

**The Role of electoral Competition in ethnic Conflict: A comparative Analysis of Kenya
and Tanzania**

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ABSTRACT

Electoral systems influence politics in multiethnic societies and often incite multiethnic conflict. This study explores the reasons underlying variations in the effect of different electoral systems on political stability and ethnic conflict in Tanzania and Kenya. More specifically, at the most general analytical level my study found that in Kenya, the ‘First-Past-The-Post’ (FPTP) electoral system worsens ethnic tensions because political success depends on ethnic mobilization, which marginalizes smaller ethnic groups. In contrast, Tanzania's electoral system combines proportional representation and FPTP to generate more inclusivity and to eliminate ethnic tensions accruing from cross-ethnic representation. Furthermore, to explain changes in patterns of electoral competition, the study examines how political, historical and social contexts influence the electoral system's effectiveness in Tanzania and Kenya and helps manage ethnic conflict. Kenya has a colonial legacy that caused economic disparities and ethnic divisions, while Tanzania established cohesive nation-building policies that promoted unity and national identity. Key findings highlight the significance of inclusive electoral designs to prevent ethnic tensions and proposes recommendations. These include institutional arrangements such as power sharing, proportional representation and nation-building initiatives that promote stable multiethnic democracies. The study adds to the wider scholarly literature on electoral systems and ethnic conflicts by offering insights into how variations in electoral designs shape ethnic dynamics allowing inclusivity and political stability in some multiethnic societies while engendering exclusion and conflict in another.

Les systèmes électoraux influencent la politique dans les sociétés multiethniques et provoquent souvent des conflits multiethniques. La présente étude cherche à comprendre pourquoi les

systèmes électoraux de la Tanzanie et du Kenya ont des effets différents sur la stabilité politique et les conflits ethniques au sein de ces deux pays. Plus précisément, au plus haut niveau d'abstraction, mon étude révèle qu'au Kenya, le scrutin majoritaire uninominal (First-Past-The-Post, ou FPTP) exacerbe les tensions ethniques, puisqu'une victoire électorale dépend de la mobilisation ethnique, ce qui marginalise les groupes minoritaires ethniques. En revanche, le système électoral de la Tanzanie combine le FPTP et la représentation proportionnelle ce qui favorise l'inclusivité et de réduites tensions ethniques générées par la représentation interethnique. De plus, afin d'expliquer les changements dans les tendances de compétition électorale, l'étude examine comment les contextes politiques, historiques et sociaux influencent l'efficacité du système électoral et la gestion des conflits ethniques en Tanzanie et au Kenya. Les conclusions de l'étude mettent en lumière le rôle important des modèles électoraux inclusifs dans la prévention des tensions ethniques. Des recommandations sont également émises, y compris des dispositions institutionnelles telles que le partage du pouvoir, la représentation proportionnelle et les initiatives de construction nationale qui favorisent une démocratie multiethnique stable. Cette étude contribue à la vaste littérature scientifique sur les systèmes électoraux et les conflits ethniques en proposant une perspective sur la façon dont les différents modèles électoraux façonnent les dynamiques ethniques en favorisant dans certaines sociétés multiethniques l'inclusivité et la stabilité politique, et dans d'autres l'exclusion et le conflit.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCM:	Chama Cha Mapinduzi
CUF:	Civic United Front
FPTP:	First-Past-The-Post
ICC:	International Criminal Court
IEBC:	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
KANU:	Kenya African National Union
NARC:	National Rainbow Coalition
NEC:	National Electoral Commission
ODM:	Orange Democratic Movement
TANU:	Tanganyika African National Union
ZEC:	Zanzibar Electoral Commission

INTRODUCTION

Multiethnic societies are significantly influenced by electoral systems, as they play a pivotal role in shaping the political dynamics within them (Lijphart, 2012). Ethnic tensions can be heightened by electoral systems, as they foster a competitive environment for power where the success of one group is viewed as detrimental to another, creating a zero-sum scenario (Chandra, 2020). This can lead to ethnic mobilization along political lines, potentially fueling violence and instability (Hechter & Levi, 1979). However, electoral systems also hold the potential to mitigate conflict. Proportional representation systems, can encourage broader coalitions between ethnic groups by ensuring that a wider range of voices are represented in government (Mesquita, Smith, Siverson & Morrow, 2020). This can foster a sense of power-sharing and inclusivity, potentially reducing intergroup hostility. Understanding how ethnic cleavages interact with electoral systems is crucial for promoting peaceful and stable democracies in multiethnic societies.

The study focuses on examining the strengths and weaknesses of different electoral designs and offers recommendations on potential best practices in electoral design for promoting peaceful multiethnic cooperation in the two East African nations: Kenya and Tanzania. Despite sharing similar levels of ethnic diversity, these countries have distinct electoral systems and political landscapes, offering a valuable comparative lens for understanding the role of electoral systems in shaping multi ethnic conflicts influenced by voting behavior.

Studying Kenya and Tanzania on electoral systems and multiethnic conflict offers a compelling avenue due to their shared similarities and intriguing differences. Both countries possess diverse ethnic populations, providing a nuanced context for exploring ethnic politics. While they share similar historical trajectories in state building and institutional development, they differ in electoral systems. With Kenya's electoral system that involves selecting the candidate

with the most votes in each constituency, while Tanzania's electoral system allocates seats in proportion to the votes each party receives nationwide. These differences extend to their political landscapes, raising questions about party-ethnic alignments and voting patterns.

Notably, Kenya has seen more incidences of multiethnic conflicts that are influenced by electoral systems, prompting investigations into the underlying causes noting that Kenya's heightened incidence of multiethnic conflicts, influenced by electoral systems, spur inquiries into the root causes. Electoral systems, by structuring political competition along ethnic lines and fostering winner-takes-all dynamics, contribute significantly to exacerbating existing tensions and triggering conflicts. By examining these variations, researchers can delve into how electoral systems interact with ethnic diversity to shape conflict dynamics. This comparative approach will shed light on how different electoral systems influence multiethnic conflicts. Moreover, focusing on these East African nations allows for a geographically focused analysis, potentially uncovering regional trends, while the accessibility of data and the proximity of the countries facilitate rigorous comparison.

Kenya and Tanzania make for an interesting comparative analysis in important ways. Indeed, the intricate relationship between electoral systems and multiethnic conflict in Kenya and Tanzania reflects the complex interplay between electoral system and ethnic conflict. Both countries are characterized by diverse ethnic populations and despite this diversity, the interplay diverge significantly (Bula 2023). In Kenya, political parties and candidates often appeal to ethnic sentiments to mobilize support, leading to a polarized political environment where ethnicity influences electoral outcomes and exacerbates tensions, particularly during elections (Rovny, 2023). In Kenya, the "Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission" (IEBC) is the official electoral body whose function is to ensure fairness and electoral integrity and challenge ethnic

divisions in intense political competition (Bratton & Kimenyi, 2008). In Tanzania, the "National Electoral Commission" (NEC), along with the "Zanzibar Electoral Commission" (ZEC) of Zanzibar helps manage the electoral processes and ensures national unity (Murithi, 2022).

In contrast, Tanzania pursues a proportional representation approach in electoral system that goes beyond ethnic affiliations. Policies such as the promotion of Kiswahili as a national language and the implementation of affirmative action programs aimed at equitable representation of different ethnic groups (Marshall 2022), have contributed to fostering a sense of national unity. However, despite these efforts, ethnic tensions persist beneath the surface, occasionally manifesting in localized conflicts and political disputes. Recent trends suggest emerging challenges to Tanzania's narrative of unity, as economic disparities and political grievances based on ethnic lines threaten to undermine the country's stability. Understanding electoral systems and ethnic conflict in Kenya and Tanzania is crucial for navigating the complexities of governance and fostering inclusive political systems that transcend narrow ethnic divides in the region.

Kenya and Tanzania witnessed different degrees of conflict in the context of electoral competition. These draws different views on how electoral systems affect the frequency and intensity of conflict in multi-ethnic societies. Serious post-election violence occurred in Kenya, particularly in the 2007–2008 electoral cycle. After the disputed presidential election, ethnic violence resulted with thousands of people fleeing their homes and over 1,100 people dying (Branch and Cheeseman 09). Kenya's majoritarian electoral system is a zero-sum electoral system, meaning ethnic rivalries are often exacerbated by competition for power. This incident highlights that fact. Similar tensions emerged in 2017, when allegations of election manipulation sparked protests and occasional violence (Cheeseman, 2018), further highlighting the precarious nature of the election campaign.

In comparison, the electoral environment in Tanzania has typically remained calm. However, there have been isolated incidents of unrest, such as the violent clashes and allegations of electoral fraud during the Zanzibar elections in 2000, where the country was generally spared from widespread post-election violence (Minde, 2001). Ethnic competition in elections has been reduced in Tanzania due to its proportional representation system and initiatives to promote national cohesion, such as the use of Kiswahili as a unifying language (Marshall, 2022). But growing political discontent and economic inequalities are undermining Tanzania's stability, as the 2020 elections demonstrated, when opposition parties accused the government of using authoritarian measures (Paget, 2020). The different levels of conflict between these two countries are the subject of this which compares peaceful aftermath of elections in Tanzania with the more frequent and serious incidents in Kenya. This raises significant concerns about the potential of electoral systems to either exacerbate or reduce ethnic tensions.

I. Justification of the Comparison

Kenya and Tanzania were both ruled by the British in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which lay the foundation for similar colonial legacies. But after independence, the ways in which states were founded differed significantly. When Kenya gained independence in 1963, the colonial policy of indirect rule, which focused on ethnic divisions, particularly between the Kikuyu and other major ethnic groups, left the country with an even more divided and polarized society (Anderson, 2005). In addition, the colonial government created a group of elite landowners, mainly Kikuyu, who played a prominent role in politics after independence. Due to the economic divide between ethnic groups, Kenyan politics has become increasingly ethnicized, with elections often becoming battles between rival ethnic elites (Lynch, 2011).

In contrast, Tanzania gained independence in 1961 under the leadership of Julius Nyerere, who advocated a more centralized strategy for nation-building. Nyerere's initiatives, such as the promotion of Kiswahili and *Ujamaa* (African socialism), aimed to unite the country's more than 120 ethnic groups under a single national identity (Hyden, 1980). Despite economic difficulties, Tanzania managed to escape the ethnic political divisions that characterized Kenyan politics. Because of the long-lasting impact of this national unity, ethnicity now plays a much smaller role in electoral campaigns in Tanzania (Tripp, 1999). In both countries, the colonial legacy influenced state-building processes, but the contrasts in their political developments after independence provide a rich basis for comparative analysis. While Kenya struggled with ethnic fragmentation and economic inequality, Tanzania focused on creating a unified national identity, which had a significant impact on the structure of electoral competition and ethnic relations.

The fundamental difference between the electoral systems of Tanzania and Kenya is how political power is distributed. Kenya has 'First-Past-The-Post' (FPTP) electoral system, where the candidate who receives the most votes in each constituency wins. This system often results in the marginalization of other ethnic groups and the overrepresentation of some ethnic groups in government (Barkan, 1992). Because political parties are often aligned along ethnic lines, this winner-take-all strategy has fueled ethnic competition and created a highly polarized electoral environment (Kimenyi, 2008).

In comparison, Tanzania uses a hybrid electoral system that incorporates aspects of proportional representation at the national level, particularly in the allocation of parliamentary seats. According to Paget (2019), this particular system serves to mitigate the risks of electoral competition by ensuring that minority parties and ethnic groups retain their political representation. Provincial proportional representation ensures more balanced representation of diverse groups,

contributing to overall stability, while at the national level Tanzania's focus on unity is reinforced by policies that promote inclusion across ethnic lines. In both systems there are consequences for ethnic conflict. The zero-sum, high-risk political environment created by the FPTP system in Kenya often leads to violence, particularly when election results are contested. Despite certain shortcomings, Tanzania's proportional representation system reduces the likelihood of conflict by diluting political competition.

II. Study Objectives

Understanding the divergence in terms of the role of ethnic voting in Kenya and Tanzania requires exploring some prior analytical questions. These include: An analysis of variations in electoral systems in Kenya and Tanzania influence the inclusion and representation of ethnic groups in their respective political systems, an assessment of the extent to which electoral systems in Kenya and Tanzania contribute to or mitigate ethnic conflict and the identification of the potential best practices in electoral design for promoting peaceful multiethnic democracies.

A result of the direct impact that electoral systems have on political stability, particularly in multi-ethnic societies such as Kenya and Tanzania, it is important to understand how electoral systems influence ethnic conflict. The dynamics of FPTP winner-take-all systems can promote ethnic polarization and competition, as post-election violence in Kenya in 2007-2008 and 2017 demonstrates a common tactic, which is used by ethnic groups who feel marginalized in politics. On the other hand, Tanzania's proportional representation system has generally prevented large-scale violence by ensuring greater representation and inclusion, although there have been occasional tensions. This was evident in Zanzibar's 2000 elections, which saw local conflict but did not result in the same levels of violence as in Kenya.

In contrast the theories that locate the source of ethnic conflict as resulting from colonial legacies, the formation of legitimating ideologies and variation in patterns of state formation, these study argues that differences in electoral design, often resulting from the history of state building, offer a stronger explanations of contemporary incidences of inter-ethnic conflicts. In the context of this analysis, the political environment in modern African countries must be understood. Electoral systems are crucial to determining the extent of ethnic divisions across the continent and whether they are managed or exacerbated. In Nigeria, for example, ethnic-based parties often compete on an “everybody wins, whoever wins” principle, as demonstrated in the 2011 and 2019 elections, which has contributed to the country's history of ethnic conflict (Suberu, 2010). According to Bach (2011), the ethnicized nature of electoral competition in Ivory Coast also contributed to the violent clashes that followed the 2010 electoral crisis. This study provides insights into the broader difficulties facing multi-ethnic democracies across Africa by closely analyzing Kenya and Tanzania. It also expands our understanding of the electoral systems in these two countries. The results potentially serve as a model for other African countries facing similar difficulties and can advise policymakers on optimal electoral design practices that promote an inclusive and peaceful political environment.

III. Research Questions

More specifically, the study focused on a fine-grained empirical analysis of three inter-related questions: How do electoral systems in Kenya and Tanzania affect the inclusion and representation of ethnic groups in their political systems? What is the impact of electoral systems in Kenya and Tanzania on ethnic conflict? Do variations in electoral institutions contribute to its mitigation or exacerbation? What are the potential best practices in electoral design for fostering peaceful multiethnic democracies?

The comparative analysis of Kenya and Tanzania provides important insights into whether electoral systems mitigate or exacerbate ethnic conflict. As demonstrated by the 2007–2008 post-election violence, in which winner-take-all dynamics exacerbated ethnic rivalries, Kenya's FPTP system often exacerbates ethnic tensions, particularly at competitive elections. On the other hand, despite local tensions such as those in the Zanzibar elections, Tanzania's proportional representation system has generally ensured broader representation, which has fostered a more inclusive political environment and helped mitigate large-scale ethnic conflicts. Based on the comparison, hybrid systems that promote inclusivity and power sharing, lower electoral stakes, or proportional representation are potential best practices for electoral design in multi-ethnic democracies. Further dilution of ethnic divisions can be achieved through policies of national unity, such as the emphasis on Kiswahili in Tanzania, paving the way for more stable and peaceful democracies in Africa's pluralistic societies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The prevalence of ethnic conflicts affiliated to electoral systems in Africa has been extensively explored in the scholarly literature. Bannon, Miguel and Posner (2004) and Lindberg & Morrison (2008) provide empirical evidence confirming the widespread presence of ethnic conflicts, where voters often align themselves with candidates or parties based on shared ethnic identities. Varshney (2007) introduces debates on ethnicity and elections, arguing that while ethnicity plays a significant role, its impact can be modulated by other factors such as class and ideology. This challenges the notion of ethnicity as the sole determinant of political choices. Bedasso (2017) and De Waal (2005) contribute to the discourse by emphasizing the necessity of context-specific analysis. They argue that, for nuanced comparisons across countries. They underline the importance of considering historical institutional, structural-economic and more agency driven explanations that focus on leadership imperative in understanding the variations in ethnicity and its implications for democratic processes in diverse African contexts.

The historical-institutional approach illuminates how state building and colonialism shaped the emergence of modern electoral systems and ethnic divisions. For example, Mamdani (1996) and Kymlicka (2012) argue that ethnicity is a crucial basis for political mobilization because the structures imposed by colonialism entrenched ethnic divisions. According to Posner (2005), the establishment of colonial boundaries and the unequal distribution of resources led to the emergence of “ethnic constituencies” in which certain groups were favored in gaining resources and political power. The way African countries' electoral systems operate today has been significantly influenced by these institutional legacies. The FPTP system in Kenya, for example, is a remnant of previous attempts to consolidate the power of larger ethnic groups. This leads to winner-take-

all elections, exacerbating tensions within marginalized communities (Bratton and Kimenyi, 2008).

As Horowitz (1985) points out, the enduring institutional structures of history play a role in the formation of ethnic political parties, thereby making it difficult to build interethnic partnerships. This is evident in Kenya, where instances of electoral violence, particularly after the 2007 elections, were closely linked to the ethnic mobilization of influential political figures who exploited institutionalized ethnic divisions to strengthen their voter base (Kagwanja & Southall, 2009).

Historical institutional analysis sheds light on how the FPTP system has reinforced ethnic divisions through gerrymandering and maldistribution in other developing countries such as Malaysia (Jannial, Zainal & Roslan, 2023). The colonial period, when the British favored certain ethnic groups for economic and administrative positions, is the source of ethnic tensions in Malaysia, even as they are shaped by modern politics.

Examining alternative explanations for phenomena such as multiethnic conflict is essential for a comprehensive understanding of these complex dynamics. Scholars like Mamdani (1996) have emphasized the historical context, particularly the divergent trajectories of nation and state-building processes, in shaping contemporary political landscapes in Africa. Additionally, electoral institutions play a crucial role, as highlighted by Schedler (2006), with variations in electoral systems influencing voter behavior and political outcomes.

Furthermore, structural-economic issues play a role. This includes powerful politicians unfairly giving land rights and resources to their supporters, as discussed by Englebert and Ndeng'e (2004), are vital considerations in understanding multiethnic conflicts and political dynamics. These alternative explanations, grounded in historical institutional, structural-economic and more

agency driven explanations, offer valuable insights into the complexities of governance and politics in Africa, highlighting the multifaceted nature of Neo-patrimonial political systems and their implications for societal cohesion and stability.

The structural economic approach highlights the importance of economic factors, particularly inequality and resource distribution, in influencing ethnic voting behavior and conflicts. Englebert and Ndeng'e (2004) suggest that economic discontent, such as the biased distribution of land and resources, can trigger ethnic tensions when certain groups believe that they are systematically ignored in the nation's wealth distribution. Bates (1983) and Lindberg & Morrison (2008) extend this perspective by showing how economic underdevelopment can lead to “ethnic entrenchment,” where communities rely on their ethnic identity to maintain access to resources in the absence of a powerful, integrative system to maintain state mechanism.

In the African region, De Waal (2005) uses the Sudan conflict as a case study to illustrate how economic exclusion fuels ethnic agitation. Significant economic inequality between Sudan's northern and southern regions exacerbated tensions and political frameworks designed to strengthen the power of elite leaders in the north further cemented these divisions. Varshney (2007) contends that economic status, consistent with ethnicity, has a significant influence on the formation of electoral blocs, with wealthier ethnic groups more likely to seize political power through electoral systems such as FPTP that disproportionately reward larger, wealthier constituencies.

In countries like Nigeria, where the oil economy concentrates economic resources in certain areas, electoral rivalries often revolve around ethnic claims to control of public resources. According to Chandra (2020), Nigeria's mixed electoral system aims to create a balance between resource distribution and ethnic representation by combining elements of both majoritarian and

proportional governance. As these efforts have been undermined by persistent economic inequality, particularly in areas rich in natural resources, ethnic tensions remain.

Individuals may vote based on ethnic identification when they perceive it as beneficial or when ethnic affiliations align with their interests, though this is not always the case. The study's survey assumes individual agency, aligning with agency-driven approaches that emphasize rational calculations in voting behavior. Afrobarometer has emerged as a crucial tool in understanding ethnicity and ethnic conflict. Bratton and Mattes (2001) have utilized Afrobarometer data to investigate how ethnicity influences electoral choices in African democracies. Their findings suggest that ethnicity significantly shapes voting behavior, with individuals often aligning themselves with candidates who share their ethnic identity. Moreover, Afrobarometer surveys have shed light on the prevalence and underlying causes of multiethnic conflicts, providing insights into the dynamics of intergroup tensions and the factors that exacerbate them. By offering a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of these phenomena, Afrobarometer contributes significantly to scholarly discourse and policymaking aimed at fostering social cohesion and democratic governance in ethnically diverse societies.

Bratton and Mattes (2001) posit that electoral systems are instrumental in influencing the social harmony and political stability of multiethnic societies. The implementation or design of electoral systems can either worsen or mitigate ethnic tensions, making them imperative in societal cohesion. Dulani, Harris, Horowitz and Kayuni (2020) support that proportional representation enhances inclusivity, which results in minimizing ethnic tensions because smaller ethnic groups are engaged in legislative representation. Lijphart (2012) argues that proportional representation systems foster political stability due to the promotion of coalition governments, such representation from diverse ethnic groups eliminates the potential

marginalization of smaller or minority groups causing social harmony. The view is supported by Murithi, (2022), who emphasizes that proportional representation systems promote the establishment of multiethnic coalitions, which is vital for maintaining stability in divided societies.

Varshney (2007) adds that proportional representation systems can handle the intricacies of multiethnic societies due to their accurate depiction of the electorate's diversity, allowing equitable policymaking that includes the interests of different ethnic groups. Similarly, Schedler (2006) highlights that proportional representation systems lessen the possibility of ethnic conflict by giving minorities a stake in politics. However, some scholars identify potential limitations of proportional representation systems. Rovny (2023) and Posner (2005) note that proportional representation causes political fragmentation, with the formation of many small parties or unstable coalition governments, which results in complicated decision-making. Rovny (2023) further argues that the intricacy of proportional representation systems can alienate voters who do not understand the system, reducing trust and political engagement in electoral procedures. Pastarmadzhieva (2021) echoes this sentiment, implying that proportional representation inclusiveness may hinder effective governance because of the challenges in forming a stable and strong coalition. The argument is that varying patterns of state formation and leadership dynamics, when paired with specific electoral designs, offer the clearest explanation for why some contexts experience conflict and fragmentation, while others successfully mitigate inter-ethnic tensions. This approach highlights how structural and institutional differences shape the likelihood of peaceful or conflict-prone outcomes across diverse settings.

The FPTP systems involve single-member constituencies and the candidate that gets the most votes wins and is critiqued for potentially marginalizing smaller ethnic groups (Lindberg &

Morrison, 2008). Lockwood, Krönke and Mattes (2021) highlight that FPTP systems result in a "winner-takes-all" dynamic, making the dominant ethnic group secure all the political power disproportionately and potentially disenfranchising minority groups. Mainwaring and Scully (1995) argue that FPTP systems may cause political stability by reflecting clear majorities which ensures strong governments that can enforce policies without needing to build a coalition. The view is supported by Kaufman (2006) who implies that the FPTP system's majoritarian nature can minimize political fragmentation and give stable governance. Moreover, Lockwood, Krönke and Mattes (2021) point out that the FPTP system's simplicity helps voters to better engage and understand promoting political participation.

Mixed electoral systems combine proportional representation and FPTP elements and are viewed as a solution to enhance stability and inclusivity. Horowitz (2014) argues that in mixed systems it is possible to mitigate the negative effects of 'zero-sum competition' prevalent in FPTP systems to promote wider representation via proportional elements. Such a hybrid approach effectively addresses the potential weaknesses of FPTP and proportional representation systems, encouraging social harmony and political stability. Ferejohn (1986) cautions that mixed systems success is based on their implementation and design, implying that poorly designed systems may cause political instability and ethnic marginalization. Fanso (2023) emphasizes that mixed systems require socio-political context consideration to function better. In concurrence with Fanso (2023), while electoral design, including mixed systems, is essential for addressing ethnic conflict, it is not sufficient on its own to explain the variations observed. A comprehensive analysis must integrate historical, social and political contexts to fully understand the complexities and root causes of ethnic conflict. Similarly, Englebert and Ndeng'e (2004) note that its dual nature can cause confusion among voters, complicating the electoral process. Mixed systems promote

inclusivity and their success hinges on a country's political environment and commitment to fair representation (Horowitz, 2014). Bedasso (2017) points out that manipulating electoral boundaries or gerrymandering can worsen or exacerbate ethnic tensions in FPTP systems because it entrenches the power of dominant groups and marginalizes minorities.

Lijphart (2018) sheds light on how electoral systems manage multiethnic tensions using consociational theory. The theory focuses on inclusive governance and power-sharing structures to manage diversity in diverse societies where a grand coalition can be formed to include all representatives from different ethnic groups. Consociational theory also includes mutual veto mechanisms to give minority groups the power to safeguard their vital interests by vetoing decisions that impact them negatively. Electoral systems can enhance mutual veto arrangements by ensuring the representation of minority ethnic groups in legislative bodies and with their influence, they can block decisions that impede their interests (Lijphart, 2018). The theory also emphasizes proportional and fair allocation of opportunities, resources and political representation and electoral systems that maintain the proportionality principle ensure that minority ethnic groups are included in political power. Lijphart (2018) also advocates for autonomy to different ethnic groups allowing them to manage their affairs to minimize inter-ethnic competition. Electoral systems shape the autonomy offered to ethnic communities via the structure and representation of government institutions.

While consociational theory supports the electoral system's role in managing multiethnic conflict, other theories offer additional viewpoints such as the "ethnic conflict theory" by Horowitz which argues that electoral systems shape ethnic relations. Herfeld (2020) critiques proportional representation systems because they potentially reinforce ethnic tensions through the formation of ethnically based parties and acknowledges their significance in allowing minority

representation, which highlights the function of electoral system design in worsening or mitigating ethnic conflict. Similarly, Fearon (1999) posits that “power-sharing theory” emphasizes inclusive governance structures to prevent conflicts and manage ethnic diversity because inclusive governance offers peace and stability in divided societies. Bedasso (2017) uses social cleavage theory to show how electoral systems impact societal cleavages like ethnicity causing political divisions. Proportional representation systems institutionalize and reflect social cleavages and potentially worsen divisions, while majoritarian approaches like FPTP suppress such cleavages, which may come at the expense of minority representation.

Electoral systems help determine social harmony and political stability. In Europe, Belgium is a multiethnic society with German-speaking groups, Dutch Flanders and French-speaking communities of Wallonia (Put, Muyters & Maddens, 2020). The country utilizes a proportional representation electorate system to ensure that all ethnic groups are represented equitably in the parliament. Put, Muyters and Maddens (2020) posit that Belgium's electorate system has enabled political stability because it encourages coalition governments with representatives from diverse ethnic groups and such inclusivity mitigates ethnic tensions because it prevents a single group from dominating the political landscape. The proportional representation system in Belgium enables smaller ethnic groups to participate in the legislative process eliminating exclusion or marginalization. While Belgium's proportional representation system has a stabilizing effect, it still experiences some hurdles of ethnic division between the Walloon and Flemish communities. Wauters, Bouteau and de Vet (2019) posit that these tensions are mitigated by institutional mechanisms such as federalism that gives autonomy to regional governments. The devolved power allows the addressing of ethnic grievances and the federal structure helps accommodate regional differences and brings governance to the population.

In Asia, Malaysia comprises a multiethnic composition with Indian, Malay and Chinese populations. The country utilizes a FPTP electoral system that favors the dominating ethnic group, which is the Malays via malapportionment and gerrymandering (Jannial, Zainal & Roslan, 2023). The system has worsened ethnic tensions because the minority groups feel marginalized as the political power is with the Malay-majority party, which results in policies that favor Malays at the expense of minority ethnic groups (Yi, 2020). The FPTP system develops a 'zero-sum game' and the Malay's concentration of political power instigates ethnic tensions. Jannial, Zainal and Roslan (2023) posit that the FPTP system creates an environment where the 'winner-takes-all' while the losers are excluded, which can bring distrust and social unrest.

In Africa, Nigeria is a multiethnic nation with over 250 ethnic groups and utilizes a mixed electoral system where an election is through a majoritarian system that demands majority votes and the candidate must have 25% support in two-thirds of the 36 states (Muhammad, Egie & Etim, 2023). Nigeria's mixed system has aspects of proportional and majoritarian representation to balance wider national support and includes diverse ethnic groups. Chandra (2020) posits that candidates being required to secure votes across all states helps minimize ethnic polarization and foster national unity. Despite such mechanisms in place, Nigeria experiences ethnic tensions that are worsened by electoral competition and the mixed system does not effectively represent the smaller ethnic groups.

Electoral fraud and political manipulation also undermine the system's capacity to effectively manage ethnic diversity. The focus of the agency-driven approach is on how elite manipulation and political leadership can either exacerbate or mitigate ethnic conflict. This concept is explicitly defined as the agency-driven approach that highlights and emphasizes on both individual-level behavior and the decision-making choices of political leadership in shaping ethnic

conflict dynamics. Schedler (2006) argues that political actors have a significant influence on ethnic voting patterns and that institutional and structural factors are also important. Political elites often use ethnic identity manipulation to their advantage during elections, particularly in FPTP systems where gaining a majority through ethnic mobilization can lead to disproportionate power. Political leaders fomented and demonstrated ethnic violence in Kenya in 2007 to challenge election results (Mueller, 2011).

According to Subramanian (2014), who agrees with this view, the way political leaders handle election campaigns can have a significant impact on whether they reinforce ethnic divisions or promote national unity. Julius Nyerere's government in Tanzania discouraged ethnic politics by promoting a national identity through programs such as *Ujamaa* or African socialism. But in a mixed electoral system, the subsequent leadership had to overcome the challenges of maintaining political stability while striking a balance between ethnic inclusions (Marshall, 2022).

Afrobarometer's data is also consistent with the agency-driven approach as it shows how political parties and leaders use ethnic identities to gain electoral support. In this view, it is not that individuals inherently choose to vote based on their ethnic identity; rather, they are prompted to do so when political elites instrumentalize ethnicity for electoral gain. This highlights the influence of elite manipulation on voter behavior and the contextual factors that shape electoral decisions. Using data from Afrobarometer surveys, Bratton and Mattes (2001) show how political actors often exploit ethnic identities to gain support, particularly in countries with underdeveloped national institutions. Ethnic voting patterns are often the result of this manipulation, with voters supporting candidates from similar backgrounds in the hope of gaining access to public funds.

The results of the Afrobarometer suggest that low institutional trust and economic insecurity are the main factors influencing ethnic elections. When state institutions are unable to

provide public goods in an equitable manner, ethnic groups tend to turn to their own family networks for security and access to resources. Afrobarometer's analysis is consistent with both structural economics and agency-driven frameworks; it shows that when state institutions fail, voters expect support from ethnic leaders and that political elites actively exploit ethnic appeals to stay in power (Bratton and Mattes, 2001). This is consistent with the theory of ethnic cooperation by Fearon and Laitin (1996), which suggests that ethnic groups work together to gain access to limited resources in situations where they believe state institutions are unreliable.

Kenya adopts a “FPTP” system for its elections and it is characterized by single-candidate constituencies that benefit larger cohesive ethnic groups (Bratton & Kimenyi, 2008). Kenya is multiethnic, it has over 42 ethnic groups and the FPTP system excludes smaller ethnic groups from governance causing disenfranchisement and ethnic tensions because the groups may feel like their interests are ignored. Mesquita, Smith, Siverson and Morrow (2020) suggest that political parties mobilize their support using ethnic identity, which reinforces ethnic divisions because political success depends on ethnic solidarity and the ‘winner-takes-all’ system inspires ethnic tensions. In Kenya, the disputed 2007 presidential election caused ethnic violence due to perceived electoral injustices, while in subsequent elections ethnic mobilization was common highlighting divisions and failure of proportional representation.

Tanzania’s mixed electoral system requires the election candidate to win through the majoritarian system and parliamentary elections use FPTP in constituencies while proportional representation ensures representation for special groups, youths and women (Marshall, 2022). Tanzania's mixed system allows for broader representation, eliminating the ‘zero-sum competition’ that exists in FPTP systems and its elections are relatively peaceful due to the inclusive approach of the proportional representation ensured national unity.

Drawing on extant scholarship on multiethnic conflicts, I maintain that electoral institutions play a crucial role in shaping electoral outcomes. Variations in electoral systems, rules and practices can significantly impact voter behavior and political outcomes (Schedler, 2006). Electoral institutions may either mitigate or exacerbate ethnic divisions, affecting the salience of ethnicity. Kenya's historical and social factors play a significant role in contributing to ethnic conflicts. The country's colonial legacy, marked by ethnic divisions and unequal resource distribution, continues to fuel contemporary grievances and influence political dynamics. Mamdani (1996) and Kymlicka (2012) provide valuable insights into this historical context, highlighting how colonial legacies contributed to the entrenchment of ethnic identities and disparities in power and resources. These legacies have had lasting effects on political mobilization, with ethnic affiliations often serving as primary markers of identity and driving voting behavior in Kenya's democratic processes. Understanding these historical and social factors is crucial for comprehensively analyzing ethnic voting dynamics and addressing underlying tensions in Kenyan society.

Analyzing Kenya's electoral system reveals a FPTP approach that encourages "winner-take-all" outcomes within single-member constituencies. This system, as argued by Horowitz (2014), can incentivize political candidates to focus their campaign efforts on mobilizing their dominant ethnic group, potentially marginalizing other ethnic communities and exacerbating intergroup tensions. Empirical data provided by Bannon, Miguel and Posner (2004) highlights this point by demonstrating a strong correlation between ethnicity and candidate choice in Kenyan elections. Such findings suggest that the electoral system in Kenya plays a significant role in shaping ethnic voting behavior, emphasizing the need for comprehensive analysis to understand its implications for political representation and social cohesion in the country.

Tanzania's historical and social factors present a unique context for understanding voting behavior. While the country's history has been characterized by a focus on national unity and anti-colonial struggle, potentially fostering a stronger sense of national identity compared to its neighbor Kenya, ethnic divisions persist. Medani (2022) highlighted the ongoing significance of ethnic identities in Tanzanian politics, irrespective of the efforts to promote national unity, there are still multiethnic conflicts in the country. Recognizing and understanding these social dynamics, including the tension between national unity and ethnic diversity, is crucial for analyzing voting patterns and political mobilization in Tanzania.

Evaluating Tanzania's electoral system reveals a proportional representation approach designed to promote broader representation through multi-member districts. This system, as advocated by Lijphart (2018), aims to encourage the formation of broader coalitions and reduce the incentives for political candidates to solely mobilize their ethnic group for electoral success. However, research gaps persist regarding the actual impact of Tanzania's proportional representation system on individual voting behavior and its influence on ethnic tensions. While the proportional representation system theoretically fosters inclusivity and reduces the winner-takes-all dynamics often associated with FPTP systems, further empirical analysis is needed to assess its effectiveness in mitigating ethnic divisions and promoting political representation for all groups within Tanzania's diverse society.

The comparative analysis of Kenya and Tanzania discern similarities and differences in the relationship between electoral systems and multiethnic conflicts, considering historical, social and electoral system factors. By examining these two East African nations with distinct political landscapes and electoral systems, the study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics influencing multiethnic conflicts that are affiliate to electoral systems. This

comparative approach contributes to a better understanding of the contextual nuances at play in each country, shedding light on how historical legacies, social dynamics and electoral design choices interact to shape political outcomes and offer insights that can inform electoral reforms and strategies to promote inclusive participation and mitigate ethnic tensions in diverse African democracies.

The research develops tailored policy recommendations to encourage non-ethnic voting behavior in Kenya and Tanzania, drawing upon existing strategies such as power-sharing arrangements (Subramanian, 2014) and civic education campaigns (Htut & Weldon, 2015). These recommendations consider the unique historical, social and electoral system factors influencing ethnic dynamics in each country and involve enhancing interethnic dialogue, reforming electoral laws to incentivize cross-ethnic political alliances and strengthening civic education programs to foster national identity and issue-based voting.

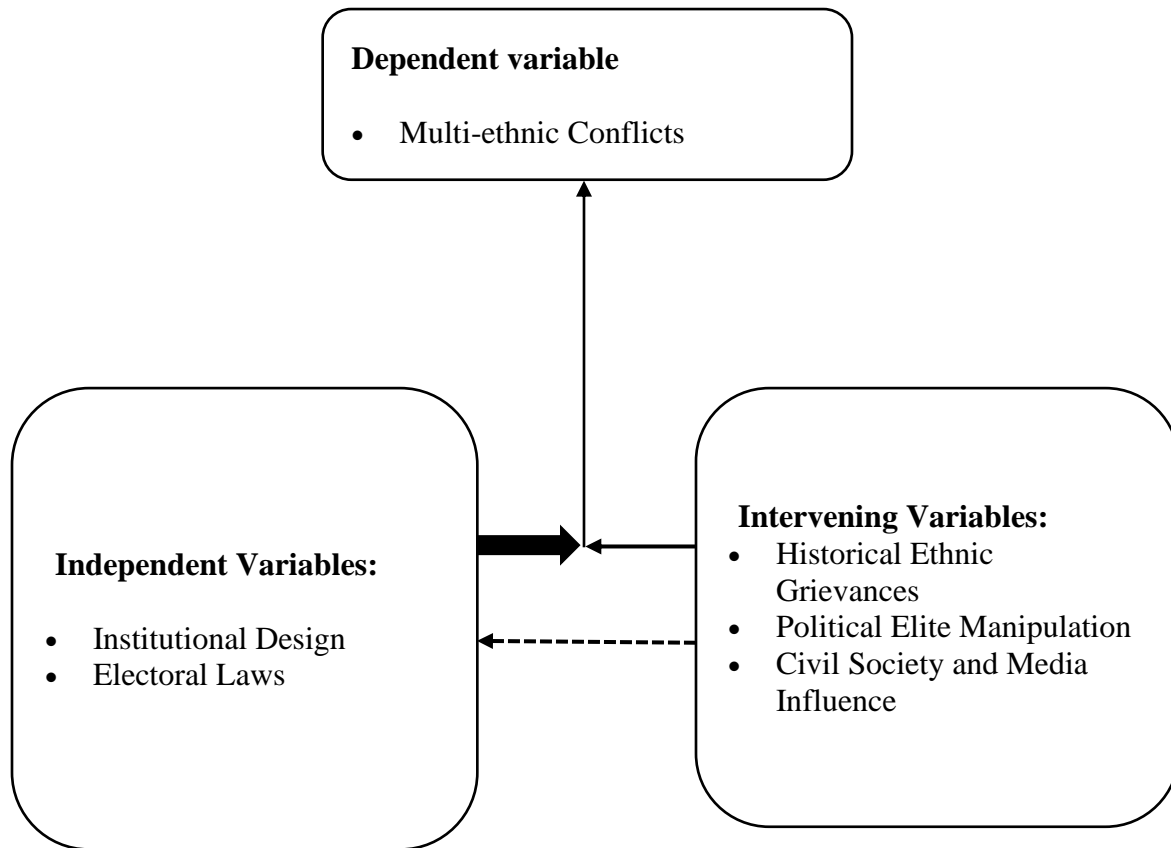
The literature review highlights the need for further investigation into the intricate relationship between electoral systems and multiethnic conflict in Africa. It synthesizes existing research and identifies gaps in understanding, emphasizing the importance of comprehending the complex dynamics shaping political behavior and societal cohesion in diverse African contexts. The comparative analysis of Kenya and Tanzania, grounded in relevant theoretical frameworks and empirical data address these gaps and offer insights for policymakers and scholars. By illuminating the nuances of ethnic voting patterns and their impact on political stability and inclusivity, the research aid in the development of effective strategies for promoting inclusive and peaceful societies in Africa.

THESIS BODY

I. Methodology

The methodology utilized for the study was comprised of the use of content analysis of relevant secondary sources, most notably the data collected by Afrobarometer. Content analysis was considered, by utilizing Afrobarometer Data as a primary source of information. Afrobarometer gives insights into public attitudes and opinions across African countries, including Kenya and Tanzania, on various issues including electoral systems and ethnic dynamics. The desktop review entailed a systematic analysis of existing literature, scholarly articles, reports and data sets related to electoral systems, multiethnic conflict in the context of Kenya and Tanzania. This approach enabled the synthesis of existing knowledge and the identification of key themes, trends and empirical evidence pertinent to the study's objectives. Additionally, the methodology involved a comparative analysis framework to examine similarities and differences between Kenya and Tanzania in terms of electoral structures, ethnic dynamics and their implications for multiethnic conflict.

a) Conceptual Framework:



In the conceptual framework diagram for the role of ethnic-based voting behavior and multiethnic conflict in Africa, the center represents multiethnic conflict, with indicators such as violent conflict, political instability and intergroup tensions. The left box encompasses independent variables, including the institutional design and electoral laws. These independent variables directly influence multiethnic conflict, indicated by solid arrows. The right box contains intervening variables, such as historical ethnic grievances, political elite manipulation featuring the variation in leadership between Julius Nyerere and Jomo Kenyatta, civil society and media influence which may moderate or mediate the relationship between independent variables and multiethnic conflict, represented by dotted arrows. Additionally, intervening variables may directly influence multiethnic conflict, as indicated by dashed arrows. This conceptual framework

illustrates the interplay between historical, contemporary and intervening factors influencing multiethnic conflict in Africa.

The design of electoral institutions and their variations are influenced by three key intervening factors: historical patterns of state formation, social and political contexts and the instrumentalization of ethnicity by political elites. These factors contribute to different levels of conflict, highlighting the complex interplay between institutional design and ethnic dynamics. Together, they encapsulate insights from historical institutionalist, structuralist and agency-driven explanations of political behavior. Hence, a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between electoral design and ethnic conflict is best achieved within this multifaceted framework.

b) Theoretical Framework

This study integrates insights from historical institutionalist, structural and agency-driven approaches to examine electoral systems and multiethnic conflicts in Kenya and Tanzania. Drawing on institutional theory from Amenta and Ramsey (2010) and rational choice theory from Herfeld (2020), it emphasizes how historical legacies influence contemporary political behavior and ethnic grievances. Institutional theory highlights the impact of formal and informal regulations on political conduct, suggesting that Kenya's FPTP system encourages ethnic groups to rally behind dominant parties, intensifying rivalries. In contrast, Tanzania's proportional representation system promotes broader political appeals and multiethnic coalitions, potentially reducing tensions. Rational choice theory further explains how individual actors make strategic decisions based on perceived advantages, emphasizing that both institutional designs and elite manipulation shape the dynamics of ethnic conflict. By analyzing these intertwined variables, the study reveals the complex relationship between electoral systems and multiethnic conflicts in these two countries.

The study drew insights from institutional theory advanced by Amenta & Ramsey (2010) and rational choice theory advanced by Herfeld (2020) to examine electoral systems and multiethnic conflicts in Kenya and Tanzania, where history serves as a foundational backdrop, providing insights into long-standing ethnic grievances and power dynamics that shape contemporary political behavior. Drawing from institutional and rational choice theories, historical legacies interact with institutional designs and individual decision-making processes to influence how electoral systems mediate or exacerbate multiethnic tensions in these contexts.

Institutional theory emphasizes on the importance of both formal and informal regulations, norms and frameworks within a society, which shape the conduct of individuals and collective actions (North, 1990). Regarding electoral systems, proponents of institutional theory assert that the formulation and execution of electoral regulations and structures profoundly affect political conduct, the formation of political parties and representation, thereby influencing the dynamics of multiethnic conflict (Mainwaring & Scully, 1995).

In Kenya, where the FPTP electoral system prevails, ethnic groups find it advantageous to unite their support behind a single dominant party or candidate perceived to most effectively advocate for their interests. This scenario escalates ethnic divisions and rivalry, as political parties compete for the backing of specific ethnic factions to secure electoral triumph (Posner, 2005). In contrast, Tanzania employs a proportional representation electoral system, which prompts political parties to appeal to a broader spectrum of voters. This approach potentially mitigates ethnic tensions by fostering the formation of multiethnic coalitions and enhancing representation (Bratton & Kimenyi, 2008).

Conversely, rational choice theorists present an alternative viewpoint, emphasizing the strategic calculations and utility-maximizing actions of individual actors in shaping electoral

dynamics (Downs, 1957). According to rational choice theory, voters and political elites make decisions based on perceived advantages and disadvantages, weighing factors such as ethnic identity, policy preferences and electoral tactics (Ferejohn, 1986). Critics of institutional theory contend that it may overlook the agency of individual actors and the strategic considerations guiding their actions, especially in contexts marked by intense political competition and uncertainty (Fearon, 1999).

Institutional and rational choice theories converge in explaining the causal link between electoral systems and multiethnic conflicts. Intervening variables like Historical Ethnic Grievances, shaped by past institutional arrangements and Political Elite Manipulation, driven by rational calculations, influence conflict dynamics. Institutional Design and Electoral Laws, reflecting both institutional structures and strategic choices, impact representation and power distribution. Civil Society and Media Influence, operating within institutional frameworks, shape perceptions and mobilize support. Analyzing these variables illuminates the complex relationship between electoral systems and multiethnic conflicts in a comparative analysis of Kenya and Tanzania.

In Kenya, the FPTP system amplifies ethnic divisions by incentivizing parties to mobilize around ethnic identities to secure votes. In contrast, Tanzania's proportional representation system encourages broader coalitions and cross-ethnic alliances, which mitigates ethnic tensions. The FPTP system in Kenya creates incentives for ethnic mobilization by rewarding parties that can secure the largest share of votes from specific ethnic groups, reinforcing existing divisions. In contrast, Tanzania's proportional representation system incentivizes inclusive, cooperative political behavior by encouraging parties to form cross-ethnic coalitions in order to secure broader electoral support, fostering national unity.

c) Methods

The study employed a comparative case study design with Kenya and Tanzania as the cases. This approach according to Goodrick (2020), allows for a systematic comparison and contrast and will be relevant in the case of study of the electoral systems and multiethnic conflict patterns in two East African countries, considering historical factors, political manipulation, electoral institutions design, civil society and media influence on electoral systems and multiethnic conflicts. By focusing on these specific cases, the study explored how variations in electoral systems influence multiethnic conflicts. This design also enables in the drawing of nuanced insights into the mechanisms through which electoral systems shape voter behavior and political outcomes in multiethnic societies.

In terms of data collection, a mixed-methods approach was employed to capture both descriptive quantitative data taken from the surveys conducted by Afrobarometer and qualitative perspectives. Quantitatively, the study utilized Afrobarometer survey data to examine the relationship between electoral systems and multiethnic conflicts in Kenya and Tanzania. The Afrobarometer is a widely recognized survey project that collects data on public attitudes and opinions across Africa. It provides nationally representative data on various issues, including ethnic identification, voting behavior and attitudes towards conflict. By leveraging this dataset, the study was able to analyze the prevalence of ethnic cleavages in electoral processes and understand how ethnicity influences voting patterns in both countries. Specifically, the study used statistical techniques such as regression analysis to identify correlations between ethnic identity and voting behavior, controlling for other relevant factors such as socioeconomic status and political preferences.

Moreover, the Afrobarometer survey data enabled the study to assess the extent to which multiethnic conflicts are influenced by electoral systems. By analyzing the survey data on electoral systems and multiethnic conflicts towards conflict resolution, the study was able to gain insights into the role of electoral systems in shaping multiethnic conflicts. Additionally, the dataset allowed for cross-country comparisons between Kenya and Tanzania, facilitating a nuanced understanding of how ethnic voting dynamics differ or converge across these two contexts

Content analysis was conducted to examine two important elements: the nature of the electoral laws undergirding electoral design and the ways elites manipulated the media to instrumentalize ethnicity in electoral cycles. Electoral laws, political speeches and media reports provided contextual understanding on electoral systems and multiethnic conflicts of each country. Electoral laws play a crucial role in shaping the electoral process, including the rules governing candidate nominations, campaign financing and voting procedures. By analyzing electoral laws in Kenya and Tanzania, the study gained insights into the electoral institutions that govern the electoral systems in each country and how they may influence multiethnic conflicts. Additionally, political speeches by key political figures and parties offered valuable insights into the rhetoric and narratives used to mobilize voters along ethnic lines. By analyzing political speeches, the study explored how multiethnic conflicts are influenced by electoral systems through discursive strategies used to appeal to different ethnic groups.

Media reports helped in portraying how electoral systems influence multiethnic conflicts, as well as the role of the media in shaping public perceptions of multiethnic conflicts. Broadcast and Print media coverage of electoral campaigns, political rallies and intergroup relations provided valuable context for understanding the broader socio-political dynamics at play in each country. Through qualitative content analysis techniques, the study analyzed the themes, narratives and

discourses present in electoral laws and public insightful political speeches to contextualize the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data sources and provide an understanding of the relationship between ethnicity, electoral systems and multiethnic conflicts in the case of the two countries.

In terms of data analysis, statistical analysis of the Afrobarometer survey data to identify correlations between ethnicity and voting behavior was conducted, as well as patterns of ethnic identification and conflict attitudes. This analysis quantifies the extent of ethnic voting and its implications for multiethnic conflict in Kenya and Tanzania. Qualitatively, document analysis was utilized to understand the underlying motivations and perceptions driving ethnic voting behavior. By triangulating quantitative and qualitative data, the study provided a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between electoral systems, ethnic identity and multiethnic conflict in East African democracies.

II. Findings

The study aimed to answer three research questions to understand the role of electoral systems in multiethnic conflict in Tanzania and Kenya. Findings on the first question revealed that Kenya's FPTP system favors the dominant ethnic groups, resulting in the exclusion of smaller ethnic communities. The electoral system polarizes the political environment because success in the electoral process requires ethnic mobilization. Subsequently, voter alignment and political campaigns follow ethnic lines, which further complicates the ability of smaller ethnic groups to be represented in politics. The marginalization is witnessed in resource distribution and political power, whereby the winning coalition's ethnic base benefits the most while smaller ethnic groups are disenfranchised.

In Tanzania, a mixed electoral system is adopted and it integrates features of FPTP and proportional representation. The system together with the nation's historical legacy of national unity ensures an inclusive political environment. Proportional representation enables smaller ethnic groups to be represented in the legislative process and Julius Nyerere shaped the country's national identity allowing a political culture that is inclusive and that integrates diversity into the political framework. The study also finds that Kenya's FPTP system worsens ethnic conflict due to the zero-sum, high-stakes political environment and losing or winning influences political power and resource access intensifying competition along ethnic lines. The losing groups perceive that they are excluded heightening ethnic tensions. In contrast, Tanzania's electoral system eliminates ethnic conflict by fostering inclusive representation. By combining FPTP and proportional representation aspects, the concept of political domination of a single ethnic group is eliminated mitigating ethnic-based grievances. Subsequently, a country's politics and history also influence the electoral systems as reflected by Nyerere's policies that discouraged ethnic divisions and encouraged a peaceful and stable political environment. Conversely, the historical dynamics of Zanzibar contribute to the Island's political polarization and electoral violence.

The study also explores electoral design best practices that promote peaceful multiethnic democracies. Some of the recommendations include implementing a proportional representation system to ensure inclusiveness and representation of diverse ethnic groups, which eliminates the likelihood of elections' zero-sum nature. A proportional representation system advocates for equitable political power distribution among different ethnic groups lessening the stakes of electoral outcomes. Approaches such as power-sharing can encourage political stability when different political groups are engaged in governance, which promotes peaceful coexistence and minimizes conflicts. Prioritizing unity and national identity via civic education and nation-building

can lessen ethnic divisions as seen in Tanzania offers a model to foster cohesion and peace in multiethnic societies. Electoral commissions should be reformed to ensure impartiality in managing credible elections and addressing inequalities through inclusive economic policies that can eliminate political discontent. When economic disparities are effectively tackled, grievances that fuel electoral violence can be addressed.

The adoption of different electoral systems in Kenya and Tanzania was deeply rooted in their colonial legacies and post-independence state-building efforts. Under British colonial rule, Kenya's divide-and-rule strategy exacerbated ethnic divisions, which influenced the adoption of an electoral system that reinforced these cleavages. In contrast, Tanzania's post-colonial state-building project, under Julius Nyerere, focused on fostering national unity and inclusivity, leading to the adoption of a more cooperative electoral system. Thus, Kenya's FPTP system reflects a legacy of ethnic competition, while Tanzania's proportional representation system arose from a vision to bridge ethnic divides and promote national cohesion. The study focused on Kenya and Tanzania with respect to their experiences with elections and ethnicity.

'First Past the Post' and the Dilemma of Ethnic Conflict: The Case of Kenya

In explaining the incidence of inter-ethnic conflict in Kenya, it is essential to consider not only the electoral design but also the legacy of colonialism and ethnic politics, as well as the socio-political context that has shaped the FPTP system. The legacy of colonialism in Kenya has profoundly influenced state formation, leading to the institutionalization of ethnic identities and divisions. Colonial policies favored certain ethnic groups over others, fostering a sense of competition and mistrust among various communities. This historical backdrop has entrenched ethnic identities in the political landscape, making them a critical factor in electoral dynamics. Since independence, the interplay of ethnicity and politics has manifested in heightened tensions,

particularly during elections, as political leaders often mobilize ethnic support to secure their positions, exacerbating divisions.

In this socio-political context, the FPTP electoral system further complicates the relationship between ethnicity and political behavior. Under FPTP, the winner-takes-all approach encourages political parties and candidates to focus on consolidating support from specific ethnic groups to maximize their electoral chances. This has resulted in a political environment where ethnic identity becomes a pivotal factor in determining electoral outcomes, leading to intense competition among ethnic factions. Consequently, elections in Kenya often heighten existing tensions, as communities rally behind candidates who are perceived to best represent their ethnic interests. This cycle of mobilization and competition reinforces the connection between ethnicity and political behavior, contributing to the persistence of inter-ethnic conflict in the country.

Historically, the country's various ethnic groups have organized along communal lines, which has led to increased tensions, rivalries and occasionally violence. Land distribution policies, economic inequalities, colonial legacies and other historical and modern factors are the root causes of ethnic politics in Kenya. The political elite's constant pursuit of support from its ethnic constituency has resulted in the marginalization and exclusion of smaller ethnic groups, which has strengthened the ties that bind ethnic voting patterns together.

In particular, the FPTP model used in Kenya had a major impact on the election results. The FPTP system tends to favor larger ethnic groups and marginalize smaller ones by rewarding the candidate who receives the most votes in each constituency. The political success of this system was linked to ethnic mobilization, which exacerbated ethnic tensions by deepening divisions and reducing the likelihood of national cohesion. Understanding how electoral cycles affect ethnic

conflicts and how they are exacerbated or mitigated therefore largely depends on how electoral systems shape the political landscape.

Election-related conflicts and ethnic tensions in Kenya have their roots in the British colonial era. From the late 19th century onwards, the British colonial administration adopted a divide-and-rule strategy that exacerbated ethnic divisions between Kenya's diverse communities. By classifying and organizing ethnic groups into different administrative units, the colonial government exacerbated differences between these groups. To sabotage any unified opposition to colonial rule, ethnic identities were politicized and communities were often turned against each other. Furthermore, certain ethnic groups were favored over others by the colonial system; this was particularly true for communities originating in the central highlands, such as the Kikuyu, who were granted access to resources and administrative positions. The country's post-independence elections would ultimately reflect the rivalry and hostility between ethnic groups initially sown by the early favoritism of some groups over others.

Land was a major factor in the ethnic divisions fostered by colonial rule. The British colonial government confiscated large tracts of fertile land in the Rift Valley and Central Highlands for European settlers and displaced indigenous communities, particularly the Kikuyu, Kalenjin and Maasai. While large farms were provided to European settlers, these communities were forced into “native reservations,” often on less fertile land. The “land question” had long sparked resentment, particularly among the Kikuyu, who felt economically excluded and deprived of their ancestral land. Ethnic tensions were exacerbated by colonial land policies, which resulted in political power becoming closely linked to competition for land. Later, these unresolved land disputes were crucial to Kenya's post-independence electoral politics, as politicians sought to exploit land grievances to gain the support of various ethnic groups.

Kenya's postcolonial leadership inherited these deep-rooted ethnic divisions with the country's independence in 1963. Smaller ethnic groups such as the Kalenjin, Luo and Luhya felt marginalized under the nation's first president, Jomo Kenyatta and his ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU), which was dominated by the Kikuyu and other groups from central Kenya. Political parties formed along ethnic lines as the political elite continued to use ethnic identity as a tool to consolidate power. This legacy of ethnic division, as well as unresolved colonial-era land disputes, led to electoral competition between different ethnic groups. Because of the historical grievances that exacerbated these ethnic divisions, violence and instability were frequent as the country moved to multiparty politics in the 1990s. Consequently, Kenya's electoral politics is still marked by the ethnic tensions cultivated during the colonial era, making it difficult to achieve national unity in the post-colonial era.

In the early 1990s, Kenya experienced a dramatic change in its political landscape with the introduction of multi-party politics. After years of one-party rule under President Daniel Arap Moi's KANU, politicians from both domestic opposition groups and foreign donors increased pressure for democratic reforms. In 1991, in response to the growing unrest, the Moi government repealed Section 2A of the Kenyan Constitution, which had established KANU as the only recognized political party in the country. With the adoption of this constitutional amendment, the first multi-party elections and the formation of several political parties were possible in 1992. As various ethnic groups organized around recently formed political parties to compete for control of resources and power, this shift while crucial to the country's democratic transition also reignited long-suppressed ethnic tensions.

Ethnic politics played an important role in the 1992 parliamentary elections, the first elections since the introduction of the multi-party system. With the repeal of Section 2A, political

parties emerged that were primarily oriented toward specific ethnic groups, with each major ethnic group supporting its own political leaders. For example, the Kalenjin and other related ethnic groups continued to provide significant support to the KANU, which was led by President Moi. In contrast, the Luo-led FORD-Kenya became the platform for the Luo's ethnic aspirations, while the Kikuyu group FORD-Asili, a breakaway group from FORD-Kenya, led by Kenneth Matiba, provided the majority of support. Political competition in Kenya quickly became a reflection of ethnic divisions as different communities competed for dominance in the recently opened political arena, as these ethnic loyalties demonstrated. As political leaders exploited longstanding grievances and pledged to advance their community's interests if elected, ethnic identity became a crucial component of political mobilization.

The FPTP electoral system in Kenya further exacerbated inter-ethnic rivalries and tensions. Under this system, regardless of the total percentage of votes cast, the candidate with the most votes in a constituency wins. Larger ethnic groups are naturally favored by this system because they can concentrate their votes in specific areas, guaranteeing electoral victories. For example, Moi's KANU managed to win key constituencies despite its numerical inferiority at the national level by exploiting the Kalenjin bloc and other smaller ethnic groups in the Rift Valley and northeastern provinces. On the other hand, opposition parties such as FORD-Kenya and FORD-Asili were unable to successfully form broad coalitions to challenge KANU due to their dependence on ethnic strongholds such as Nyanza and the Central Provinces. This perpetuated a cycle of exclusion and political inequality, leading to a fragmented opposition and a political environment in which ethnic groups that lacked numerical strength were marginalized.

The 1992 and 1997 elections saw heightened political tensions between ethnic groups, particularly in the Rift Valley, due to unresolved colonial-era land disputes. During British colonial

rule, European settlers in this fertile region of Kenya took a significant amount of land from indigenous communities such as the Kalenjin and Maasai. Ethnic groups, particularly the Kalenjin, who believed that their ancestral lands were being taken over by “outsiders,” particularly Kikuyu settlers, were more than unhappy that the Kenyan government had failed to adequately address these grievances after independence. Ethnic mobilization surrounding the upcoming multiparty elections was concentrated in the country and political leaders exploited these long-standing grievances to win over voters. Ethnic tensions erupted in the Rift Valley in 1992 and 1997 when young Kalenjin people, allegedly supported by local politicians close to KANU, attacked Kikuyu communities, claiming they were occupying land to which local groups had a right. Deaths, displacement and widening ethnic divisions were the consequences of these conflicts. This highlights that electoral design alone cannot account for all instances of electoral violence. In the 1990s, the violence in Kenya was primarily driven by structural issues, such as ethnic land grievances, combined with elite manipulation to stoke tensions. In the early 2000s, however, the FPTP electoral system contributed to conflict by fostering intense competition, as communities felt compelled to secure political representation due to the winner-takes-all nature of the system.

President Moi and the Role of Leadership in Kenya’s Electoral History

The heightening of ethnic tensions during the election was largely caused by the leadership of President Daniel Arap Moi, who ruled since 1978, used divide-and-rule tactics to cleverly exploit ethnic differences to stay in power. He maintained their political marginalization while securing the loyalty of smaller ethnic groups such as the Kalenjin and others by providing them with political offices and state resources. Moi's government also allegedly orchestrated ethnic violence, particularly in the Rift Valley, to weaken political opposition, many of whom came from these marginalized ethnic communities. Moi managed to consolidate his support base despite

growing discontent with his regime's authoritarianism and economic mismanagement by stoking ethnic fears and positioning KANU as the party that could protect the rights of minorities. His leadership in the 1990s served as an example of how ethnic identity was used as a political tool to maintain power, often at the expense of national unity.

The 1992 and 1997 multi-party elections saw significant electoral violence, much of it with an ethnic component. Before both elections, there were many reports of ethnic conflict, particularly in the Coast and Rift Valley provinces, where KANU supporters targeted ethnic minority groups such as the Luo and Kikuyu. While these conflicts were politically motivated attacks aimed at weakening the electoral influence of opposition strongholds, they were often portrayed as land disputes. For example, violence in 1992 displaced thousands of Kikuyu from the Rift Valley, preventing them from exercising their right to vote and reducing opposition support. Similar violent tendencies emerged in 1997, when conflict broke out along the coast against Luo and other communities supporting the opposition. Violence and displacement not only undermined the legitimacy of the elections but also reinforced the idea that ethnic conflict and political rivalry in Kenya were inextricably linked.

Kenya's electoral landscape from 2002 to 2017 shows how institutional structures, structural-economic factors and leadership interacted in complex ways to shape the country's political and ethnic dynamics. Unlike the 1990s conflicts in Kenya which were primarily driven by political manipulation of ethnic divisions, economic marginalization and historical land grievances. President Moi's use of divide-and-rule tactics fueled ethnic tension, securing loyalty from select groups like the Kalenjin while alienating others, especially in opposition strongholds. Additionally, unresolved land disputes and economic disparities exacerbated ethnic rivalries, as

many communities competed for resources and political power in a system that often favored larger or strategically significant ethnic groups.

President Moi's long rule, marked by political repression and ethnic divisions, ended with the 2002 elections, marking a significant turning point. Under the leadership of Mwai Kibaki, the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) became a unifying force, bringing together a diverse coalition of opposition parties and ethnic groups. The NARC victory was hailed as a sign of hope for reform and a possible break with Kenya's longstanding ethnic politics. The election demonstrated the possibility of national unity when diverse ethnic groups came together to support a common agenda and underscored the importance of inclusivity and ethnic coalitions in achieving a peaceful transition of power. Kenyans were initially encouraged by the Kibaki government's promises of reform, economic expansion and better governance.

However, the 2007 elections revealed the fragility of Kenya's political landscape, so the optimism that followed the 2002 elections was short-lived. The election resulted in one of the bloodiest incidents in the country's history due to the strong influence of ethnic politics and leadership. Raila Odinga, who's Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) received significant support from the Luo community and other fringe groups, posed a serious challenge to Mwai Kibaki, who was seeking re-election. The election was marred by allegations of voting errors, including ballot fraud and voter suppression, leading to widespread unrest. The Kenya Election Commission's judicial system and institutional deficiencies were evident as it found it difficult to resolve electoral disputes. Both Kibaki and Odinga mobilized their supporters along ethnic lines and portrayed the election as a competition between their respective communities, exacerbating pre-existing ethnic tensions. Structural economic factors such as long-standing land disputes, extreme poverty and widespread unemployment created a volatile and conflict-prone atmosphere.

A major low point in Kenya's democratic journey was reached when post-election violence broke out, killing over 1,000 people and displacing hundreds of thousands more.

Following the violent post-election events in Kenya in 2007–2008, the Kenyan government worked to bring about important institutional changes to avert similar crises in the future. In 2010, a new constitution was enacted with the aim of addressing historical injustices, particularly related to land ownership and distribution. This was one of the biggest reforms. A more decentralized governance structure was created. To further improve the legitimacy and effectiveness of the electoral process, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) was established. To address ethnic tensions that have threatened Kenya's democracy in the past, new constitutional provisions were enacted for the 2013 elections. Greater representation of diverse ethnic groups in local government was made possible through the implementation of decentralization and district-level proportional representation, which were seen as positive steps towards inclusion. However, the government's inability to fulfill promises of equal opportunity and justice has left many Kenyans dissatisfied and long-standing structural economic problems such as unresolved land disputes and high unemployment rates continue to cause difficulties.

The political climate in Kenya during the 2013 elections was heavily influenced by the leadership of William Ruto and Uhuru Kenyatta, who formed a coalition that united the Kikuyu and Kalenjin, two of the country's largest ethnic groups. This alliance played a crucial role in organizing a sizable voter base and leveraging the racial makeup of their respective communities to defeat their rivals. But with their rise to fame came the threat of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which had charged Kenyatta and Ruto with crimes against humanity in connection with the violence in 2007 and 2008. The ICC intervention further complicated the electoral process by making both leaders targets of political persecution, which bolstered their support among ethnic

voters. The 2013 elections, although more peaceful than previous election cycles, highlighted underlying ethnic divisions and the difficulties of achieving national cohesion amid conflicting interests.

The electoral reforms implemented in Kenya and the political environment shaped by past cycles were put to the test in the 2017 elections. Initially, there was great tension in the electoral atmosphere as Raila Odinga's opposition coalition called for a boycott of the elections due to concerns about the IEBC's professionalism and preparedness. Citing electoral irregularities as justification, the Supreme Court made a historic decision, unprecedented in Africa, emphasizing the role of the judiciary in maintaining electoral integrity. This decision was important for Kenya because it showed that legal institutions can control political power. Nevertheless, there were allegations of state-sponsored violence against opposition supporters and low voter turnout in the opposition's repeat election.

Electoral reforms contributed to mitigating ethnic violence in Kenya by 2017. Reforms like the introduction of the IEBC, electronic voter identification and transparent vote tallying helped to reduce claims of vote-rigging, which had previously fueled ethnic tensions. While the FPTP system can indeed amplify ethnic divides, strengthening accountability through independent oversight bodies and legal institutions offered more avenues for redress, reducing the likelihood of violence. Additionally, the devolution of power under the 2010 Constitution lessened competition over national-level positions by giving communities more control over local resources, which diffused some ethnic-driven political tensions.

Ethnic mobilization shaped the leadership dynamic during the 2017 elections, as both President Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga sought to strengthen their support bases. Kenyatta's government struggled to bring together a country sharply divided along ethnic lines and a general

climate of distrust and hostility prevailed during the election cycle. Significant tensions arose in the post-election period, culminating in the controversial "handshake" between Kenyatta and Odinga in March 2018, following disagreements that emerged during the electoral process. The "handshake" marked a turning point in Kenya's political history as it emphasized the need for inter-ethnic cooperation to create long-term peace and stability in a country still grappling with the fallout from its electoral history.

Institutional design and reforms have significant implications for the relationship between ethnic politics and elections in Kenya, particularly when considering the FPTP electoral system. Since the advent of multi-party politics, the FPTP system has existed, which has tended to deepen ethnic divisions by making political success heavily dependent on ethnic mobilization. This system requires candidates to receive the most votes from voters in their respective constituencies, which often results in the winner taking all. Political leaders are encouraged by this dynamic to focus primarily on their ethnic groups, leading to the emergence of political parties with a homogeneous ethnic base. Ethnic minority groups are therefore often marginalized, leaving them feeling excluded and disillusioned with the political system. This electoral system not only deepens pre-existing divides, but also creates a competitive environment in which political loyalty is based primarily on ethnicity, making efforts for social cohesion and national unity even more difficult.

Kenya's approach to governance underwent a dramatic change with the adoption of the 2010 Constitution, which brought a series of reforms aimed at addressing the problems caused by ethnic politics and advancing more inclusive governance. The 2010 Constitution introduced decentralization, granting counties more control over resources, which helped address ethnic grievances and reduced competition at the national level. The Constitution also promoted independent institutions, like the judiciary and electoral commission, enhancing accountability and

public trust in the electoral process. Together, these changes highlight that while institutional design is essential, mitigating conflict requires addressing historical grievances, ensuring institutional autonomy and enacting electoral reforms that strengthen democratic governance.

The new constitution places great emphasis on decentralization, transferring powers from the federal government to 47 county governments. The purpose of this action was to ensure that diverse ethnic communities have access to local resources and services and a say in governance. The constitution aims to promote a more equitable distribution of resources and political power by reducing the concentration of power within dominant ethnic groups through the promotion of local representation. Furthermore, a wider range of political voices can now be heard at the county level thanks to the introduction of proportional representation mechanisms, which are essential in a multi-ethnic society such as Kenya. By allowing diverse communities to participate in governance, these reforms represent an important step toward creating an inclusive political environment that reduces ethnic tensions.

Independent institutions are crucial to maintaining the fairness and transparency of the electoral process and maintaining electoral integrity. The 2010 Constitution established the IEBC, which is responsible for regulating elections in Kenya. Its responsibilities include monitoring electoral district boundaries, facilitating voter registration and conducting free and fair elections. Because any perceived bias or incompetence can exacerbate ethnic tensions, the effectiveness of the IEBC is critical to promoting public confidence in the electoral process. After the 2007 post-election violence, the creation of the IEBC was seen as a crucial step in changing the electoral system and averting further conflict. However, given the Commission's difficulties in maintaining its credibility, particularly in high-stakes elections where it is clear that more support and changes are needed to increase the Commission's capacity and independence. A society with a diverse

population of ethnic backgrounds requires political stability and the judiciary is crucial to resolving electoral disputes and upholding the rule of law.

Power-sharing arrangements and peace agreements as well as electoral management reforms have proven essential to reducing ethnic tensions in Kenya. The National Accord and Reconciliation Act was created in the wake of the 2007-2008 electoral violence and paved the way for the formation of a coalition government that included Raila Odinga and President Mwai Kibaki. The aim of this power-sharing agreement was to address the grievances that had fueled the violence and to promote national unity. Such mechanisms can provide a platform for dialogue between competing ethnic groups and create an environment conducive to peaceful coexistence. Power-sharing initiatives can reduce feelings of exclusion among minority communities by involving a variety of political actors in governance. This helps create a more stable and inclusive political environment. These agreements serve as essential tools for redressing the historical injustices that continue to impact Kenya's ethnic dynamics and underscore the importance of institutional frameworks that prioritize cooperation and negotiation over conflict.

In Kenya, structural-economic factors are important determinants of ethnic politics and electoral dynamics. A major issue that has caused ethnic tensions over time is land policy. In areas such as the Rift Valley, where unresolved land disputes have become a flashpoint for conflict, deep-rooted grievances between different ethnic groups have their roots in the historical context of land distribution during the colonial era. The systematic distribution of land during colonial rule to some ethnic communities, often at the expense of others, was a legacy of dispossession and hostility. Since independence, disputes over land ownership and use have continued as national governments have failed to adequately address these historical injustices. During election season,

political actors often use the land issue as a catalyst for ethnic mobilization, escalating tensions and fomenting violence while organizing their communities around these unresolved grievances.

Economic inequality exacerbates these structural conflicts because it encourages ethnic mobilization due to widespread poverty and high unemployment rates. Many marginalized communities in Kenya face severe economic hardship and often feel abandoned by the country's development agenda. Resentment and competition for access to economic opportunities are fueled by the belief that some ethnic groups or geographical areas have disproportionately benefited from national resources. Political leaders often exploit these grievances by promising to prioritize the interests of their communities when allocating resources and by appealing to ethnic loyalties. When competing ethnic groups fight for access to resources and political power, this strategy can lead to an escalation in electoral violence. The dynamics that led to widespread violence and conflict during the 2007 elections are illustrated by the combination of political rhetoric focused on ethnic identity and economic marginalization.

Furthermore, the economic marginalization of certain ethnic groups and regions is a key factor in the polarization of the Kenyan electorate along ethnic lines. When local leaders prey on their constituents' frustrations, areas that have historically experienced slower economic development can become hotbeds of political unrest. This marginalization reinforces feelings of exclusion from the national political narrative and limits access to opportunities and basic services. A key driver of electoral violence is youth unemployment, which can be caused by a lack of economic opportunities. Disillusioned youth are more likely to be recruited by political actors who want to use violent means to mobilize support. The interplay of these structural economic variables illustrates the close relationship between Kenya's ethnic politics and economic realities and

underscores the need for comprehensive reforms that address the political and economic aspects of these conflicts.

In Kenya, political leadership has a significant impact on how elections and ethnic dynamics interact, impacting both the escalation and reduction of ethnic tensions. Divide-and-rule strategies and ethnic favoritism were essential to the regime of President Moi (1978–2002) maintaining power. Moi consciously ignored other ethnic groups and promoted his own, instilling in his followers a sense of dependence and loyalty. This strategy not only entrenched ethnic divisions but also prevented the formation of solid opposition coalitions. Moi maintained a shaky peace that often erupted into violence during election season by using state resources to reward supporters and marginalize dissidents. He set a precedent for future leaders by using ethnicity to mobilize support in elections, using his leadership style as an example of how political actors could use ethnic identity for personal gain.

Kenya's political landscape underwent a dramatic change in the 1990s with the advent of multi-party politics, as new leaders emerged with different styles and had different impacts on ethnic politics. For example, in the 1992 and 1997 elections, politicians such as Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga used ethnic identities to gain support, often leading to increasing hostilities between competing factions. But Kibaki's leadership during the 2002 elections demonstrated a more inclusive approach as he brought together diverse ethnic communities under the NARC, indicating a shift toward ethnic coalition building. Initially, Kibaki's presidency offered hope for inclusivity and reconciliation; however, subsequent elections tested this goodwill and underscored the crucial role that leadership plays in escalating or reducing ethnic rivalries.

Elite coalitions have been identified as a means of reducing ethnic conflict and promoting political stability. The Kenyatta-Ruto coalition was formed during the 2013 elections and united

the Kikuyu and Kalenjin, two of Kenya's largest ethnic groups. This alliance sought not only to consolidate power but also to show unity to reduce ethnic tensions. To allay community grievances and advance a narrative of national unity in the face of looming conflict, leaders pooled resources and support networks. Such elite coalitions demonstrate how political leadership can consciously work to bridge ethnic divides by encouraging cooperation among larger ethnic groups, contributing to a more stable political climate.

The significance of the “handshake” between Kenyatta and Odinga in 2018 after the disputed 2017 elections is another example of how leadership can promote national unity in a multi-ethnic society. President Uhuru Kenyatta and opposition leader Raila Odinga publicly showed their reconciliation with a handshake intended to mend rifts caused by political polarization and violence during recent years' elections. This action was more than just a cynical political ploy; this was a crucial step in resolving ethnic group grievances and promoting inclusion. The handshake represented a commitment to bringing the country together and reducing ethnic tensions by prioritizing communication and cooperation over rivalry. This incident demonstrated the importance of visionary leadership in addressing Kenya's diverse ethnic landscape and demonstrated how political leaders can bring about significant change and stability through proactive measures.

Proportional Representation and the 'First Past the Post' in Tanzania

In Tanzania, the incidence of inter-ethnic conflict can be understood by examining not only the country's electoral design but also the enduring legacy of colonialism and the impact of ethnic politics on post-independence state formation. President Julius Nyerere's administration, beginning in 1961, strove to unify a country with over 120 ethnic groups through the ideology of *Ujamaa*. This was intended to counteract the divisive colonial legacy, which had grouped ethnic

communities along distinct socio-political lines, creating entrenched divisions. Under colonial rule, favoritism in the allocation of resources and political influence created regional inequalities that post-independence leaders like Nyerere sought to alleviate through state-led policies and a focus on a national Tanzanian identity. Ethnic politics, however, persisted as an underlying factor, with certain groups maintaining socio-economic advantages that complicated efforts to create a cohesive national framework.

The socio-political context that gave rise to the adoption of the FPTP electoral system and, later, discussions around proportional representation, was closely tied to this legacy of state formation. FPTP was initially chosen to consolidate power in a single ruling party, the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), aiming to create political stability and minimize ethnic factionalism by promoting a dominant, centralized authority. However, FPTP's winner-takes-all structure has often marginalized minority groups, failing to fully represent Tanzania's diverse population in government. Proportional representation, by contrast, has been debated as an alternative that could allow for more equitable ethnic representation and reduce the ethnic tensions that stem from political exclusion. By balancing FPTP's simplicity with proportional representation's inclusiveness, Tanzania could potentially strengthen its democratic institutions and reduce the risk of ethnic-based grievances, highlighting the need for electoral systems that are responsive to the complexities of Tanzania's historical and socio-political landscape.

The relationship between electoral systems and ethnic dynamics in multiethnic societies is crucial to understanding political stability. Tanzania offers a special case study due to its diverse ethnic composition. This lecture examines Tanzania's electoral history, with particular attention to the events of the 1990s and subsequent elections. Leadership, structural economic variables and institutional designs are considered in their relationship to the formation of ethnic relations and

electoral outcomes. Before the 1990s, Tanzania had a one-party system introduced after the 1964 revolution and led by Julius Nyerere's Tanganyika African National Union (TANU). In this environment, national identities were pushed forward by the government as part of a socialist agenda that emphasized *Ujamaa*, or family and ethnic identities were largely absorbed into this larger national identity. In an effort to promote social harmony and unity, the state suppressed ethnic differences and sought to create a unified national identity. Although this strategy succeeded in promoting some semblance of national unity, it often ignored the complexity of Tanzania's numerous ethnic groups, which numbered over 120.

Tanzania's political trajectory was significantly influenced by the global wave of democratization in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In response to demands from within and without, the nation began shifting to multiparty politics. Tanzania officially allowed the formation of multiple political parties in 1992 when it adopted a new constitution that significantly changed the country's electoral system. The trigger for this change was the recognition that more political pluralism and public engagement are needed. The emergence of multiparty politics complicated the once unified national narrative by bringing previously marginalized ethnic identities to the fore, as political parties began to mobilize support based on ethnicity.

Proportional representation and FPTP are two different electoral mechanisms combined in Tanzania's electoral framework. This dual strategy aims to promote inclusivity and representation in a country known for its diverse ethnic composition. While PR aims to distribute parliamentary seats based on the overall percentage of votes each party receives, the FPTP system is theoretically intended to guarantee that the candidate with the most votes in a given constituency wins. However, this hybrid system has come under criticism for underrepresenting ethnic minorities and limiting the political capacity of opposition parties by primarily favoring the ruling CCM. For

example, in the 2000 elections, the Civic United Front (CUF) managed to capture a significant share of the national vote. However, because the FPTP was dominant in some areas, it was unable to convert this share into an equivalent number of seats in the country's parliament.

The effectiveness of Tanzania's electoral system is significantly influenced by the entities responsible for its operation and supervision. The National Electoral Commission (NEC) is charged with overseeing the elections but has been criticized for its perceived lack of autonomy and honesty. The NEC has often been observed to operate under the influence of the ruling party, which damages its credibility. This perceived bias has profound implications for public trust in electoral processes. For example, numerous local and international observers reported anomalies during the 2015 elections that cast doubt on the NEC's ability to conduct impartial and fair elections. Such doubts can discourage voter participation and promote political indifference among citizens, thereby undermining the democratic process.

Although the judiciary is crucial in resolving electoral disputes, doubts have been raised about its effectiveness due to its apparent bias. Accusations of political interference resulted from court rulings in favor of the ruling party in various election disputes. For example, several opposition parties challenged the results of the disputed 2000 elections in court, but many of these cases were dismissed, reinforcing the perception that the judiciary lacked objectivity in deciding whether elections were fair. Opposition supporters are becoming increasingly angry and skeptical as public trust in the democratic system and the institutions designed to protect it wanes.

The architecture of Tanzania's electoral system has a major impact on the country's ethnic politics. Ethnic divisions have resurfaced in politics as parties increasingly rely on specific ethnic groups of voters to win votes. For example, to strengthen ethnic and regional ties, the CUF used its strong support in Zanzibar in the 2010 elections to position itself as a champion of Zanzibar's

interests. Political campaigns that emphasize ethnic identity risk deepening divisions and hampering attempts at national unification. Thus, the relationship between governance and social cohesion has become more complex due to the electoral system's unintended contribution to the entrenchment of ethnic identities in political discourse.

The sense of marginalization of minority groups was also exacerbated by institutional deficiencies in Tanzania's political system. Marginalized communities may feel disconnected from the political system if they perceive electoral processes to be biased or unrepresentative. When marginalized groups direct their grievances to other channels, this exclusion can trigger a vicious cycle of mistrust and political violence. A poignant example of how feelings of exclusion and injustice can escalate into larger societal conflicts is the violence that erupted in Zanzibar following the 2015 elections, leading to clashes between opposition groups and CCM supporters.

In addition, socioeconomic variables often compound the effects of institutional deficits and ethnic divisions. Differences in access to resources and political power can lead to competition between ethnic groups and further deepen divisions. For example, land distribution has been a controversial issue in Tanzania, where some ethnic groups believe they are disadvantaged. Political parties have exploited these tensions by aligning themselves with certain ethnic groups, reinforcing the cycle of ethnic rivalry and distrust within the electoral system.

Deep-rooted inequities have shaped ethnic relations across Tanzania, where land politics have historically been a major source of conflict. Due to the legacy of colonial land dispossession, which continues to impact today's land tenure systems, tensions arise between different ethnic groups over the allocation and access to resources. For example, some ethnic groups have been marginalized due to the creation of large-scale agricultural holdings and the distribution of prime land to them, particularly in areas such as Kilimanjaro and Arusha. The Chaga and Maasai

communities have benefited greatly from land ownership in these areas, which has led to hostility among smaller ethnic groups who feel excluded from land use decision-making processes. These differences fuel feelings of injustice and inequality that can lead to conflict, particularly as competition for land resources increases.

Land distribution in Tanzania has not only shaped the dynamics between different ethnic groups locally, but has also led to greater economic divisions along ethnic lines. Government investments and policies disproportionately benefited some communities, resulting in uneven development in the surrounding area. For example, some ethnic groups in coastal regions have benefited financially from growing cash crops such as cashews, while others continue to face economic disadvantages. Disparate distributions like these reinforce ethnic identities and grievances by giving marginalized groups the impression that they are being excluded from economic development. As these groups are marginalized, they may feel excluded, which can exacerbate political unrest and occasionally spark violent protests in response to perceived injustices.

These economic disparities make it easy for political elites to exploit ethnic support, especially during election cycles. Through their ties to specific ethnic communities and their promises to address their grievances in exchange for votes, political actors often exploit existing inequalities. For example, in the 2015 elections, opposition parties such as the CUF emphasized the focus on access to resources and land rights, which were important to the people of Zanzibar. This tactic increased resentment toward the ruling CCM party, which was seen as maintaining the status quo and also gained support from disaffected voters. Campaign tactics like these illustrate how economic inequality can exacerbate ethnic tensions as political parties compete to win over ethnic groups by pledging to solve their particular economic problems.

Furthermore, the politicization of economic inequality can exacerbate pre-existing tensions when economic promises are broken. After the 2010 elections, for example, marginalized communities became more upset with the government as opposition parties claimed it had failed to deliver on its promise of a fair distribution of resources. Consequently, there is a stronger sense of perception that political power is being used unfairly, which could lead to social unrest. An unstable atmosphere arises from the interplay of economic inequality and ethnic tensions, particularly in areas where there is intense rivalry over resources and unresolved historical grievances.

In Tanzania, leadership dynamics are fundamental in determining the nature of ethnic relations and electoral outcomes. Political leaders have the ability to either reduce or increase tensions between different ethnic groups. Leaders who actively promote unity and inclusive policies tend to reduce ethnic tensions and strengthen a sense of national identity. For example, former President Julius Nyerere placed great emphasis on socialism and *Ujamaa*, which aimed to reduce ethnic divisions by uniting different ethnic groups into a single national identity. On the other hand, leaders who use polarizing language or play on ethnic sentiments have the potential to significantly exacerbate disputes. This was evident in the 2000 elections, when opposition party leaders and other political figures began to rally support along ethnic lines, heightening tensions and bringing ethnic identities back into political discourse.

Leadership crises often result from violent and fraudulent elections, which further undermine the legitimacy of elected officials and throw the political system into turmoil. For example, in the 2015 election there were numerous allegations of voting errors such as ballot forgery and voter intimidation. These anomalies not only demoralized the electorate but also created serious instability, particularly in areas such as Zanzibar where opposition parties enjoyed

significant support. The subsequent leadership crisis created a climate of mistrust towards the ruling CCM party, as many citizens felt their voice had been muffled. When marginalized groups view their exclusion from political processes as a betrayal, such crises can exacerbate ethnic tensions and further divide society.

In electoral conflicts where high stakes and increased potential for violence are at stake, the influence of leadership on ethnic relations is particularly evident. For example, the 2000 elections saw violent clashes between CCM and CUF supporters, particularly in Zanzibar, where CUF claimed the elections were fraudulent. Provocative statements by leaders of both sides worsened the situation, deepened ethnic divisions and resulted in significant loss of life and property. These incidents are a reminder of how incompetent leadership can lead to violent conflict and a climate of distrust and terror between different ethnic communities during election cycles.

Instability and increasing ethnic divisions can also result from leadership crises due to controversial elections, which can leave a power vacuum. The sense of marginalization of ethnic minorities was exacerbated by the leadership conflicts following the 2010 elections, which were also the subject of allegations of fraud. People became increasingly restless and began demanding reforms as they believed that the newly elected government did not reflect their interests. This sense of disenfranchisement can set in motion a vicious cycle in which ethnic groups organize against the ruling party and sow more division and conflict.

Tanzania's 2010 elections saw allegations of irregularities and violence, particularly in Zanzibar, the country's semi-autonomous territory. As voters cast their ballots, allegations of intimidation, ballot box stuffing and other electoral errors emerged, causing widespread dissatisfaction among opposition parties, particularly the CUF. The CUF strongly disputed the results of the Zanzibar Electoral Commission, which declared the ruling CCM the winner. Sixty-

two percent of Zanzibar respondents who took part in a Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics post-election survey said the elections were not free and fair (Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics, 2011). The grievances raised by the opposition highlighted the urgent need for electoral reform and greater representation, as many Tanzanians believed their voices had been disregarded. The region's ethnic and political divisions were further deepened by this disillusionment, leading to major unrest that culminated in violent protests and clashes between CUF members and CCM allies.

Tensions had been rising since 2010 and the 2015 elections only made them worse as opposition parties stepped up their calls for electoral reform and greater transparency. Ahead of the elections, the opposition - which included CUF and Chadema - united in calling for reforms, highlighting, among other things, the need for a more transparent voter registration process and the independence of the NEC. Reportedly, around 67% of Tanzanians believed that the Electoral Commission was biased in favor of the ruling party (Afrobarometer, 2015). As opposition parties found it difficult to compete with the established CCM, which could exploit its historical dominance and rich resources, tensions between ethnic groups increased. For example, the ruling party repressed opposition parties and used the media and state apparatus to maintain its power, particularly in rural areas where the CCM had strong support.

Ethnic tensions prevailed during the 2015 elections, particularly in Zanzibar, where the CUF enjoyed significant support from the Swahili-speaking population. There were reports of several deaths and injuries in fighting between supporters of opposing parties during the election, which was marked by widespread violence. According to a report published by the International Crisis Group (International Crisis Group, 2016), over 20 people died in election-related violence during this period. The resulting unrest called into question the legitimacy of the electoral process

and highlighted the precarious state of ethnic relations in a country that had previously prided itself on its relative stability. As the CUF failed to win, allegations of electoral fraud intensified, leading to protests and calls for the ruling party to take responsibility.

Opposition parties' complaints in both elections highlighted the need for comprehensive electoral reforms to ensure fair representation and reduce systemic bias. The persistent patterns of violence and irregularities not only weakened public confidence in the electoral process, but also ensured that marginalized ethnic groups remained in a state of constant exclusion. Institutional reforms such as strengthening the independence of the NEC and introducing policies to ensure fair competition are urgently needed, as the 2015 elections made clear. Tanzania faces continued political instability, increasing ethnic divisions and possible conflict in upcoming electoral cycles if these reforms are not implemented. Because unresolved historical grievances will undermine public trust in democratic processes.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOLARLY DISCUSSION OF ALL THE FINDINGS

The study's goal was to explore the electoral system's role in managing multiethnic conflict, by focusing on Tanzania and Kenya. Examining how the systems shape representation and inclusion of ethnic groups, helps in understanding their effect on ethnic conflict and best practices to promote multiethnic democracies that are peaceful.

I. Electoral Systems and Ethnic Inclusion

Kenya utilizes an electoral system that is characterized by the framework FPTP, which impacts ethnic representation and inclusion. The system favors the dominant and larger ethnic groups, subsequently marginalizing the smaller ones and the electoral process in Kenya is intertwined with political mobilization and ethnic identity along ethnic lines. Such dynamics result in a polarized political environment, causing elections to be viewed as 'zero-sum' contests among the competing ethnic groups. Dulani, Harris, Horowitz and Kayuni (2020) implies that the nature of FPTP elections of the winner taking all has historically worsened ethnic tensions with large tribes like the Kalenjin, Kikuyu and Luo dominating the political landscape and reflecting exclusion among the smaller communities. The exclusion is evident in the resource and political power distribution, which favors the ethnic base of the winning coalition. Kenya's '2007-2008 post-election violence shows the severe implications of such exclusion because the disputed election results caused violence, which was an effect of the electoral injustice perception and prevalent ethnic grievances (Fanso, 2023).

Conversely, Tanzania applies a 'mixed electoral system,' which has both proportional representation and FPTP elements and the electoral system together with its historical focus on socialism and national unity allows for an inclusive political environment (Pastarmadzhieva, 2021). Julius Nyerere's party CCM was responsible for policies and a legacy that fostered national

identity rather than ethnic affiliations and continue to shape the country's political landscape. The 'mixed electoral system' promotes the representation of diverse groups. Proportional representation allows for smaller ethnic groups and parties to have a say in the political process and such inclusiveness is witnessed in Tanzania's peaceful elections. However, Zanzibar due to its unique political and historical dynamics deviates from the mainland's experience.

The agency of political elites in both Kenya and Tanzania was shaped by the structural legacies of colonialism, which influenced their choices regarding electoral systems. In Kenya, the entrenched ethnic competition from the colonial period constrained the elites' ability to introduce reforms that could foster cross-ethnic cooperation, with the FPTP system reinforcing ethnic-based political alliances. This system effectively locked the country into a cycle of ethnic mobilization, making it difficult for elites to adopt a more inclusive electoral approach. In contrast, Tanzania's post-independence elites, guided by Nyerere's vision, were able to prioritize national unity over ethnic division, facilitating a more inclusive electoral system that promoted cross-ethnic cooperation.

II. Electoral Systems and Ethnic Conflict

The electoral system of Kenya has catalyzed ethnic conflicts because the 'FPTP' system encourages ethnic mobilization, where political success depends on having the most ethnically homogeneous constituencies support (Fanso, 2023). The system allows for ethnic divisions because political leaders focus on getting support from their ethnic bases for electoral victories. Dulani, Harris, Horowitz and Kayuni (2020) points out that FPTP elections have high stakes due to their zero-sum nature, which makes the losing groups feel disenfranchised. Kenya's post-election violence reveals how electoral systems may worsen ethnic conflict. The 2007 disputed election caused the clash of different ethnic groups resulting in deaths and displacement of citizens.

The subsequent power-sharing agreement to ensure political settlement underscored the need for representative and inclusive electoral frameworks. However, Tanzania's electoral system is more effective as it mitigates ethnic conflict by a combination of proportional representation and FPTP elements for a balanced representation and to eliminate exclusion perception. Nyerere's legacy which discourages ethnic divisions and promotes unity, also helps maintain stability and a peaceful political environment.

Tanzania and Kenya's comparative analysis shed light on the role of electoral systems to effectively manage multiethnic conflict. Kenya's FPTP system worsens ethnic tensions and perceptions of exclusion through the 'winner-takes-all' mentality, while Tanzania's mixed system is representative and inclusive. The electoral system's effectiveness is impacted by the political, socio-economic and historical factors of each country. Inclusiveness and representation help mitigate ethnic conflict and electoral systems that prioritize broader representation eliminate the perception of disenfranchisement and the potential for violence. The proportional representation in Tanzania allows smaller ethnic groups and parties to have a say, such inclusiveness helps maintain stability and peace in multiethnic societies.

The post-independence electoral systems in Kenya and Tanzania have played a pivotal role in shaping ethnic conflict and political dynamics. In Kenya, despite the introduction of multi-party politics in the 1990s, the FPTP system perpetuated ethnic mobilization, with elections deepening ethnic tensions rather than fostering party-based competition. The system incentivized political elites to exploit ethnic identities for electoral gain, reinforcing divisions. Conversely, Tanzania's proportional representation system promoted a more inclusive political environment, mitigating ethnic tensions by encouraging cross-ethnic cooperation, which underscores the crucial impact of electoral system design on ethnic conflict.

III. Addressing Historical and Political Contexts

Tanzania and Kenya have different political and historical contexts that impact their electoral systems' effectiveness and shape conflict and ethnic inclusion. Political historical factors matter because, while variations in electoral institutions explain variations in conflict across cases, understanding the context is essential to explain changes in patterns of exclusion and inclusion. The contexts give a backdrop against the electoral systems and require understanding to establish effective reforms. Kenya's political environment is shaped by its colonial history which was responsible for establishing and reinforcing ethnic divisions, which resonate in today's politics. The colonial administration used a divide-and-rule approach entrenching ethnic identities and promoting competition among various groups for economic and political resources (Pastarmadzhieva, 2021). Ethnic compartmentalization legacy was pushed into the post-independence period, developing a political climate where ethnic identity determines competition and political allegiance. O Mbori (2021) posit that the colonial era resulted in economic disparities in ethnic groups, whereby some communities benefited more from infrastructure and colonial economic activities than others. Such historical injustices perpetuated ethnic grievances and economic inequalities that surface during elections. An example is the Kikuyu community which had access to economic opportunities and education during the colonial period and remains economically dominant, worsening marginalization feelings among other communities (O Mbori, 2021).

Reforming the electoral system in Kenya must consider such deep-seated political and historical factors to effectively address the underlying causes of ethnic conflicts. Murithi (2022) supports initiatives that foster social cohesion, deconstructing ethnic stereotypes and fostering economic equity. The policies must ensure equitable resource distribution while considering

affirmative action aimed at eliminating the marginalization of communities to mitigate historical grievances. Kenyan political elites take advantage of ethnic identity for their political mileage and utilize ethnic mobilization to galvanize support without considering national cohesion (Fanso, 2023). Hence, electoral reforms must include measures that diminish ethnic mobilization incentives, by ensuring that political parties adopt multi-ethnic platforms, which are inclusive such as a diverse leadership structure and demonstrate wide support in multiple regions so that they can qualify to participate in elections.

Tanzania's historical political context was heavily influenced by the policies of Julius Nyerere that focused on socialism and nation-building rather than ethnic divisions. *Ujamaa* was Nyerere's philosophy that builds a national identity of unity by eliminating ethnic affiliations and fostering economic and social equality (Lockwood, Krönke & Mattes, 2021). The *Ujamaa* legacy has helped Tanzania's politics to be more inclusive and peaceful. Nyerere's policies integrated the various ethnic groups through villagization programs, having a single party and making Kiswahili a national language, which reduced ethnic competition to gain political power and established a robust national identity that mitigated ethnic tensions (Lockwood, Krönke & Mattes, 2021). In the 1990s the country transitioned to having multiparty introducing novel challenges such as political competition and ethnic mobilization.

Zanzibar presents complexities due to its unique politics characterized by electoral violence and polarization. Tanzania's efforts to reform its electoral system must consider the political and historical contexts, where reforms should be established on national unity and adapt to multiparty politics. It should involve strengthening institutions and promoting a transparent electoral process that is inclusive, while in Zanzibar, customized strategies are required to effectively address

historical grievances. Power-sharing arrangements can also be a solution to ensure fair representation of various political groups (Lockwood, Krönke & Mattes, 2021).

A deeper investigation into the role of post-independence political elites is crucial for understanding the adoption of electoral systems in Kenya and Tanzania. In Kenya, the elite's decision to retain the FPTP system can be seen as a strategic choice to consolidate power by capitalizing on ethnic support bases, thereby reinforcing existing divisions. Conversely, in Tanzania, the adoption of proportional representation was a deliberate move by elites, particularly under Nyerere's leadership, to promote inclusive governance and reduce ethnic competition. A more thorough examination of the political dynamics and elite preferences in both countries would shed light on how these electoral systems were shaped by political agency, while also considering the constraints imposed by colonial legacies.

IV. Electoral Design Best Practices

In multiethnic democracies several best practices can be utilized in electoral design such as proportional representation to promote inclusiveness and diverse groups are heard in the political process to eliminate the volatile 'zero-sum' nature of most FPTP elections by lessening the stakes with electoral results (Dulani, Harris, Horowitz & Kayuni, 2020). Another best practice is that power-sharing arrangements can minimize political tensions and enhance political stability. Such arrangements promote inclusivity allowing different groups to be part of the governance process ensuring peaceful coexistence. Nation-building initiatives and civic education can be encouraged to emphasize national identity and unity can reduce ethnic divisions, Tanzania's focus on national unity and Nyerere's legacy offers a valuable model for building cohesion.

Reforming the electoral commission is another best practice that ensures its impartiality and independence for credible elections. Reforms foster electoral commissions' autonomy and

enhance their ability to manage elections without malpractice or potential violence (Pastarmadzhieva, 2021). Another best practice is addressing socio-economic inequalities causing political discontent can ensure long-term stability. Inclusive economic policies that reduce poverty can alleviate grievances fueling electoral violence.

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

Tanzania and Kenya's electoral systems highlight the intricate interplay between ethnic inclusion, electoral frameworks and conflict. Kenya's FPTP framework proves ineffective because it is prone to ethnic tensions, while Tanzania's mixed system is a testament to an effective electoral system that ensures inclusiveness and eliminates conflict. The comparative analysis of Kenya and Tanzania has shown that differences in electoral design explain variations across cases. However, my research has also demonstrated that while electoral institutions explain differences across cases, variations in electoral arrangements cannot in themselves fully explain changes in levels and patterns of inter-ethnic violence in the context of electoral competition overtime.

Indeed, my empirical comparative analysis of Kenya and Tanzania has clearly shown that history matters. That is, it is imperative to consider each country's unique political and historical contexts when designing and enforcing electoral reforms. Best practices that promote peaceful multiethnic democracies require integrating proportional representation, power-sharing, civic education, addressing socio-economic inequalities, reforming electoral commissions and addressing inequalities. Adopting such practices fosters fairness and inclusiveness in electoral systems, ensuring stability and peace in multiethnic societies.

The empirical implications are crucial for understanding how post-colonial states can address colonial legacies through electoral reforms. Kenya and Tanzania's experiences provide valuable insights for other post-colonial countries struggling with ethnic conflict and the need for inclusive governance. The key issue is whether electoral reforms, like proportional representation, can genuinely reduce ethnic tensions or merely mask deeper structural problems. Policymakers should focus on designing electoral systems that promote inclusivity, reduce ethnic competition and align with the historical and political contexts of their countries.

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