



Explaining Regime Persistence in Kazakhstan and  
Tanzania:  
Dominant Party Strategy and Neo-Patrimonialism

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## Note to the Reader:

This paper is a work in progress and is intended an attempt to work with data collected for my PhD dissertation in Kazakhstan and Tanzania during 2010 and 2011. My dissertation project is a comparative study investigating party dominance and programmatic politics in four states. Aside from the two examined here, I also study two countries with pluralist party systems, Kyrgyzstan and Kenya. Needless to say, I have spent much of my time so far doing fieldwork in these countries. The paper you are about to read is an effort to situate the data within a theoretical framework.

My initial understanding – that the systems I was studying could be explained by theories on neo-patrimonialism have been challenged while working in the field. Firstly because few theories explain how and when party systems become programmatic and secondly as a result of other dominant party systems, namely those in Egypt and Tunisia, breaking down without clientelistic elite networks breaking down. These challenges have brought me to combine theories on neo-patrimonialism with other theories on dominance and democracy in order to find how these interplay in the persistence of party dominance. As of yet, the conclusions in this paper are quite sketchy and the theoretical formwork roughly drawn up. Suggestion you may have on, especially on theory are most welcome.

## Abstract:

The persistence of single-party dominance in states which have introduced multi-party rule is a topic that has attracted substantial academic attention in recent years. In face of the current and ongoing regime breakdowns in North Africa and the Middle East, understanding how and why some parties remain dominant is all the more important. Notwithstanding recent events, many countries, which made a political transition during the 1990s allowing more than one party to stand for elections a single party is able to dominate the political stage almost completely.

In this paper, I investigate and compare two such regimes, Tanzania and Kazakhstan, in order to investigate how dominant parties and elites deal with potential challengers and remain in power. My argument is that there are similar mechanisms, which allow for dominant party persistence in these two cases. They may at first glance seem quite dissimilar in terms of political culture, yet intricate neo-patrimonial networks work in favour of the current regime in both cases. In addition, the programmatic qualities of the party system are examined. In Tanzania and Kazakhstan, the dominant parties do not communicate a clear programmatic message, which makes it difficult for persons and parties opposition to challenge their position.

The study is based on interview data from both countries. Politicians, scholars and others who are knowledgeable were interviewed.

## Introduction

In this age of revolutions and protest in North Africa and the Middle East, it is easy to overlook that there are still a great number of seemingly stable authoritarian dominant party regimes. In the Caucasus, Central Asia and Africa south of the Sahara, party dominance is still the rule rather than the exception and there is little evidence to support that recent events have influenced the state of democracy in these regions<sup>1</sup>.

Although some dominant party regimes still persist throughout the globe, it has become necessary to evaluate theories on dominance in light of what we now know about the end of party dominance. The recent events in North Africa and Middle East demonstrate that some regimes that we thought to be stable dominant party regimes may in fact fall or at least be threatened by internal political strife.

This paper explores puzzles of party dominance in two states where the status quo seems yet unchallenged. In both states, political competition seems possible, at least at first glance. Tanzania and Kazakhstan both introduced formal multi-party rule during the 1990s<sup>2</sup>, yet the dominant party and elites have faced few challengers in the elections held since then. In fact, the dominant party has increased both in terms of percentage of the vote and seats in parliament in both states in every election since the first elections during the 1990s<sup>3</sup>. Tanzania or Kazakhstan has never held elections that have fully fulfilled international standards. However, elections are held in both states and opposition parties exist and are not prevented from taking part in elections. Although they are sometimes not able to campaign freely, there is at least some space for them to act.

The point of departure is that recent research on party dominance has focused on elite oriented explanations for persistence, while ignoring programmatic politics and the lack of political mobilisation among ordinary people. I investigate the theoretical foundations for elite oriented explanations for regime breakdown,

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<sup>1</sup> The exception may be Azerbaijan, where there have been protests inspired by the events in Egypt during March and April 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Kazakhstan's new constitution, which was adopted at independence in 1991 allowed for more than one political party to compete for power in competitive elections. In the case of Tanzania, the first multi-party elections were held in 1995. The constitution was amended in 1993, when the ban on political parties was lifted.

<sup>3</sup> In the case of Kazakhstan, there have been several changes in the electoral system, which has had an effect on electoral outcomes in terms of representation in the lower house of parliament. Previously, it was legally possible to run as an independent candidate for parliamentary elections. The Nur Otan party (Literally Fatherlands Ray of Light), which is currently the only party in parliament was established in ahead of the XXXX elections. Despite the late establishment of the party, I argue that Kazakhstan is a dominant party regime. Nur Otan was formed

while considering other theoretical frameworks. A great number of studies have argued that neo-patrimonialism will explain persistence, but have ignored that political mobilisation may take place on the grounds of programmatic politics. On the other hand, scholars who have argued that regime breakdown or democratisation take place because of mass mobilisation have often ignored patronage. This paper is an attempt to overcome these theoretical gaps and combine theories on neo-patrimonialism, theories on programmatic politics and mobilisation in order to understand why some dominant party regimes still persist.

The data used in this paper is elite interview conducted in Tanzania and Kazakhstan during 2010 and 2011. Most of the persons interviewed are politicians from the two countries. Other people, such as political analysts and scholars were also interviewed in both states. There is an innate problem to using interview data in order to investigate potentially sensitive issues such as party dominance and neo-patrimonial patterns. The persons interviewed are stakeholders; it is not necessarily in their interest to give a true picture of the issues discussed. On the other hand, the interview data reveals dominant ideas about democracy, dominance and the political arena in general. In some cases, elite actors especially within the dominant parties express very similar views. This indicates that there are some governing ideas or that it may not be possible to speak about political issues in other ways.

## Theories on Party Dominance Examined

One of the common characteristics of the uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa is that fairly ordinary people; jobless youths and the disgruntled middle class have taken a leading role in political change rather than the established political and financial elites<sup>4</sup>. Thus, some of the more established elite oriented theories of why dominant party regimes persist are called into question. Scholars such as Jason Brownlee (2002; 2007) and Kenneth Greene (2007; 2010) have investigated regime persistence from the perspective of events and relationships within the political elites. Greene's main argument is that party dominance can persist as long as they have access to state resources. Privatisation is thus essential to the breakdown of dominance (Greene 2010). Jason Brownlee's thesis as to why regimes persist or break down is based on a similar argument. According to Brownlee, neo-patrimonial structures demand both resources, as explored by Greene, and a strong ruling party, which effectively bounds important political and economic elites together (Brownlee

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<sup>4</sup> There is an element of uncertainty here, it is difficult to define who ordinary people are.

2002). Brownlee's and Greene's elite oriented explanations are well established within the field of democracy studies and there are a great number of other scholars working on similar premises; that it is the inner working of political and economic elites and neo-patrimonial patterns that lead to the persistence or breakdown of authoritarian dominant party regimes (see for example Bellin 2000; Lust-Okar 2004; Magaloni 2006). Although some of these theorists do take the interplay between elite and mass, it is obvious there has been a shift from mass oriented explanations for regime breakdown to elite oriented ones.

This shift departs from theories on neo-patrimonialism. These theories have not exclusively dealt with democracy and dominant regimes. Rather, the concept has been used to explain slow economic development, inefficient civil service and high levels of poverty (see for example Kjaer 2004; Emrich-Bakenova 2009). According to Bratton and van de Walle (1997:62ff) there are three concepts inherent to neo-patrimonialism: presidentialism, clientelism and state resources. These are, in Bratton and van de Walle's work institutions. Presidentialism refers to politics and society being centred on one strong individual –“big man rule”. The leader (or leaders if there are several strong local power brokers) has the capacity to circumvent the rule of law and bureaucracy because of an extensive personal network of elites, which takes the place of formal structures (ibid: 63f). Clientelism refers to the rewards structure in the informal network, where loyalty is rewarded through the distribution of personal favours, which may include government jobs and contracts (ibid: 65f). Bratton and van de Walle's definition of clientelism does not focus specifically on the relationship between the electorate and politicians, but rather on the relationship between elites and those who hold political power. A reason may be that their book focuses on neo-patrimonialism as a phenomena and the inherent logic of the concept rather than on the effects on government. Herbert Kitschelt (2000) has developed a theory on how linkages between voters and the elected may or may not be related to clientelism. His theory is as such not focused exclusively based on linkages within the elites, it is also seeks to explain the motivation of voters. Although Kitschelt develops ideas on clientelism in relation to democracy and the masses, he does not elaborate on how systems dominated by clientelistic practices change (see also Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007). In some states, there has been a shift from neo-patrimonial or clientelistic systems to a political arena where parties are to a large extent programmatic<sup>5</sup>. Some of the qualities of neo-patrimonial states are that state resources are used to create legitimacy, and there is seldom a clear watertight divide between personal resources and state resources. A consequence of

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<sup>5</sup> Most western European states have programmatic parties, yet that was not always the case.

neo-patrimonialism is that it hampers development, as the use of resources is often based on other priorities (Bratton and van de Walle 1997: 67f). Neo-patrimonialism and clientelism are strategies; they are used to secure access to resources for the elites and political support in order to stay in power.

What I find is that scholars working with these often concepts lack explanations for why non-elite actors do not demand a fundamental change to the system. As Bratton and van de Walle (1997) explored, these patterns often impede economic and social development. In addition, it serves to uphold the privileges of an elite at the expense of the majority (see for example Brownlee 2002; Greene 2010). Elite oriented explanations for regime persistence fail to explain why the regimes in Tunisia and Egypt broke down as they do not take the potential force of the unorganised and jobless into account. Tunisia and Egypt have previously been described as neo-patrimonial (for more on neo-patrimonial patterns in Tunisia and Egypt please see Willis 2002; Clark 2004; Brownlee 2007; Koehler 2008). The overthrow or ousting of a government does not necessarily signify a shift away from neo-patrimonialism<sup>6</sup>. It could be argued that it is in the interest of neo-patrimonial regimes to dominate the space of ideas or to de-politicise the public space in order to prevent mobilisation.

Earlier, there was a much debate about whether the working class or elite work as an agent for democracy. The discussion on elite or mass oriented explanations takes its point of departure in Barrington Moore's (1967) seminal work on the rise of the bourgeois as a necessary element for democracy. His argument is that a middle class is essential to break the dominance of the landed elites, as it is in their interest to break the dominance of the aristocracy. Other scholars take the agency of the working class and other non-elite groups as proponents for democracy as a given: "Capitalism brings the subordinate class or classes together [...] where members of those classes can associate and organize more easily[...]" (Rueschemeyer, Stephens et al. 1992:271). Or as O'Donnell and Schmitter wrote in 1986 "The popular upsurge performs the crucial role of pushing the transition further than it would otherwise have gone" (1986:56). At a later date, Ruth Berins Collier argued that the democratisation project is not by default a project for the working class *or* elites. Her empirical study shows that sometimes more than one class support and act in favour of the democratic project the end of dominance

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<sup>6</sup> For a more on the persistence of non-programmatic politics in pluralist systems see Olsson, M. (2011). Power Sharing or Elections? Investigating Strategies to Contain Political Violence in Kenya and Kyrgyzstan. PCDRNET biannual conference. Gothenburg.



(1999:193). The main argument is that change can and has occurred either through mass mobilisation, elite negotiation or both.

Political mobilisation may take place on the grounds of real or perceived grievances such as joblessness, hikes in food prices, the lack of adequate health care or the lack of political rights and civil liberties. There seems to be a relationship between economic and social conditions getting worse and people mobilising politically. In India for example neo-liberal policies which have had a detrimental effect on the state of education and healthcare has lead to increased mobilisation of the poor (Sahoo 2010). In addition, theories on political participation emphasise resources such as time, money and civic skills as important components in addition to political interest (Brady, Verba et al. 1995). In democracies, such concerns are often addressed by political parties. In many dominant party states programmatic politics are not an inherent quality of parties. Policy issues, such as education, health care and other social issues are not contested; rather incumbent parties may use strategies to avoid placing such concerns on the agenda.

It could be argues that there are at least two ways of understanding the importance of programmatic politics for democracy. Some scholars argue that it is significant that election campaigns are based on programmatic agendas, which make it possible for voters to distinguish between the political parties on the basis of ideas and policy. In addition, there needs to be a correspondence between the election campaign and the policy of the party should they win the elections. Inherent to these theories is that the electorate though elections give a mandate to politicians to execute a particular set of policies (see for example Emy 1997; Stokes 2001:7f; McDonald, Mendes et al. 2004; Shamir, Shamir et al. 2008)

The responsible party model is a normative model, designed to further the understanding of how programmatic parties are in a particular context. It is assumed that programmatic parties are a desirable good and an ideal model to create political choice for voters. The theory was designed for the American political context, and Schattschneider (1952), who developed the model, argued that the Democratic and Republican parties in the USA failed to reach the criteria set up in the model.

In RPM, a model developed by Schattschneider (1952), parties must have clear policy platforms and offer distinct choices to the voters. Once elected, members of each party must actively work to enact their party's platform. It is imperative that voters are aware of the differences between parties in order to make in informed choices during elections. Dahlberg (2009) argues that a perceptual agreement is necessary, in the sense that voters agree on how the political parties are positioned in terms of policy within the system. As I am not studying voters *per se* it will be difficult to determine whether or not

there is a perceptual agreement on the positions of the political parties in Kazakhstan and Tanzania. According to Dahlberg (2009: 276) a perceptual agreement is reached through the behaviour and characteristics of political parties. In the western states studied by Dahlberg, the actions of political parties were more important than their characteristics in order to reach a perceptual agreement. Evaluating the parties in my cases using the criteria in RPM may prove useful in understanding if they are in fact programmatic and in that case to what extent. It is possible to criticise RPM as being too idealistic as the criteria set up is difficult to achieve for parties even in democratic settings. It may prove even more difficult to apply to authoritarian or semi-authoritarian settings.

Three distinctly different traditions on party dominance and democracy have been discussed here. Firstly, neo-patrimonialism, from which many theories on party dominance derive. Secondly, theories on mass mobilisation, which have previously been much more prominent within the field than they are now. And thirdly, the idea that political parties need to have certain qualities. These are seemingly not linked, however it is not unlikely that dominant systems are both neo-patrimonial, lack mass mobilisation and have parties, which fall short of the criteria in RPM. It is also likely that neo-patrimonial structures influence party development – if it is unlikely that parties and politicians can get elected using programmatic strategies then it is feasible that they will not. Dominant parties may also strategize to keep programmatic issues off the agenda in order to remain in power.

## Tanzania and Kazakhstan: Dominance Investigated

It may seem arbitrary to compare two states as geographically, economically and culturally different as Kazakhstan and Tanzania. There are some obvious similarities between the two states. Firstly, they are both dominant systems, where the opposition stands little or no chance to win power through elections. Secondly, they are both states that have been at the periphery of imperial projects. In the case of Tanzania, the British never had a large colonial administration there. It was never viewed as the heartland of the colonies. Similarly, Kazakhstan was never at the heart of the Soviet Union. Although there are great differences in the experiences of Soviet communism and British colonialism, there are also some marked similarities; the most obvious being the subjection of one's culture, language and social structures to outside dominant forces. This year, Kazakhstan celebrates 20 years as a sovereign state as Tanzania celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> year of independence. Other similarities include the moving of the capital as a means of nation building. Tanzania moved its capital from Dar-es-Salaam to Dodoma in 1973, although the National Assembly

was not moved until 1996 and many government offices remain in Dar-es-Salaam. Dodoma is situated in the centre of Tanzania, and enjoys a very dry climate with frequent sand storms and very little rainfall. In a similar manner, Kazakhstan moved its capital from Almaty in the south of the country to Astana in the north. Kazakhstan has the second coldest capital city in the world. There are also common feature in terms of nation building strategies. At independence, Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania, took the decision to promote Kiswahili as the national language, rather than English. In a similar fashion, Kazakhstan has recently made a move to promote Kazakh rather than Russian; Kazakh is compulsory in schools and all official documents are now available in both languages. In addition, Kazakhstan has changed its electoral law. All presidential candidates are obliged to take a Kazakh language test. Persons who do not pass the test are barred from taking part<sup>7</sup>.

Several scholars have attempted definitions for dominant party regimes. There are two core issues at hand, where operationalisations differ. The first one is *time*, how long a single party or coalition must stay in power. Most scholars would argue that a single landslide victory for a party is not enough to constitute a dominant party regime. Time can be conceptualised either as years or as number of elections. How long a party needs to dominate varies from 20 years (Greene 2007) to indefinite time Maurice Duverger who argues that a party is dominant “*when its doctrines, ideas, methods, its style so to speak, coincides with those of an epoch*” (1959: 308f). Mattias Boogaard (2008: 115) on the other hand argues that a party is dominant when it has won three consecutive elections. The second issue is that of the *degree of dominance* – to what extent can the party dominate the legislative? Cox (1997) and Greene (2007) argue that winning the majority is sufficient, while Hadenius and Teorell (2007) use 75% of the votes is necessary.

Regardless of the definition used, it is clear that Tanzania’s CCM is a dominant party. It holds 259 of the 350 seats in the Tanzanian parliament and has been in power since independence<sup>8</sup>. Although there are other political parties in parliament, CCM can dominate the agenda. The only truly competitive region is the islands of Zanzibar where the Civic United Front has had considerable electoral success. In the latest presidential elections held in October 2010 the CCM candidate Jakaya Kikwete won 62.83 % of the vote. The CCM party has increased its electoral dominance in almost every election since the introduction of multi-party rule in 1995. The only exception to that rule is the most recent ones. In the 2005 presidential elections Kikwete won by a landslide – he was elected by a full 80.3 % of the vote. From 2005 to 2010 CCM held 275 of the seats in

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<sup>7</sup> This section needs additional references

<sup>8</sup> TANU merged with Zanzibars Afro-Shiraz Party in 1974??? To form CCM.

parliament<sup>9</sup>. Although the degree of dominance has decreased, there is still no doubt that CCM is a dominant party. The European Union, who sent an international mission to observe the elections in Tanzania, concluded that only minor incidents had taken place:

Overall, polling stations procedures were applied evenly across the country and voting was conducted in a calm manner with only a few incidents of minor nature in over 549 observed polling stations. Unfortunately, the secrecy of the vote was compromised in 12 percent of observed polling stations and EU observers reported that in 20 percent of cases the layout of the polling station did not guarantee the secrecy of the vote (EU 2010).

Unlike many other dominant party states in Africa and elsewhere, Tanzania has had several presidents since independence. Julius Nyerere stepped down voluntarily in favour of Ali Hassan Mwinyi who led the country when negotiations to introduce multi-party rule commenced. Since then, no president has served longer than the two terms in office stipulated in the constitution. This does not indicate that the power of the executive in Tanzania is weak; although the parliament and government of Tanzania are important, the prime minister is subordinate to the president (<http://www.tanzania.go.tz/administration.html>).

The situation in Kazakhstan is not as unambiguous; The Nur Otan party, which holds all seats in parliament, was not formally founded until December 2006, which would exclude Kazakhstan as a dominant party state if time is taken into account. On the other hand, Nur Otan was formed through the merger of the former presidential party Otan and several other pro-Presidential parties in 1999 and it is obvious that no turnover in power has taken place since independence. President Nursultan Nazarbayev has remained firmly in power since before independence. There is no doubt that elections in Kazakhstan are often flawed and marred by irregularities. Presidential elections were held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2011 and the international OSCE/ODIHR observer mission was highly critical in their statement after the elections:

International observers noted serious irregularities, including numerous instances of seemingly identical signatures on voter lists and cases of ballot box stuffing. The vote count and tabulation of results lacked transparency, and procedures were often not followed. International observers were sometimes restricted in their

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<sup>9</sup> Election results for Tanzania are available through the African Elections Database: <http://africanelections.tripod.com/index.html>

observation. The CEC [Central Election Commission] did not publish detailed election results on election night (OSCE/ODIHR 2011).

The incumbent president Nazarbayev won a total victory; 95.5% voted for him with a 90% turnout rate. There is thus no question that Kazakhstan is a dominant system, it can however be questioned whether or not Nur Otan is a dominant party. As there has been no turnover in power and the executive power is very strong, and the persons supporting the president are essentially the same individuals as directly after independence I consider Kazakhstan a dominant party state. Nur Otan is a party, which was created in a manner of speaking to support president Nazarbayev, who has been the dominating force in Kazakhstani politics since independence.

In Kazakhstan, it is difficult to imagine that there would be any open conflict between the executive and the legislative. Many of the persons interviewed, including the some deputies in parliament stated that the role of both the party and parliament is first and foremost to support the current president (Aigul Soloyeva 2011, Nurlan Uteshev 2011, Yerlan Karin 2011, Meruert Makmutova 2010). Swearing allegiance to Nazarbayev is essential for everyone who holds any kind of power in Kazakhstan. One of the delegates at the congress of the Nur Otan party in February of 2011 said in a speech: *“All countries need a national idea. Our current national idea is you president Nazarbayev (Vladimir Kim 2011).”* His statement is not unlike many others made in speeches at the same congress (Mariam Belgebayeva 2011, Vladimir Nehoroshev 2011, Yekaterina Ponomarenko 2011). These statements suggest that the party Nur Otan may not be as important as the CCM party is in Tanzania. The party has an unclear policy position and it is possible for the president to act completely independently of the party programme.

Both Kazakhstan and Tanzania are dominant party systems, which to varying degrees use fraud and coercion to stay in power. Although the last presidential elections in Kazakhstan were flawed, there is little doubt that Nazarbayev would have won the election for lack of options had they been free and fair given that there were no viable alternative candidates. Coercion alone cannot explain why Kazakhstan and Tanzania have remained dominant party states.

## Neo-Patrimonial Features

As mentioned, one explanation for the persistence of party dominance, which has been explored by several scholars in neo-patrimonialism (Way 2005; van de Walle 2007; Isaacs 2010). I investigate how these patterns in both states contribute to upholding the status quo and what strategies are put in place in order to exclude the opposition from

positions of power. Traditionally, theories on neo-patrimonialism are not used to discuss the development of programmatic parties. There are two implicit questions at hand here: firstly, I seek to investigate whether or not Kazakhstan and Tanzania are neo-patrimonial systems. Secondly, to what extent this affects the development of programmatic parties.

The two states studied share neo-patrimonial features. In Tanzania jobs within the civil service, government contracts and other types of favours are often distributed according to neo-patrimonial linkages. Employment in the civil service is often not based on merit, but on family or other ties (interviews with John Mrema, Samuel Lazaro Nyalando, Amon Cheliga, Ismail Jussa and Abdul Sheriff). Willibrod Slaa, party leader of the Chadema party insists that corruption is widespread:

The majority of those who become MPs they do so to protect their interests because you have immunity when you are an MP. You have access to all levels of decision makers. You can import things without paying the taxes and things like that. I think most people here are in that category (Willibrod Slaa 2010).

Corruption involving government contracts has also been common in Tanzania. The most publicised case being a contract involving BAE systems<sup>10</sup> and the sale of military radar equipment. The company was found guilty of bribing a Tanzanian advisor to win the contract <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-12049723>. In recent years, there have been several other highly publicised cases of corruption involving public tenders. When asked about the connections between political and other elites in Tanzania, almost all of the interviewees replied that they are often the same people and that it is difficult, if not impossible to do business in Tanzania without the right connections. One MP for the dominant party CCM put it like this:

They [business people] don't want to get in [to parliament] because of the salary. No, that is not enough for them. They are trying to influence things. They are looking for a space where people can hear them so that they can influence everything. Where they can make sure to influence legislation and get a chance to win very big contracts so that they can make very big deals. It is not good. Also, when they are sent by the government overseas on our expense, they make sure that they meet

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<sup>10</sup> BAE systems is a British company, which sells advanced military and security equipment.

with the right people so that they, personally, can get contracts and make sure to get deals (Michael L. Lekule).

In a similar fashion, Kazakhstan's civil service is based on person ties (Emrich-Bakenova 2009). Some scholars argue that these ties are often based on clan (Schatz 2004). Others argue that that clan ties are only one of many possible patronage ties (Isaacs 2010). With regard to public tenders and access to Kazakhstan's immense oil wealth, political connections are as necessary in Kazakhstan as they are in Tanzania. Interestingly, as Kazakhstan does business with other states, which also have neo-patrimonial features and this has an influence:

All of the Chinese business people who come here for the oil are relatives of officials in the communist party of China. That way, the Nur Otan thinks they are important and will allow them into the circle and they can do business. It is the same with the Russian main guy his wife is one of the most successful in the oil business. If you deal with oil, you need connections in politics, and they have them in both countries (Rassul Rysmambetov 2010).

Thus, it is sometimes necessary for people who want to do business in Kazakhstan to have political connection in more than one state. Many of the relatives of Nursultan Nazarbayev are immensely wealthy. The president's son in law, Timur Kulibayev, is on the Forbes 500 list of the world's wealthiest people ([http://www.forbes.com/lists/2007/10/07billionaires\\_Timur-Kulibaev\\_9QF5.html](http://www.forbes.com/lists/2007/10/07billionaires_Timur-Kulibaev_9QF5.html)). Other Kazakhs on the Forbes list include Vladimir Kim, the head and largest shareholder in the government owned mining company Kazakhmys, Dinara Kulibayeva, the president's daughter, Alidzhan Ibragimov, of the Euroasian National Resources Corporation and the chairman of the Kazkommertsbank, Kazakhstan's largest bank Nurzhan Subkhanberdin (<http://silkroadintelligencer.com/2011/03/11/five-kazakhs-on-forbes-billionaires-list-2/>). In 2006, Mr. Subkhanberdin was accused by an advisor to Nazarbayev of being a Kazakhstani Mikhail Khodorkovsky<sup>11</sup>, implying that he funded political parties other than Nur Otan and used his connections to gain advantages. The presidential administration made statements to the effect that the rule of the oligarchs was detrimental to development in Kazakhstan (<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/eav111804.shtml>). This indicates that there is some internal conflict within the elites. One of the interviewees with connections within the elite said that the events, which took place in 2006 were a signal to the wealthy

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<sup>11</sup> Mikhail Khodorkovsky is the founder of Russian energy company Yukos, who was imprisoned by Russian authorities in 2003 on charges of tax fraud and evasion. He was the wealthiest man in Russia and number 16 on the Forbes list. Khodorkovsky funded political parties, which were not supportive of Vladimir Putin.

elites in Kazakhstan to get in line and support the president, making it impossible for them to act independently of political power (anonymous 2010).

Both Kazakhstan and Tanzania show signs of neo-patrimonialism. Kazakhstan fits Bratton and van de Walles (1997) model perfectly. It is a highly presidential system, where power is concentrated in the hands of the president and a few other people. There are clear dynamics of patronage; government jobs are often distributed according to patterns of loyalty rather than on merit and there are clientelistic features as well. Tanzanian politics is not as centred around one dominant individual. Rather, a larger group of people benefit from the patronage structure. That being said, there are several strong men who have power and there are clientelistic elements as well.

## Dominating the Space of Ideas

As mentioned, there is only one party, which holds seats in the parliament in Kazakhstan. Recently, there has been some criticism against this state of affairs from within the Nur Otan party. The election law has been changed so that the party, which comes in second in the parliamentary elections automatically, wins one seat in the Majillis. Nazarbayev's advisors, Mr. Yertysbayev, then discredited the exiting opposition and stated that the Atameken, which is an organisation for entrepreneurs spearheaded by the presidents' son-in-law Timur Kulibayev, should form a political party and take part in the elections in 2012. He then went on to argue that the other existing political parties should join either Nur Otan or the newly formed Atameken party (И н т е р ф а к с - К а з а х с т а н 2011). Yertysbayev told the Daily Telegraph:

We need to create a real institutional system, where Nur Otan would look like a Conservative party, and Ata Meken would look like a Liberal party. In my imagination, Nur Otan might be for increasing pensions and social payments, and Ata-Meken could support lower taxes.(Orange 2011)

It is interesting that Yertysbayev says that the parties should “look like” parties with ideology. The statements made by Mr. Yertysbayev are symptomatic of the state of affairs within the party system in Kazakhstan. Most of the political parties aside from Nur Otan are supportive of the president and to some degree even of Nur Otan. The party leaders of Aul Village Social Democrats, Ak Zhol, Rukhniyat Green Party, Party of Patriots of Kazakhstan and the Kazakhstan Communist Peoples Party all stated that they were supportive of



Nazarbayev and the policies implemented by the government since independence (interviews with Gani Kaliev 2011, Alikhan Baimenov 2011, Serikzhan Mambetalin 2010, Gani Kassimov 2011 and Vladislav Kossarev 2011). The leader of the Rukhniyat Green Party Serikzhan Mambetalin said that:

There are some people who would like to shake the society and do some revolutionary things, but I ... we have a completely different approach. [...] We will try to position ourselves as a centrist party and we will be working with both the pro-government and opposition parties as long as it's in compliance with our programme (Mambetalin 2010).

Mr. Mambetalin's pragmatic approach to politics is very much in line with several of the parties in Kazakhstan – parties like Auyl and Ak Zhol are pro-presidential, yet they have suggestions on particular issues. They do not challenge Nur Otan's hold on power. The view that most political parties in Kazakhstan are not opposed to the president is reinforced by the actions taken by a number of them in January 2011, when it was announced that Kazakhstan was to hold a referendum in so that the president could stay in power until 2020 without holding elections. All of the parties mentioned above joined the congress of political parties in support of this initiative.

For reasons that are difficult to speculate on, the referendum was called off and snap presidential elections were called. With only two months to go before the elections, most of the serious opposition opted to not take part in the elections at all. Four candidates ran in the elections: Nursultan Nazarbayev of Nur Otan, Gani Kassimov of PPK, Zhambyl Akhmetbekov of the Peoples Communist Party of Kazakhstan and Mels Yeleusizov, an independent candidate representing an environmental movement. Although two of the non-incumbent candidates for the presidency represented political parties, none of them expressed a desire to win the elections. Only Gani Kassimov is the party leader of a party and he said that he supported the current government and president fully (Gani Kassimov 2011). Zhambyl Akhmetbekov is not the party leader of his party. The leader of the Peoples Communist Party of Kazakhstan, Vladislav Kosarev said that he was unable to run in the elections as he does not speak and read the Kazakh language (Kosarev 2011).

There are parties in Kazakhstan, which did not join the congress in support of the referendum. These include OSDP/AZAT, The Communist Party of Kazakhstan<sup>12</sup> and ALGA. There seems to be

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<sup>12</sup> There are two Communist Parties in Kazakhstan. Vladislav Kossarev is the Chairman of one, which is generally more positive to the government and president, while Serikbolsyn Adbilin heads the other, which is more oppositional.

a consensus among party officials about which political parties can be categorised as opposition parties (Interviews with Bulat Abilov 2011, Vladimir Koslov 2010, Petr Sviok 2011, Ludmila Zhulanova 2011). Two of these parties are not officially registered. OSDP/AZAT was created through the merger of the Social democratic party led by Tuyakbayev and the AZAT party led by Bulat Abilov. Only OSDP was officially registered as a political party (Interview with Bulat Abilov 2011). Although the merger took place in 2007, the new political party has been unable to reregister as one party. This makes it impossible for the party to run as one unit in the upcoming parliamentary elections, which significantly reduces their chances of reaching the 7% threshold to enter the Majillis. Similarly, the Alga party has attempted to register as a political party for many years. Vladimir Koslov, the party leader of Alga, said that the party has reached the requirements for the party to register according to the electoral law of Kazakhstan, but has not been possible for them to register, as they are one of the few parties, which is actually opposed to the current president. The only party, which is actually in opposition and fully registered as a political party is Abdildins communists.

There is a political will among some of the opposition leaders to create a party system where parties debate programmatic agendas:

We did try to promote that idea to have a debate with Nur Otan party members, but the thing is that usually Nur Otan party members fear to have an open dialogue and discussion with an opposition. That is why Nazarbayev did not participate in any debates. I know in Europe you have debates between the parties when it comes to parliament elections or presidential elections, but that case has never happened in Kazakhstan (Serikbolsyn Adbilin 2010).

There is very little room for debate within the political space in Kazakhstan and it is also quite telling that it is difficult to differentiate between the political parties based on policy or ideas. This is true for the Nur Otan party as well as other parties. None of the party officials I spoke to in Kazakhstan said that policy or ideas was the primary reason for voters supporting their party. The party secretary of the Nur Otan said:

There is not one special idea for the political party; there is no idea that makes them vote for us. There are a variety of factors that make people vote. Of course, there will not always be just one political party in parliament, because of

our law there will soon be more than one political party, maybe soon we will have three or four. After these presidential elections there will be new plans and new political reforms because the president proposes a political modernisation (Yerlan Karin 2011).

In Tanzania, the dominant party has existed for much longer than in Kazakhstan. The position of the CCM party has previously been one of the strongest in Africa. It has been based on Ujamaa, a particular kind of African Socialism. To what extent the past of the party matters today is highly contested. It is also important to remember that CCM was not founded in an environment that facilitated competition. Julius Nyerere disputed whether or not political parties in the African should be compared to parties in more programmatic environments:

Our own parties had a very different origin. They were not formed to challenge any ruling group of our own people; they were formed to challenge the foreigners who ruled over us. They were not, therefore, political 'parties' i.e., factions but nationalist movements. And from the outset they represented the interests and aspirations of the whole nation (Nyerere 1963 quoted in (Binns 1994:124)).

One of CCMs MPs, Lazaro Nyalando spoke about a new profile for the party:

Nowadays Ujamaa is not important. We have moved past that and everybody understands that we have to be more business oriented. So now maybe we have more liberal values. But we do not talk about it like that anyway, the people vote for the individual nowadays (Samuel Lazaro Nyalando 2010).

CCM and opposition politicians alike agree that a shift has taken place and that Ujamaa is no longer as important. In terms of policy, the politicians correctly observe that privatisations have taken place, but that is rarely connected to a particular set of ideas.

Now we are following a capitalist system, but we have not been told that we are following a capitalist system. With the abandoning of Ujamaa there was not an internal pressure, it came from abroad like the IMF, the World Bank and donor pressure. [...] They brought the idea of free market; CCM never believed in it, they are getting a problem because they are implementing policies which

they don't believe in. They are doing it because it has been imposed (Ismael Jussa 2010).

One CCM MP was very unclear about the meaning of Ujamaa in the past and the path that the party has taken today.

You know CCM is the ruling party and before it was the only party. Many of us have been built like that. [...] I just decided to join because they are there in the constituencies. [...] CCM is facing a challenge, it has combined people from different areas and the management of the party is difficult. It is the biggest challenge. The Ujamaa, we have been moving, the ideology was not working. Many used the situation, so we privatised instead, but that is not really an ideology (Stella Martin Manyanga 2010).

The Chadema leader Willibrod Slaa framed the issue of corruption as unconnected to ideology, ideas or party:

Corruption has come in as the biggest enemy of the population. People will be looking at those issues rather than how ideologically you want to position yourself (Willibrod Slaa 2010).

None of the party officials of any of the parties in parliament in Tanzania believed that the programmatic elements of their parties were the main reason for their voters to elect them. Also, the statements made about the ideas of the parties were sometimes incoherent. One top party official of the CUF party stated that the party is a conservative party while another said it is a liberal party. Several other parties displayed similar characteristics, which leads me to believe that it is not important in Tanzanian politics and seldom discussed among the party cadre.

In Kazakhstan and Tanzania alike the representatives of the incumbent party as well as other political parties were generally unclear about their party's position with regard to specific policy issues. In Tanzania, CCM officials often stated "development" as a goal they wished to attain as a part (Zubeir Ali Maulid, Ali Mzee, Zainab Gama, Job Ndugai), while in Kazakhstan Nur Otan politicians spoke of "stability" in a similar manner (Yerlan Karin, Aigul Soloyeva, Nurlan Uteshev). Very little was said of how these goals were to be obtained or which strategies were used to reach them. Stability and development are concepts which are difficult to argue against. The political discussion was framed in a way that does not promote open

debate as the premises for discussion were very vague. Having an unclear programmatic position (as is the case with both Nur Otan and CCM) and declaring positions that are impossible or at least difficult to counter are dominant party strategies, which have thus far been successful in Tanzania and Kazakhstan.

The party systems in both states fall short of the criteria set up in the Responsible Party Model (Schattschneider 1952; Dahlberg 2009). Because of the unclear positions of the parties, it is also difficult to understand mandates in the two contexts. It is well understood by the electorate in both states that voting for a particular candidate or party does not entail a programmatic mandate. Often, only very vague political messages are communicated. When politicians and parties are elected without a clear message, there is no mandate – the voters do not expect a certain set of policies during the term in office. Because of this, it is difficult to hold individuals or parties accountable.

## Conclusions

Understanding to what extent political parties in general, not only opposition parties are programmatic matters. There is an issue as to whether or not incumbent parties base their support on programmatic or other advantages may be useful, as it is not obvious that dominance is achieved through neo-patrimonialism, rigging or other means alone. Programmatic parties matter too. The link between the neo-patrimonial and the lack of programmatic politics is clear. When voters base their political choices on other sentiments than political issues, there is no incentive for programmatic politics. In addition, neo-patrimonial systems are by definition controlled by closely knit elites who have little interest in placing programmes rather than patronage on the agenda. It is plausible that political elites within the incumbent parties strategies to control the space by not leaving room for debate. When there are few real issues on the table, there is little room for gambits by the opposition. It is possible that elite linkages remain intact, while control of the agenda is lost. There is also potential for elite linkages breaking down, while political elites still governing the space of idea. In each of these cases, there is potential for the breakdown of party dominance. In the first scenario, mobilisation by opposition forces may take place and in the second, new political elites may form and win elections.

In Kazakhstan and Tanzania, neo-patrimonial dynamics are important in politics. Civil service is not merit based and corruption is largely unchecked. Business people in both states need political connections in order to stay in order to stay afloat. Office holders use their office to gain access to public tenders, shares in government run companies and for other purposes. Despite the existence of other political parties besides the incumbent, the programmatic elements of parties remain vague at best and sometimes incoherent and confusing. In Kazakhstan, there are reasons to believe that some parties are

closely linked to the Nur Otan have been created by the regime to create the illusion of opposition.

With this in mind, further development of theories on neo-patrimonialism is called for in order to understand the linkages between patronage and programmes better.

## List of interviewees

Still to come...

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