

Defection and Its Implications on Party Politics in Tanzania

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Abstract

This paper reflects on party defection in Tanzania. It shows that since the country's reintroduction of multiparty politics in 1992, thereby paving way for the formation of opposition parties, cases of party defection have been common. Election observation reports have often featured defection stories, especially during intraparty nominations. While much is known regarding individuals who defected and the parties they joined, little has been done to reflect on the effects of party defection on political parties and party politics in Tanzania. Based on this gap, this paper highlights factors that have often triggered party defection, namely: limited internal party democracy, personal ambitions, legal frameworks, prospective gains, support to exemplary performance of the government, as well as ideological mismatch. The paper further reflects on the effects of party defection on party politics, and shows that it has had both negative and positive consequences on both the opposition parties and the incumbent party. The paper shows that the opposition has benefited from defectors from the incumbent party who have often contributed to an increase of the opposition's share of presidential votes and the number of parliamentary seats. On the other hand, the paper shows that the ruling party has benefitted from defectors, especially members of parliament whose decision to join the incumbent party has tended to weaken the opposition. The paper also shows that the defection of some influential figures from the ruling party has contributed to reducing internal conflicts and power struggles. It further shows that despite CCM's continued domination of the country's political landscape, some cases of defection have contributed to a relative increase of interparty competition, as was observed during the 2015 elections in which the opposition recorded significant gains. Thus, the observations indicate that defection matters to both the ruling party and the opposition, though at varying levels.

Key words: *defection, democracy, incumbent party, opposition parties, Tanzania, effects.*

Introduction

Since the reintroduction of multiparty politics in 1992, Tanzania has witnessed the formation of many political parties in addition to Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), which was the only party following the country's adoption of a single party rule in 1965 (Whitehead, 2000; Ewald & Wohlgemuth, 2012). Besides opening the space for more political competition, the existence of many parties has offered avenues for party members and leaders to join and leave their parties on different occasions. The country has thus periodically been characterized by incidents of members of

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parliament, party leaders and cadres to defect from their parties and join other parties. So often, party defections have tended to occur during election times as politicians struggle to secure party nominations for elections (TEMCO, 2011).

While defection is a common phenomenon across the world, it stands to have varying effects on the functioning and survival of political parties. In Tanzania, election observers and the media have covered incidents of party defection on several occasions.¹ Much of this coverage has often focused on reporting defection incidences with less reflection on the effects of these acts on party politics in Tanzania. Similarly, very few scholarly works have examined party defection, the most recent ones being by Bujiku et al. (2020) who focus on whether there is a need to formulate anti-defection laws in Tanzania; and Sulley (2022) who examines the consequences of selection methods on intraparty democracy. Despite their coverage of the legal and decision-making dimensions of defection, more still needs to be covered; particularly the implications of defections on political parties and party politics in the country. Against this background, this paper seeks to shed more light on party defection in Tanzania by trying to answer two main questions, namely: (i) *What are the drivers for party defection in Tanzania?* (ii) *What are the effects of defection on political parties and party politics in Tanzania?* In addressing these questions, and using documentary sources, the paper highlights factors that have motivated party defections; and discusses the effects of party defection on political parties and party politics in Tanzania. The paper is divided into four main sections that deal with theoretical and empirical issues related to party defection; party defection in Tanzania; implications of party defection on political parties; and party politics in Tanzania. These are followed by a conclusion.

Theoretical and Empirical Issues Related to Party Defection

Party defection has been a common phenomenon in both developed and developing countries (Janda, 2009). For instance, Winston Churchill—who defected from the Conservative Party to join the Liberals in 1904, before rejoining the Conservatives in 1925—is regarded as one of the famous defectors in modern history (Okechukwu & Ogbochie, 2014). Defection is the act of a party member giving up one’s allegiance to a former party to join another party. So often, defectors are treated as traitors since they are accused of revealing secrets of their former parties. In some extreme cases, defectors are regarded as infidels who engage in politics without strong moral or ideological standpoints (Okechukwu & Ogbochie, 2014). There are various theories that explain political defection. In the context of this paper, the rational choice theory and the theory of parties are used as the analytical frameworks. The rational choice theory is relevant here as it offers a framework for examining the basis upon which an individual’s decision to defect is anchored. On the other hand, the theory of parties offers some parameters for examining the interplay between organizational politics and one’s decision to defect.

¹See, for example, the Tanzania Election Monitoring Committee (TEMCO) reports for the 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2020 general elections.

At the heart of the rational choice theory is the belief that individuals use their self-interests to make rational choices that will provide them with the greatest benefit (Aldrich & Bianco, 1992; Scott, 2000). As applied to the field of economics, rational choice entails the process of determining what options are available; and then choosing the most preferred one according to a consistent criterion (Levin & Milgrom, 2004). The rational choice theory holds the belief that all social actions are rationally motivated, and that individuals are thus presumed to be motivated by certain goals that express their preferences. Individuals are thus considered to be acting within specific constraints and in accordance with the information at their disposal about the conditions within which they operate (Scott, 2000). The theory believes that as individuals cannot achieve all which they desire, they make choices in relation to their goals and means of attaining them. The theory further provides that individuals are capable of anticipating the outcomes of their calculated actions, in which the courses of actions pursued are those that are likely to give them the greatest satisfaction (ibid.).

From the theoretical point of view of rational choice, defection is associated with one's calculation of what s/he stands to benefit from joining a particular party (Aldrich & Bianco, 1992). Thus, an individual may defect to a new party with a view to securing private goods benefits, such as ballot positions for upcoming elections (Desposato, 2006). This is especially the case when elections costs are high, and when it is certain that the party one is defecting to can cover a part of such costs. In other cases, individuals—particularly rich ones—opt to join parties that can lower their election costs, and guarantee them of post-election benefits such as appointments (Arriola et al., 2021). In other cases, defection is associated with ones' calculation of re-election prospects as defectors normally aim at maximizing their benefits of political office and votes (Klein, 2021). Individuals are also presumed to calculate their defection decisions by looking at the existing bond between them and the electorate. When that bond is great, chances of defection are high (Gherghina, 2016).

On the other hand, defection is explained by the theory of parties propounded by political science scholars at the University of California, Los Angeles. This theory is a response to the belief that office-seeking politicians were the central actors shaping political parties (McCarty & Schickler, 2018). That belief regarded political parties as organizations composed of policy-motivated activists, whereby changes in party organization were presumed to be made for the sake of meeting politicians' demands (ibid.). On the contrary, the theory of parties sees political parties as organized coalitional groups that have the role of mobilizing support for candidates who are likely to meet their policy demands. It provides that these groups sometimes suffer from fragility that is attributed to differences in perceptions among group members, which in certain instances force some individuals to defect (ibid.). The theory believes that defection can be overcome by addressing the majority-instability problem that makes coalition members realize the importance of maintaining affiliation to long-time stability. Realizing this stability obliges coalition members to surrender some of their powers for the common good. The

other defection control approach treats political parties as networks of various groups. It sees the cost implications associated with making and breaking networks as defection barriers (ibid.).

Several factors account for an individual's decision to leave one's party and join a new party. Some of these include personality clash, power tussles, contradicting opinions regarding the management of a party, and disunity within a given political party (Okechukwu & Ogbochie, 2014). In other instances, defection is linked to a quest for the realisation of one's personal political ambitions (ibid.). Ambitious rational politicians thus decide to join other parties that would lead them to office (Aldrich & Bianco, 1992). Other factors include ideological confusion, personal greed, lack of internal democracy, as well as fear of persecution (Abraham et al., n.d). In other instances, defection is attributed to inducement, whereby defectors are given or promised to be given several benefits such as pork-barrel spending (Couch & Stevenson, 2013). In other instances defection is attributed to a country's type of electoral system. Experience from Japan shows that the single non-transferable vote (SNTV) system is accused of fostering political corruption, clientelism, electoral fraud and money politics that trigger defection (Chang, 2009). In addition, party defection is associated with electoral rules and discipline; as well as party size and influence as observed in Italy. It is presumed that the decline in the influence of a party prompts defections.

While a strong party discipline is credited for leading to policy convergence, a weak party discipline is accused of providing incentives for divergent policy positions that force some members to defect (González & Puy, 2019). Experience from countries with strong party disciplines, such as Finland and Ireland, shows that rarely do politicians defect from their parties. This is particularly so as strong party discipline consolidates a lasting bond between members and their parties. This leads, in the long-run, to the development of the theorem that the fate of politicians depends, to a greater extent, on the success of their parties. This discipline is sometimes reinforced by a country's legal framework that outlaws party defection (Nikolenyi, 2022). Some countries have enacted laws that disqualify members of parliament who denounce their affiliation to their parties (Mehta, 2019). Examples can be drawn from Israel, whereby anti-defection law was enacted in 1991 (Nikolenyi, 2018). Similarly, India's 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1985 disqualifies defecting representatives (Garg, 2022). A contrast can be made with the Nigerian experience whereby, due to the lack of defection controls, some politicians defect so as to secure nominations; and later return to their former parties after elections (Okechukwu & Ogbochie, 2014).

District magnitude and competition for a party's nomination are also regarded as causes of party defection. The presence of many parties in a given political system is similarly said to promote defection as they offer defection alternatives to politicians. Given the dynamic nature of party politics, politicians see other parties as alternative to the status quo (Knott, 2017). The extent to which this claim is realistic is dependent on the nature of a country's political system. There have been

cases where the executive branch uses its powers to control defection. One of the strategies used by the executive is the creation of units that serve as political brokers for representatives in the incumbent party who use them to stop opposition candidates from establishing themselves in constituencies (Hassan & Sheely, 2017). In other cases, the lack of ideas and ideals in some political parties has been a source of defection as it has often been the case in Kenya. Political parties in Kenya generally lack clear ideological positions as it is mainly during elections times that they try to coin some ideologies in the course of formulating their election manifestos (Wanyama & Elklit, 2018).

Defection is generally criticized for deceiving the mandate of the electorate, the fundamentals of a party system, and for causing political instability (Jonsson, 2017). On the positive side, defection is credited with helping to build a strong opposition that can effectively challenge the ruling party. The challenge is, however, that defections are often not linked to ideological considerations, and thus the bond between defectors and their new parties is mostly weak (Nwanegbo, 2014).

In Tanzania, citizen's choice of political parties is guaranteed by the country's constitution of 1977. Article 20-(1) of that constitution provides that every person has the freedom to associate and cooperate with other persons, and to form/join associations or organizations formed for purposes of preserving or furthering one's beliefs, or any other interests. This guarantee notwithstanding, the freedom of elected representatives to join and leave a political party is constrained by the same constitution. Article 71-(1) of the same constitution provides that a person shall cease to be a member of parliament if s/he stops being a member of the party to which s/he belonged when s/he was elected or appointed a member of parliament. However, despite this restriction, defection has been a common phenomenon in Tanzania.

Party Defection in Tanzania

Since the reintroduction of multiparty politics in 1992, Tanzania has witnessed the formation of many political parties. Currently, the country has 19 registered political parties (Office of the Registrar of Political Parties, 2021).² While these political parties are conventionally presumed to aspire capturing and exercising state power, the extent to which they have strived to achieve this goal varies across parties. Based on their levels of interaction in the political system, political parties in Tanzania are classified as major and minor parties. Major parties have included the Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM), and some opposition parties that have—or have had—representation in the parliament, such as the Civic United Front (CUF), National Convention for Construction and Reform-Mageuzi (NCCR-Mageuzi), Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA), and the Alliance for Change and Transparency-Wazalendo (ACT-WAZALENDO). Minor parties

²A list of fully registered political parties. Retrieved from <https://www.orpp.go.tz/uploads/publications/sw1628509343-PDF%20ORODHA%20YA%20VYAMA%20VYA%20SIASA%20AS%20AT%2001%20AUGUST%202021.pdf> (Accessed 31st January 2023).

without representation in the parliament are such as the National Reconstruction Alliance (NRA), Democratic Party (DP) and the United Democratic Party (UDP) (Whitehead, 2000, Norman, 2009). To a great extent, it has been the CCM that has dominated the country's political landscape as the opposition has been weak, and is unlikely to defeat it (Chege, 2007; Tsubura, 2018; Cheeseman et al, 2021).

The weakness of opposition parties has had numerical, ideological and systemic dimensions. The numerical factor explains an imbalanced share of votes, subsidies and share of seats between CCM and the opposition in favour of the former (Ewald, 2012; Paget, 2017). Ideological factor explains the failure of opposition parties to articulate alternative policies and ideologies different from those of the incumbent party (Ewald, 2011). The systemic factor, on the other hand, explains CCM's enjoyment of the incumbency, which it uses to expand its muscles against the opposition (Makulilo, 2012). Based on the rational choice theory as a guiding decisional framework for prospective defectors, it is thus most likely that individuals would defect to the ruling party than to opposition parties, other factors remaining constant. The same equation is likely to apply to individuals wishing to join minor or major opposition parties in Tanzania. Individuals from minor parties would thus join major opposition parties to increase their electability chances. Rarely, have individuals from major parties defected to minor opposition parties, e.g., when the former CHADEMA leader and cadre, Goodluck Ole Medeye, defected from CHADEMA to UDP in June 2016. He was later appointed acting secretary general of the party, before he rejoined CCM in 2018.³

Since the restoration of multiparty politics in Tanzania, several factors have accounted for party defection. The main ones include limited internal party democracy, personal ambitions and dissatisfaction with selection methods, prospective gains, the legal framework, leadership struggles, support to exemplary performance of the government and ideological mismatch.

(a) Personal Ambitions and Dissatisfaction with Selection Methods

Defection has in some instances been based on fulfilling one's personal ambition. As the Tanzania Civil Society Consortium for Election Observation (2016) observes, some high profile defections—such as those involving former prime ministers—are attributed to political ambitions. Literature on defection is replete with testimonies regarding politicians' use of electability as a criterion in considering which political party to join (Klein, 2021). The underlying assumption is that an individual would always ensure his/her election survival by joining a different party when certain that s/he cannot secure electoral victory through the ticket of one's current party. While Aldrich and Bianco (1992), and Couch and Stevenson (2013) prove this correlation, there are cases when defection is not determined by electability concerns, but by a desire to fulfil one's ambition through

³ Ole Medeye aamua kurejea CCM. Retrieved from <http://zedegree.blogspot.com/2018/01/ole-medeye-aamua-kurejea-ccm.htm> (Accessed 4 July 2022).

any platform when chances of endorsement in one's current party are slim or non-existent. In Tanzania, this experience has been common. Often, after party primaries, cases of defection—particularly within the ruling party—have been witnessed (TEMCO, 2016). Some individuals who do not secure nominations—either by failing to secure the majority of votes or by being eliminated from the race by party machineries—have tended to defect to new parties (TEMCO, 2006). These cases have been reported particularly at the parliamentary level. The same was nonetheless witnessed at the presidential level during the 2015 elections.

It is imperative to note that in the build up to the 2015 CCM primaries, the former Prime Minister, Mr. Edward Lowassa, had galvanized a lot of support within his party; and stood as the leading presidential contender. His mobilization for political support within CCM could be traced back to 1995 (Sambaiga et al., 2018) when he had managed to build strong networks across almost all levels of the party to publicize his name. Based on the pre-primaries investment, it was unlikely that this candidate would easily concede his elimination from the presidential race (LHRC & TACCEO, 2016). Thus, when it became obvious that it was impossible to fulfil his ambition through the CCM ticket, he had to seek for any other means to do it. This became evident on 28th July 2015 when he defected to CHADEMA (TEMCO, 2016). Therefore, his decision to defect to CHADEMA had little to do with the certainty of electability through the opposition, but was much driven by fulfilling his long-term ambition of vying for the presidential post. The claim he made during his defection speech that he was after change was questionable given that it was made after failing to secure nomination through the CCM ticket. Thus, it was not a surprise that four years later he rejoined CCM on 1st March 2019.⁴ A contrast could be made with the defection of the other former Prime Minister, Fredrick Sumaye, who defected from CCM on August 22, 2015, and later joined CHADEMA. Despite showing desperations to vie for the presidency in previous elections, his claim that he joined the opposition to champion political reforms was somehow genuine as he did not seem to seek for presidency through the opposition ticket during the 2015 elections.⁵

In addition to personal ambition, defection has also been attributed to discontentment with selection methods. As Sulley (2022) observes, some selection methods have sometimes been deemed undemocratic and centralized as both presidential and parliamentary candidacies are influenced and determined by a few party leaders. In Tanzania, major political parties have tended to apply various methods during intraparty nominations. Some of these include preferential voting, self-nomination, and hand-picking (TEMCO, 2006). With an exception of CCM that mostly uses preferential voting during its nomination processes, opposition parties have tended to combine these methods (TEMCO, 2001). When preferential voting is applied, the

⁴'Former Tanzanian PM Edward Lowassa quits opposition, rejoins ruling party.' Retrieved from http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-03/02/c_137861404.htm (Accessed, 31st January 2023).

⁵'Tanzania's former PM Sumaye rejoins ruling party after stint in opposition.' Retrieved from <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/tanzania-s-former-pm-sumaye-rejoins-ruling-party-after-stint-in-opposition--2703102> (Accessed 11 July 2022).

selectorate recommends—through voting—the preferred candidates who are later vetted by respective vetting authorities and nominated as candidates. Because of this arrangement, there have been cases where vetting authorities alter recommendations of candidates by the selectorates, thus leading to outcries that culminate to defection. Several examples attest to this observation. For instance, during the 2010 intraparty nomination, CCM replaced the candidate who had garnered many nomination votes in Mlalo constituency with the third winner, leading to the former's defection to CHADEMA (TEMCO, 2011). Likewise, during the 2015 elections, the aspirant known as Hassan Majaribu defected from CHADEMA to CUF in Nanyumbu constituency, challenging the party's nomination procedures (TEMCO, 2016). Defection on the basis of dissatisfaction with nomination procedures was also noted in Shinyanga Urban constituency, whereby the CHADEMA cadre, Mr. Kaheza Shilungushera, defected to ACT-Wazalendo (TEMCO, 2016).

(b) Prospective Gains

Tanzania has also witnessed materialistic defections. Some individuals have defected to new parties on the prospects of benefitting when their supported candidates are elected. The pork consideration seemed to be a strong factor in explaining the defection of some high profile CCM cadres and leaders to join CHADEMA during the 2015 elections. As pointed out earlier, the Lowassa factor had entrenched across all CCM circles, and prospects were high that he was going to secure CCM's nomination and proceed to be elected as the country's president. Even when he could not make it through CCM, some of his supporters had a hope that he could still be elected president through the opposition ticket (TEMCO, 2016). It was mainly due to this client-patron consideration that some CCM leaders and cadres defected to CHADEMA to support their candidate (LHRC & TACCEO, 2016). Following Lowassa's failure to win the 2015 presidential elections, most of the defectors returned to their former party (CCM), including Lowassa himself. Their prospects for benefitting from presidential patronage faded after the 2015 elections. As their defection to CHADEMA had little to do with the love for the new party, they found themselves out of option when their candidate lost the election. Some of individuals belonging to this category include the then member of parliament for Simanjiro constituency, James Ole Millya; and the then CCM chairpersons for Singida and Shinyanga regions, Mgana Msindai and Hamis Mgeja, respectively. The prospective gain claim was even confirmed by the CHADEMA chairman, Freeman Mbowe, who insisted that defectors from his party were those who believed that Lowassa would win the 2015 elections. He believed that due to the lack of affinity to CHADEMA, they were easily lured to rejoin the ruling party.⁶ The same claims were earlier made by CHADEMA's then member of parliament for Arumeru East constituency in Arusha Region, Joshua Nassari, who unveiled a video footage to confirm the claim that defectors were being lured (ibid.).

⁶What next for Tanzania opposition in wave of defections to CCM? Retrieved from <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/what-next-for-tanzania-opposition-in-wave-of-defections-to-ccm-1400166> (accessed, 5th May, 2022).

In other instances, prospective gains have involved defector's calculation of their chances of securing nomination through their current parties. Hence, some individuals have opted to defect to other parties even prior to nomination within their parties. This was, for instance, noted prior to CCM's intraparty nominations in 2015, whereby the incumbent member of parliament for Kahama constituency, James Lembeli, defected to CHADEMA (TEMCO, 2016).

(c) The Legal Framework

In some instances, political defection has been induced by the legal framework. Up to 2015 political parties in Tanzania were not allowed by the law to form electoral coalitions. Each political party had to nominate and sponsor its own candidates; and any interparty-arrangements for the nomination and sponsorship of candidates had to be handled informally. During the 2015 elections, some opposition political parties formed a coalition—popularly known as the *Umoja wa Kutetea Katiba ya Wananchi* (UKAWA) ('Coalition of the Defenders of the People's Constitution'). Through this coalition, member parties decided to nominate a presidential candidate from CHADEMA, and his running mate from CUF. Given that these individuals could not be formally paired, the presidential running mate, Juma Duni Haji, was obliged to temporarily defect from CUF to CHADEMA so as to be nominated and endorsed as the running mate (LHRC & TACCEO, 2016; TEMCO, 2016). It is worth-noting that prior to the legalization of coalitions, political parties seeking to form an alliance were obliged to merge. Section 11A-(1) of the political parties Act required political parties to merge and register a new party. This provision was difficult to implement as it meant erasing the history and leadership of political parties. The law was nonetheless later changed to allow political parties to form electoral coalitions. Section 11A-(1) of the Political Parties Act currently allows two or more fully registered political parties to form a coalition before or after a general election.⁷

(d) Leadership Struggles

In some instances, political defection has been due to leadership struggles. Since the adoption of multiparty politics in 1992, Tanzania has witnessed several cases of leadership struggles, some of which have been violent (Whitehead, 2000). Some of the political parties that have been affected by leadership-related conflicts include CHADEMA, CUF, TLP, UDP and NCCR-Mageuzi. It is imperative to note that the then country's major opposition party, NCCR-Mageuzi, lost its popularity mainly due to leadership-related conflicts between the then party chairperson, Augustine Mrema, and other top party officials (Whitehead, 2000). Similarly, Mrema's defection to TLP in 1999 was a result of a leadership crisis (Hoffman & Robinson, 2009). Since then, NCCR-Mageuzi has continued to face several internal conflicts. It is worth-noting that since 2010 there has been internal wrangling within the party that has sometimes led to speculations over attempts to topple the party's chairperson. For instance, in 2011 it was alleged that twenty eight

⁷ The Political Parties Act No.1, of 2019.

(28) members of the NCCR-Mageuzi National Executive Council had agreed to initiate a move to prematurely remove the chairperson from office in November 2011.⁸ Likewise, since 2022 the same party has been in serious conflicts involving some members who defected from CHADEMA. On 21st May, 2022, the NCCR Mageuzi national chairperson, James Mbatia; and his vice-person (Mainland) Angelina Mtahiwa, were suspended from office. This decision was made during the meeting of some members of the party's executive council held on May 21, 2022; which accused the chairperson of instigating conflicts within the party. His declared suspension from office also went hand in hand with the dismissal of the NCCR Board of Trustees.⁹ The suspended leaders were required to appear before the general assembly for hearing. Mbatia and his Deputy were later expelled from the party on 23rd September 2022 by the party's general assembly.¹⁰

Similarly, CUF has suffered from leadership-related conflicts between one of its founding members and chairperson, James Mapalala, and its vice-president, Seif Shariff Hamad. It is worth-noting that CUF was founded in 1993 after a merger of Mapalala's Chama cha Wananchi (CCW) and KAMAHURU, that was led by Seif Shariff Hamad. It was due to this conflict that Mapalala left CUF and founded a new party: Chama cha Haki na Usitawi (CHAUSTA) in 2001. Mapalala left after a conflict concerning the party's recognition of Dr. Salmin Amour as the president of Zanzibar (Ewald, 2011). The party later suffered from a long-time conflict between the party chairperson, Professor Ibrahim Lipumba, and the then secretary general, Seif Shariff Hamad, which culminated to the latter defecting from CUF to join ACT Wazalendo. The main source of the conflict was Lipumba's decision to step down as the party's chairperson in 2015; and then later forcefully reinstating himself as the party's chairperson in 2016.¹¹ Within CHADEMA, some party leaders have defected to other parties such as CCM, ACT-Wazalendo and NCCR-Mageuzi. During defection, they have tended to accuse the concentration of power of the top leadership, and not allowing a fair competition for leadership posts within the party.¹² Generally, the formation of ACT-Wazalendo was a result of leadership conflicts within CHADEMA.

(e) Support to Exemplary Performance of the Government

Of all the factors that have explained political defection in Tanzania, the support to exemplary performance of the incumbent government seems to be strange and unique. It is important to note that since the 1995 multiparty elections that were

⁸Mlagiri Kopoka 'Tanzania: Are Mbatia's Days at NCCR Numbered?' *The Citizen*, 15 November 2011.

⁹*The CitizenNews* 'National Chadema still recognises NCCR Mageuzi leadership', Retrieved from <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/-chadema-still-recognises-nccr-mageuzi-leadership-3825578> (Accessed, 5th May, 2022).

¹⁰*Daily News*, 'James Mbatia ousted'. September 2022.

¹¹'Profesa Lipumba asema katiba ya CUF inamruhusu kurejea kwenye uongozi.' Retrieved from <https://www.voaswahili.com/a/lipumba-uongozi-cuf-arejea/3374388.html> (Accessed 31st January 2023).

¹²Mbunge Chadema kutimkia NCCR Mageuzi akimaliza ubunge. Retrieved from <https://www.mwananchi.co.tz/habari/kitaifa/Mbunge-Chadema-kutumkia-NCCR-Mageuzi-akimaliza-ubunge/1597296-5508186-1kx3bcz/index.html> (Accessed 31 January 2023).

held following the country's adoption of multiparty politics, there has been huge uneven sharing of parliamentary seats between opposition parties and the ruling party, with the latter enjoying a lion's share of those seats; as will later be shown (Ewald, 2012). This uneven distribution equation was somehow altered during the 2015 elections as the opposition relatively increased its share of seats (TEMCO, 2016). Having won the seats, the opposition members of the parliament were expected to implement their election manifestos by addressing the challenges facing the electorate. While this was being done, unprecedented exodus of some opposition members of parliament to join the ruling party was witnessed. This happened in less than two years before the 2020 general elections. The main justification for defection was that those members were in support of the exemplary performance of the government. The words of Maulid Mtulia, the then Member of Parliament for Kinondoni constituency through CUF, when announcing his defection on December 3rd, 2017, attests to this observation:

Today 2nd December 2017, without being induced by anyone, I have decided to leave CUF. I have also resigned from all my posts within CUF. The main reason that has made me leave CUF is an outstanding performance of president Magufuli.¹³ The issues we were vocal about such as corruption, free education, and better health service are being seriously worked upon by the government. As a Member of Parliament from the opposition, it has been difficult to accomplish what I promised than it would have been if I were from CCM. On this basis, I have decided to resign from all my posts. When a fresh by-election is held, I ask Kinondoni residents to vote for the candidate from the ruling party. Given the outstanding performance of the 5th phase of government, it is difficult to establish where the opposition political parties will draw their agenda.¹⁴

Conventionally, if a member of parliament was satisfied with the support s/he was getting from the government, chances were high that s/he would be re-elected due to his/her performance. The extent to which satisfaction with the support from the government or the performance of the incumbent government would serve as a basis for defection was unprecedented. What unfolded after their defection also raised some questions. It is imperative to note that national laws in Tanzania require the conduct of fresh by-elections whenever a constituency seat falls vacant. While members of parliament have a constitutional right to defect to new parties, such an act automatically implies that defectors lose their parliamentary seats. Thus, after these members of parliament defected, the National Electoral Commission called for fresh by-elections. These elections were preceded by party primaries in which all defectors were endorsed as CCM candidates, and eventually elected as new ruling party's members of parliament. However, a year later most of them were not nominated for the same posts during the 2020 general elections.¹⁵ Defecting to the

¹³ CUF legislator Mtulia joins CCM. Retrieved from <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/cuf-legislator-mtulua-joins-ccm-2615414> (Accessed, 10th April 2022).

¹⁴ Breaking News: Mbunge wa Jimbo la Kinondoni, Maulid Mtulia Atangaza Kuhama CUF, Ajiunga CCM. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yo4BKPzorfY> (accessed, 5th May, 2022)

¹⁵ Opposition defectors find the going tough in CCM primaries.' Retrieved from <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/opposition-defectors-find-the-going-tough-in-ccm-primaries-2713118> (Accessed 30 January 2023).

ruling party was partly interpreted as a strategy to survive in the political system following various developments that had unfolded in the country from 2016. Some members of parliament did not see the possibility of being re-elected through the opposition's ticket, and thus their defection was a calculated move to win the favour of the ruling party in the forthcoming elections. Some of defectors included the then CHADEMA's secretary general and the national chairperson of the youth wing; the members of parliament for Temeke, Kinondoni, Siha, Babati Town, Momba, Ukonga, Tandahimba and Arumeru East constituencies.

A tight grip on the opposition frustrated opposition legislators. It is worth-noting that since the reintroduction of multiparty politics, there was no period when the opposition felt frustrated like in the 2016-2020 period (Paget, 2017, Collord, 2021). This frustration was revealed by the then member of parliament for Babati Urban constituency through CHADEMA when justifying her defection from her party to CCM on 29 May, 2019, by maintaining:

It is not possible for a constituency Member of Parliament from the opposition to fulfil her promises to the electorate. The one you are to challenge is the one who has the power to decide who gets what.¹⁶ That can at least be mitigated against if within your party there is unity and cooperation, you target together and share the same destination. Within my former party there are clusters of party owners, party hard workers and ordinary members.¹⁷

The testimonies of some of the defectors cited above highlight on the genesis of the alleged support to government performance. The deliberate frustration of opposition representatives was even confirmed by the chairperson of CCM's youth wing who admitted, during a by-election campaign, that the government was not ready to give money to opposition representatives as they were not part of the CCM vision.¹⁸ To a great extent, the anti-opposition attitude increased tremendously to the extent of leaving opposition representatives with no option except quitting or losing their constituencies. This fear was intensified by President Magufuli's speech on 28th July, 2018, who categorically said that he did not expect his appointees to declare opposition candidates as winners during elections.¹⁹ Presidential actions and enactment of prohibitive laws put the opposition in the dark, thus making defection to the ruling party inevitable (TEMCO, 2021). The anti-opposition attitude broadly reflected the shrinking space for democracy as marked by limited freedom of speech and assembly, thus constraining the functioning of the opposition (Paget, 2017). For instance, in 2016 the police issued an order banning party rallies until the 2020 election (Collord, 2021). This was in

¹⁶Mbunge Gekul aeleza kwa nini ametimkia CCM.' Retrieved from <https://www.mwananchi.co.tz/mw/habari/kitaifa/mbunge-gekul-aeleza-kwa-nini-ametimkia-ccm-2935338> (Accessed 3 July 2022)..

¹⁷Mbunge Aliyehama CHADEMA "Niliona UJINGA, Nikaondoka CCM." Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UexYyXjvWtg> (Accessed 4 July 2022).

¹⁸Christopher Kidanka, What next for Tanzania opposition in wave of defections to CCM?. Retrieved from <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/what-next-for-tanzania-opposition-in-wave-of-defections-to-ccm--1400166> (Accessed 4 July 2022).

¹⁹Markus Mpangala, Ni kwa nini wanasiasa wanavihama vyama vyao nchini Tanzania. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/swahili/habari-45404856> (Accessed 4 July 2022).

conformity with the president's position that there was no time for politicking after the elections until the 2020 election. Owing to this political atmosphere, defection became the main option for some representatives. As pointed out earlier, most of those who defected joined CCM and were eventually re-elected to run for the same posts during by-elections. They were nominated by CCM through uncompetitive means, which Bashiru Ally, the then CCM's secretary general, referred to as unwritten rules. The manner in which these representatives defected suggested an existence of inducement²⁰ that was tied to re-election fears. This was evident after the CCM's Central Committee issued an ultimatum to opposition members of parliament who wished to defect. It set 15th November, 2018, as the defection deadline, insisting that those who would join CCM after that would not be considered for nomination as re-election candidates.²¹ This was an unprecedented development as the basis upon which such an ultimatum was anchored was not clear. However, it presented a feeling from the ruling party's top hierarchy that opposition members of parliament had no other option if they were to survive re-election in forthcoming elections.

Re-election uncertainty through the opposition ticket was confirmed during the 2019 local government elections, in which CCM won almost all seats following a controversial disqualification of hundreds of opposition candidates. This was further confirmed during the 2020 elections whereby the country's main opposition party CHADEMA only secured one constituency seat. As pointed out earlier, a majority of the defectors were also not nominated during the 2020 elections; but some—e.g., Vincent Mashinji, Peter Lijualikali and Joshua Nassari—were appointed district commissioners in 2021. Based on incidences of defection of opposition members of parliament to CCM, there were concerns from various stakeholders, including the academia, over the need to control these defections. For instance, Bujiku et al. (2020) recommended for an enactment of anti-defection law to curb the defection tendencies of sitting members of parliament and other representatives.

(f) Limited Internal Party Democracy

One of the factors that have characterized political parties in Tanzania is limited internal party democracy. Sulley (2015) and Babeiya (2020) provide several dimensions of limited internal party democracy, which in some cases affect the rights and freedoms of some members. Top party hierarchies are blamed of suffocating such rights. Allegations of the lack of internal party democracy have sometimes been a basis for some members to defect from their political parties and join other political parties. An example can be drawn from the former CHADEMA cadres and members of parliament—Anthony Komu and Joseph Selasini—who

²⁰Tanzania: Opposition Hopeful Despite Renewed Wave of Defections. Retrieved from <https://allafrica.com/stories/202003030779.html> (Accessed 8th May 2022).

²¹Tarehe ya mwisho kuhama yatajwa. Retrieved from <https://www.ippmedia.com/sw/habari/tarehe-ya-mwisho-kuhama-ccm-yatajwa> (Accessed 20th June 2022).

defected from the party to join NCCR Mageuzi.²² The main basis of their defection was an alleged lack of internal party democracy in CHADEMA. Likewise, the defection of some renowned CCM cadres during the 2015 elections, following the elimination of Edward Lowassa from the presidential race, was on the basis that the party failed to adhere to its democratic procedures of nominating presidential candidates, as was the case since 1995 (Sulley, 2022).

(g) Ideological Mismatch

Defection has also been linked to ideological mismatch between some individuals and their political parties. An exemplary case is that of the then member of parliament for Singida North constituency, Lazaro Nyarandu, who defected from CCM to CHADEMA on 17th November, 2017. He justified his decision on the grounds that CCM diverged from its tradition of love, human rights and advocating for national unity by usurping the powers of the judiciary and legislature.²³ What was of concern was the timing of his decision to defect. Unlike prior to 2015 when at least there were chances for an individual to secure a constituency seat through the opposition ticket, what transpired at the time he defected clearly suggested a very slim chance of him being re-elected through the opposition ticket.

Opposition parties, particularly CHADEMA, had been complaining of unfairness in the conduct of by-elections in the country since 2016.²⁴ In 2019 CHADEMA declared its boycott of by-elections following the irregularities that were witnessed during the by-elections that were held in Ukonga and Monduli constituencies and in 21 wards, in which the incumbent party emerged victorious. While announcing this boycott, CHADEMA's chairperson, Freeman Mbowe, complained about blatant fouls that made the by-elections not credible.²⁵ Under such circumstances, there was no guarantee that a defector would not suffer the same fate. Thus, the fact that Lazaro Nyarandu decided to defect amidst this fragile political climate expressed his personal ideological incompatibility with the way the ruling party and the government were managing the country's politics. In a way, he seemed to be opposed to the party leadership of the time, and not the party in general. That is why he rejoined CCM after the change of the party leadership. It is worth-noting that when rejoining CCM in 2021 he asked the new president and chairperson of CCM to heal the hearts of those who had been hurt, and lead the nation based on brotherhood, justice, freedom, unity and peace among the citizens: issues that the opposition have been calling for since 2016.

²²The Daily News, Tanzania: Two More Chadema MPs Call it Quits, 23 May 2020.

²³ Nyalandu quits CCM, plans to join Chadema MONDAY OCTOBER 30 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/nyalandu-quits-ccm-plans-to-join-chadema-2610964> (accessed 21 June 2022).

²⁴ Chadema yasusia kushiriki chaguzi ndogo nchini Tanzania. <https://www.rfi.fr/sw/eac/20180919-chadema-yasusia-kushiriki-chaguzi-ndogo-nchini-tanzania> (Accessed 21 June 2022).

²⁵ Mbowe: We're boycotting upcoming by-elections. Wednesday September 19 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/mbowe-we-re-boycotting-upcoming-by-elections-2656254> (accessed 22 June 2022).

Implications of Defection on Political Parties and Party Politics in Tanzania

There are several effects of defection on political parties in Tanzania. On the positive side, defection has relatively contributed to the increase of the share of votes for the opposition, especially in presidential elections. Competition for presidential race on the side of the opposition has witnessed individuals nominated by opposition parties as their presidential candidates, after defecting from CCM, securing many presidential votes as compared to candidates nominated from within the opposition as Table 1 illustrates. Generally, the table shows that only candidates defecting from the ruling party have managed to secure at least 27% of presidential votes. The same contribution has been noted with regard to the share of parliamentary seats. However, the oppositions' share of parliamentary seats and presidential votes has not been enough to significantly shake CCM's dominance.

Table 1: Share of Votes and Parliamentary Seats for Leading Opposition Presidential Candidates from 1995 to 2020

SN	Name of Presidential Candidate	Name of the Party	Origin	Election Year	Percentage of Presidential Votes	No of Parliamentary Seats
1	Augustine Mrema	NCCR-Mageuzi	Defector	1995	27.77	19
2	Ibrahim Lipumba	CUF	Internal	2000	16.26	22
3	Ibrahim Lipumba	CUF	Internal	2005	11.68	31
4	Wilbrod Slaa	CHADEMA	Defector	2010	27.05	48
5	Edward Lowassa	CHADEMA	Defector	2015	39.97	73
6	Tundu Lissu	CHADEMA	Internal	2020	13.04	1

Source: Author, 2022 using TEMCO and National Electoral Commission's Reports.

The limited benefit from defectors to the opposition is partly attributed to various factors, including the mishandling of newcomers. It is important to note that for opposition parties to be able to effectively challenge the incumbent party, they need some external support beyond their routine operations. Defectors, especially from the ruling party, are thus very important because of three factors.

The first factor is that some defectors have served in high positions in the government and the ruling party, and thus have a lot of experience that the opposition is lacking. For instance, the decision by the two former prime ministers—Edward Lowasa and Fredrick Sumaye—to join CHADEMA before the 2015 elections offered a significant boost to the party. The second factor is that of defectors possessing 'inside' information that could help the opposition to plan for effective pursuit of the ruling party. The third factor is their possession of resources that could help opposition parties to effectively execute their strategic goals.

All these factors, notwithstanding, the opposition has sometimes failed to properly handle defectors. The relationship between incoming defectors has often been predominated by an instrumental dimension in which, while their new parties require their popularity and services, in some instances they have been perceived as a threat

to the status quo. Testimonies from defectors who rejoined their former party (CCM) attest to this observation of being sidelined by the ‘new’ party machineries. For instance, during his speech on 10th February 2020 when rejoining CCM, the former Prime Minister Fredrick Sumaye accused CHADEMA of lacking open avenues for members or leaders to air their opinions or give advice to the party. This testimony resonates with the long-time claim of power monopoly within political parties in which top leaders are sometimes accused of frustrating whoever seems to be a contender for top leadership. Even Lazaro Nyalandu, when rejoining CCM, pointed out the difficulties of working within the opposition, as pointed out earlier.

On the negative side, defection has significantly affected the opposition, especially since 2017. It is worth noting that opposition political parties depend much on state subventions to run their parties. According to the law, only parties that have representation in the parliament, and which have secured at least 5% of nationwide cast parliamentary votes, are eligible for state funding. Following a series of defection by opposition members of parliament to CCM and the results of the 2020 elections—in which the presidential candidate from CCM secured 84% of the votes and over 98% of the parliamentary seats—the opposition was made to suffer a financial crisis. With such reliable source of their revenues cut, the ability of the opposition to effectively challenge the incumbent party was decimated. The aftermath of the 2020 elections implies that the opposition will continue to seriously face financial challenges. For instance, after the 2020 general elections, eligible political parties were allocated TZS1.4bn as subsidies. Due to having 354 members of parliament, CCM received TZS1.33bn out of the total subsidies. On the other hand, the country’s main opposition party, CHADEMA, only received TZS108.68m; while ACT-Wazalendo and CUF received very little.²⁶ Defection from the opposition to CCM has at the same time weakened opposition parties as influential cadres who would have championed the political reforms agenda leave their parties.²⁷

Defection has further jeopardized the survival of some opposition parties. This has been especially the case with the NCCR-Mageuzi, which lost the status of being the country’s main opposition party following the defection of its chairperson to TLP. This defection not only reduced NCCR’s share of popular votes, but also significantly affected its share of parliamentary seats to the extent that it currently has no representation in the national assembly. CUF has also suffered from the same experience. Following the defection of its former secretary general to ACT-Wazalendo, it lost its status as the major opposition party in Zanzibar (TEMCO, 2022). The results of the 2020 general elections in Zanzibar, in which ACT-Wazalendo officially became the major opposition party, attest to this observation.

²⁶ Vyama sita vyalamba ruzuku ya Sh1.4 bilioni. Retrieved from <https://www.mwananchi.co.tz/mw/habari/kitaifa/vyama-sita-vyalamba-ruzuku-ya-sh1-4-bilioni-3258020> (Accessed 3 July 2022).

²⁷ Political parties speak out on defections ahead of polls. Retrieved from <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/political-parties-speak-out-on-defections-ahead-of-polls-2703942> (Accessed 3 July 2022); Deogratius Kamagi, Tanzania: Opposition Wave of Defection - Who Will Be the Next? Retrieved from <https://allafrica.com/stories/202002190550.html> (Accessed 25 May 2022).

On the other hand, defection has had some effects also on CCM despite the fact that it remains a dominant party in the country. As earlier shown, defection has to some extent increased the level of interparty competition. CCM has somehow faced stiff competition when its members who defected to the opposition were nominated to run for presidency. It is important to note that a majority of the leaders who formed new political parties in the build-up to the 1995 elections were former CCM members. For instance, disgruntled youth CCM cadres played a pivotal role in the founding of NCCR-Mageuzi in 1992 (Mwase, 2001). Also, Edwin Mtei, the founder of CHADEMA, was a former CCM cadre. The 1995 elections—which were the first multiparty elections following the restoration of multiparty politics in 1992—witnessed opposition candidates (who had defected from CCM) posing a significant threat to their former party. Given its infancy, the 27% NCCR-Mageuzi's share of presidential votes and the number of parliamentary seats that the opposition won were not negligible.

Similarly, the results of the 2015 elections in which the opposition presidential candidate—who had defected from CCM to join CHADEMA—secured almost 40% of the votes was a significant challenge to the incumbent party. Defection has nonetheless failed to raise vulnerability concerns within CCM. This is in sharp contrast to the challenge that other incumbent parties in Africa have encountered. For instance, Kenya's African National Union (KANU) experienced about 25% defection of its incumbent members of parliament between 1991 and 1992 (Morse, 2018). Its defeat in 2002 by the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC) was contributed by a coalition of four parties, including the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which was formed by defectors from the KANU-NDP coalition (Chege, 2007).

Several factors account for CCM's stability. One of these is the backup from retired chairpersons. For instance, following the defection of Mrema from CCM to join NCCR-Mageuzi, which posed a strong challenge to CCM during the 1995 elections, the ruling party benefitted from Nyerere's boost by stepping up to campaign for the CCM candidate (Nyaluke & Connolly, 2013). A related factor is CCM's dominance of the country's political landscape in the multiparty era that has made it a more reliable route for political career aspirants. It is due to CCM's dominance that Tanzania is referred to as a one-dominant party democracy (Chege, 2007). As such, defecting to the opposition is always the last resort when other options are not possible. In addition, CCM continues to enjoy a commanding support from rural areas that guarantees its continued stay in power (O'Gorman, 2012). CCM's stability is likewise attributed to its level of institutionalization.

As Huntington (1968) points out, there are four dimensions of institutionalization: adaptability, complexity, autonomy, and coherence. Adaptability broadly entails a political party's ability to survive the first generation of its leaders, as well as functional adaptation; whereas complexity

entails the number of a party's sub-units. Autonomy is related to the degree of differentiation from actors and methods of behaviour. On the other hand, coherence has to do with the way a party acts as a unified organ, and the existence of mechanisms of resolving internal conflicts that keep a party unified (Basedau & Stroh, 2008; Huntington, 1968). This ultimately enables a party to clearly lay down its electoral and legislative roles (Owens, 2003). CCM possesses all these dimensions. It is on the basis of these attributes that it is among the political parties in Africa with a high level of institutionalization (Basedau & Stroh, 2008). This is in sharp contrast with opposition parties that are less institutionalized and fragile (Hoffman & Robinson, 2009).

It is worth-noting that party institutionalization is often dependent on whether a country's party system is democratic or not. The democratic nature of a party system is characterized by, *inter alia*, the existence of stability in its rules, the nature of interparty competition, as well as the legitimacy of the electoral process (Randall & Svåsand, 2002). To a great extent, most of these features do not characterize Tanzania's party system. The opposition has lamented of the unfriendly nature of the country's legal framework since the 1990s, such as the constitution that empowers the president to appoint the National Electoral Commission. Competition between the incumbent party and the opposition has thus not been on a levelled playfield (Makulilo, 2012). It is worth-noting that for political parties to effectively undertake their functions, they need resources such as a share of the popular vote, and adequacy of the number of dues-paying members (Wellhofer & Hennessey, 1974). It is through these resources that leaders can build their parties and ensure consensus towards the vision and mission of their parties (Owens, 2003). Tanzania's opposition parties have struggled for these resources, thus failing to establish themselves; including formulating well-defined ideologies (Whitehead, 2000).

Defection has, on the other hand, been positive to CCM. As pointed out earlier, Lowassa's defection to CHADEMA was a manifestation of a serious internal conflict within the party. This conflict would have seriously contributed to more divisions and instability within the party. The fact that Lowassa's exit was followed by a massive exodus of his supporters from CCM served as self purging as most of those who would have contributed to that division left the party (Anyimadu, 2016). The extent to which their exit affected CCM, apart from increasing the share of the votes for the opposition, could not easily be established. However, that effect was short-lived as a majority of defectors rejoined their former party; by the time of which they they had lost their influence within CCM. This was affirmed by the former CCM chairperson, the late John Magufuli, who in 2016 equated former cadres Mgana Msindai and Fred Mpendazoe, who had defected to CHADEMA, to cows whose tails had been cut.²⁸

²⁸ 'Ng'ombe waliokatwa mkia' wazua mjadala. Retrieved from <https://www.mwananchi.co.tz/mw/habari/kitaifa/-ng-ombe-waliokatwa-mkia-wazua-mjadala-2816660> (Accessed 30 January 2023).

Conclusion

As is the case with developed and developing democracies, Tanzania's interparty competition has sometimes witnessed some members of political parties defecting to join other parties. To some extent, this signals a positive development towards democratic consolidation as individuals utilize their democratic rights to decide which political side to affiliate with. This paper has identified several factors attributed to defection in Tanzania, including personal ambition, prospective gains, legal framework, support to the exemplary performance of the government: just to mention some. These factors represent a concoction of individual's rational calculation as informed by the rational choice theory; as well as divergence of opinions as explained by the theory of parties. In general, defection seems to have had very little impact on the incumbent party (CCM), thanks to its level of institutionalization that has made it one of the strongest parties in Africa. For the opposition, defection seems to have had both negative and positive effects. On the positive side, defection has contributed to increasing their share of popular votes and parliamentary seats. On the negative side, defection has further contributed to weakening the already fragile opposition parties. This is particularly so as the defection of senior cadres to join the incumbent party has decelerated some of the positive achievements that had been registered by the opposition before 2016. Against these observations, it is worth concluding that party defection in Tanzania has been beyond a mere process of leaving one's former party to join another party. Instead, it has been a crucial factor in explaining the survival of opposition parties, as well as the nature of interparty competition.

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