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The 'X factor' in CCM's nomination process

As Tanzania's dominant party since Independence, Chama cha Mapinduzi has always won both the Union and Zanzibar elections.

Party stalwarts boast that whomever CCM nominates as its presidential candidate is all but assured of becoming the country's chief executive. However, like politics in any country, the CCM presidential nomination can be a murky process and can present a chance to settle old scores.

Previous votes have been notoriously difficult to call, and none more so than this nomination, with a far greater number of aspirants than ever before. With more players in the mix, the machinations are trickier to predict.

A number of possible scenarios could unfold over the course of the next month. Circumstances could conspire against certain applicant(s), perceived to be especially powerful and/or divisive. Events could seem to focus on a bid to control the nomination process with a view to eliminating these individuals' candidature. This figure could be termed "the X factor".

This scenario has several permutations. One could be that the chair orders the removal of X from the 32-member central committee's eventual shortlist of five aspirants, one of whom will be voted in by CCM members as their candidate. The directive to remove X could be issued by the chair. CCM's constitution declares that the chair need not be the head of state, but in practice it is always so.

President Jakaya Kikwete's fiat could be exercised based on unsavoury information provided by the Security and Ethics Committee. There are precedents to "Control by Fiat". In 1995, president Julius Nyerere is said to have ordered the removal of forms submitted by Edward Lowassa and John Malecela. The ~~forms~~ were also reportedly used on ~~the~~ Malecela a decade later during president Benjamin Mkapa's tenure.

Another course of action under the control scenario is discipline for a past offence. "Control by Discipline" could be meted out to X by the CC deciding to return to a previous misdeemeanour. One option would be to revisit last year's violation of the Election Expenses Act (2010) by a number of senior party members. Those named were Edward Lowassa, January Makamba, Bernard Membe, William Ngeleja, Frederick Sumaye and Steven Wasira. All have presidential ambitions, and all allegedly engaged in "early campaigning." In May it was announced that the six had all received a caution — in other words, a mild slap on the wrist.

The decision to hold back on a



Chama cha Mapinduzi supporters. Picture: File

COMMENTARY DR ALEXANDER MAKULLILO AND THOMAS STEVEN

"A number of possible scenarios could unfold over the course of the next month."

penalty could be seen as a tactic within a wider strategy. The tactic may have been to administer only a light rebuke in order to ensure that none of the six heavyweights obstructed the June budget — which, in the event, they all supported. The yellow card — with no penalty — could become a red card if a second caution is issued. The recent words of CCM's publicity and ideology secretary Nape Nhaiye offer a glimpse into this option under the Control by Discipline strategy. Mr Nhaiye said for "those wishing to contest... past incidents would be used during screening for candidates." Here the solution to the X factor could be to deal with Messrs Lowassa, Makamba, Membe, Ngeleja, Sumaye and Wasira all in exactly the same way as each contravened the rules in the same way.

So Control by Discipline = Deal with the threat by sacrificing all six. The method removes the X factor and leaves the others who played by to be rewarded with leadership positions.

The next Control scenario also relates in part to leadership positions. In "Control by Categorisation" the CC populates its shortlist according to classifications that exclude X. X could be outranked by those currently holding senior positions in government. The traditions of the Union could also mean that, should X be a mainland, the list of five should include a Zanzibari. In the event of X being male, the gender card could be played — selecting one of the women seeking nomination. Then there is "the outsider." Historically there is always at least one person who emerges from relative obscurity. It may be a competent civil servant, or some other safe pair of hands. The shortlist may also include a name long associated with the party who has commanded and earned respect elsewhere.

Should Control by Fiat, Discipline, or Categorisation prevail, X from taking the party's presidential nomination, the offer of a high-status government

appointment could be made to appease them. This presents a further variation, "Control by Accommodation," which sees X being informed that Y will be president, and that X will receive another senior position such as vice-president or prime minister. Whether X would be satisfied with any appointment that is not the highest office in the land is another matter — as the upper echelons of CCM know all too well.

If events are to transpire to X's displeasure, he/she may well take action that leads to a new sequence of events. If X is indeed dissatisfied with the arbitration over Y's success, there are three possible outcomes. X may decide to: 1. Play ball (*kamuni*); 2. Not play ball (sabotage); 3. Play ball elsewhere (defection).

In Outcome 1 a disappointed X feels that this just isn't his/her year to lift the cup. X lives to fight another day. Outcome 2 sees a disgruntled X attempt to sabotage the remainder of the nomination process. X's team approaches Z, one of the short-listed candidates, with the offer of a campaign team with proven experience and substantial funds. Seduced by the massive resources at X's disposal, Z

agrees to the alliance and wins the competition. X becomes the kingmaker and is a step closer to having Z, Tanzania's fifth president, in his/her pocket.

In Outcome 3 a dejected X feels snubbed by the system and leaves the party altogether. The defection of such a big-hitter leaves CCM considerably weakened. X either establishes a new party that a number of allies from CCM then join, or X joins an existing party. CCM's supremacy is then significantly challenged in forthcoming elections. Since the dawn of multiparty democracy in 1992, opposition parties have slowly grown in their share of the vote. The opposition now shows some signs of being able to mount a serious challenge to CCM's hegemony, and the forthcoming elections are likely to be the most difficult democratic test the party has ever faced.

A partnership with a newly established political party — such as the Alliance for Change and Transparency (ACT-Wazalendo) — may not have time to make a significant impact in the October polls. X would more likely favour an outfit akin to Ukawa, with greater experience as an organisation and more established Chadema and CUF-like structures.

Should X indeed attempt to form a pact, then one would hope that the ruling party's qualms would also carry weight with any self-respecting ally.

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CANDIDATES ACCUSED OF EARLY CAMPAIGNING



Edward Lowassa



January Makamba



Bernard Membe



William Ngeleja



Frederick Sumaye



Steven Wasira