who seek to promote inclusive governance in Tanzania alongside similar national contexts.

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