

ABSTRACT

MULTIPARTY ELECTORAL CONTESTS AND DEMOCRATIZATION IN AFRICA: CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN KENYA AND TANZANIA

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Within the context of the “third wave” of democratization, Kenya has held four successive multiparty elections, in 1992, 1997, 2002, and 2007; while Tanzania has held three, in 1995, 2000, and 2005. Whereas Kenya has witnessed transition of power from one incumbent party to another within this rubric of multiparty electoral contests, in Tanzania, the incumbent CCM has continued its dominance with unassailable majorities in the country’s parliament. What are the consequences and implications of these two contradictory scenarios for democratization in the two East African countries? This paper takes a comparative perspective and proposes to explore and probe these dynamics of the politics of change and continuity in Kenya and Tanzania. The thesis of the paper is that in spite of the significant democratic space that has been created by the process of democratization in the two countries, complete with power transition in Kenya, the institutional essentials of authoritarianism remain intact in both cases. Indeed, Tanzania, the paper argues, remains a single-party state in all but name; while the authoritarian single-party legacy in Kenya is what facilitated the rigging of the 2007 elections, occasioning a communal conflagration that brought the country to the precipice of collapse.