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**Advertisements or Friends?
Formal and Informal Recruitment Methods in Tanzania**

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Abstract

Only insufficient data are available on the recruitment methods of enterprises in Africa. Our aim is to investigate the recruitment methods of small and medium sized private companies in Tanzania. We test whether the way formal and informal methods are employed is similar or different to the way they are employed by companies in Europe or North America. Data collected by half-standardized questionnaires in Mwanza show that informal methods (such as referrals by friends) are primarily applied for low-ranking positions while formal methods, particularly newspaper advertisements, are used for high-ranking positions. This stands in contrast to findings from industrialized countries where informal methods are more important for filling high-ranking positions. For the vacancy period of high- and low-ranking positions patterns do not differ from those in industrialized countries.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Labour market issues in Africa have been approached from different angles. One area of study has been unemployment and its relation to the multifarious continuum between formal and informal work prevalent in many African countries. The fluidity of work situations has sparked a discussion about concepts of employment and their applicability (e.g., Heintz and Posel 2008 for South Africa). Other authors have shown that the dual labour market theory, originally conceived and tested in North America and Europe, can be used to analyze social and economic processes in Africa. They, however, demand modifications to address inadequacies (Uys and Blaauw 2006; Mulinge and Munyae 1998).

In spite of these discussions about African labour markets, little is known about *how* the demand and supply side of labor markets *de facto* interact on the micro-level. How do basic labour market processes such as informing employers about the availability of workers, informing workers about openings and the subsequent screening (Fevre 1992, pp. 10-13) function in African countries? This study focuses on the interaction between Tanzanian employers and their potential employees, particularly in the recruitment process. In this we contribute micro-level data to the discussion on human resource management, employment, and labor markets in Africa. Our case in point is an investigation into the recruitment methods of employers in Mwanza, a major city in North-Western Tanzania.

For the functioning of labour markets it is important that a match between a potential employer and a job seeker can be achieved. This match is understood as a result of successful processes of information, screening and negotiation. Employers have to convey information about vacancies and the requirements to fill them. Job seekers make their own efforts to declare their availability. As soon as interest arises between an employer and a job seeker a mutual process of screening begins with the aim of evaluating the offers made by the other part. This may result in final contract negotiations or in the refusal to enter an agreement (Fevre 1992, pp. 10-13). The first two steps of information and screening vary substantially according to recruitment

methods. Help-wanted-signs and walk-ins for instance are information processes initiated by opposite sides of the labour market. Advertisements and referrals by business partners involve different ways of screening. In the following we will concentrate on the recruitment methods of private Tanzanian companies and their implications for the labour market. The picture we will finally come up with will capture a period in time (the period of our study). We assume that labour market processes are dynamic. Managers' choices or their acceptance of recruitment methods are subject to a diversity of factors (personal experience and training, structural factors within the company, industrial sector, region, etc.) and thus part of a continuous process of change.

The literature which is less labour market- and more human-resource-management-oriented provides us with additional and abundant information about recruitment methods. It basically distinguishes between formal and informal recruitment methods (Rees 1966, p. 559). Formal methods (e.g., advertisements) and informal methods (e.g., referrals by current employees) are related to specific advantages and disadvantages not only before, but even after signing a work contract – a point we will elaborate on in detail in the next section. A review of the HRM literature, however, shows that most studies on recruitment methods limit themselves to Europe or America and ignore African economies. Our study wants to make a contribution towards closing this gap.

Although we acknowledge institutional differences between Tanzania and countries dealt with in the literature before, we would not consider it wise to overemphasize an African distinctiveness at the point of departure (for a different position cf. Kamoche 1997). Similarities as well as differences will become visible in the course of testing two hypotheses based on the findings for industrialized countries in the Tanzanian context. Particularly, we assume that employers of private enterprises recruit highly qualified personnel more often through informal than formal recruitment methods [H1], and that the vacancy period is shorter if employers apply informal methods [H2].

In the following section (section two) we will provide a review of the literature on recruitment methods. We will show what inclined us to make the mentioned hypotheses. In section three we will outline the research design, methods and sample employed for our study. In section four we will present the results, and interpret them in section five. In section six we will conclude and discuss directions for future investigations.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The HRM literature distinguishes between formal and informal methods used in the recruitment process (e.g., Rees 1966). Formal methods include advertising, signs outside the estate or arrangements with private and public employment agencies. Informal recruitment methods encompass referrals made by friends, business partners, or current employees. For industrialized countries, e.g., the United States or the Netherlands, advantages and disadvantages of formal and informal recruitment methods have been studied in detail (e.g., Rees and Shultz 1970 for Chicago). Results reveal that employers rely on formal recruitment methods if they have a large number of vacant positions or if they need less detailed information on their potential employees. Furthermore, formal methods are important if an employer has limited access to informal recruitment channels, for instance if a company establishes new branches in another country. In connection with equal opportunities, formal recruitment methods are important for obeying the law in many countries. Since formal methods are associated with more fairness and transparency they are often used by public employers. However, formal methods are in many cases related to higher search costs and higher employee turnover rates as compared to informal methods.

For highly skilled personnel, employers prefer informal recruitment methods (cf. Rees 1966; Kirnan, Farley and Geisinger 1989; Mencken and Winfield 1998; Gorter and van Ommeren 1999; additionally Barron and Bishop 1985). In this case precise information about the applicants is needed. Roper (1988), Gorter, Nijkamp and Rietveld (1996) hint at additional advantages of informal methods: they are faster and generally cheaper as compared to formal ones (cf. additionally Granovetter 1995). Furthermore, personnel selected by informal methods shows higher productivity and lower turnover rates (Holzer 1987). Montgomery (1991) claims that employers hiring through referrals realize higher profits. DeVaro (2005) finds empirical evidence that employees selected through informal channels earn higher wages. These research findings indicate that (especially private) employers rely on informal recruitment due to particular advantages for their organizations. Kirnan, Farley and Geisinger (1989) give two explanations for the positive match obtained through informal recruitment. First, they outline that applicants go through a process of 'pre-screening'. The idea is that current employees or other people pre-screen whether job applicants' abilities actually fit the requirements of a vacant position. Only those applicants who have successfully passed the 'screening' process are recommended to the employer. This explanation is called 'pre-screening hypothesis'. Second, potential applicants receive information on the vacant position, the job or the employer through informal

channels. This information is normally of better quality than information available through formal channels. Thus applicants can form more realistic expectations. Probably, more complete information induces processes of self-selection among potential applicants (Reilly, Brown, Blood and Malatesta 1981). This explanation is called 'realistic job information hypothesis'. Although formal and informal ways of getting in contact with potential employees show distinct advantages and disadvantages (i.e., search costs) employers often do not restrict themselves to a single method. They choose or combine search channels depending on the particular vacancy and situation (see Gorter and van Ommeren 1999; Gorter, Nijkamp and Rietveld 1996; Russo, Rietveld, Nijkamp and Gorter 2000).

The existing literature on recruitment focuses on industrialized countries. Here researchers can use large data pools generated by surveys (e.g., DeVaro 2005; Mencken and Winfield 1998; Russo, Gorter, Nijkamp and Rietveld 1997; Gorter, Nijkamp and Rietveld 1996). For labor markets in Africa such data pools are missing. A major part of the literature on Africa investigates human resource development (e.g., Debrah and Ofori 2006), human resource design (Nyambegera, Sparrow and Daniels 2000), human resource objectives (e.g., Templer, Hofmeyer and Rall 1997) or human resource management in private enterprises in general (cf. Anakwe 2002). The recruitment process as such is rarely focused on. A thematically interrelated but in terms of discussion separate strand developed in the social sciences. In the wake of functionalist modernization theory recruitment along ethnic and family ties was seen as detrimental to development. Referrals by friends, relatives or other members of primary groups were considered part of a backward, but resilient "economy of affection" (Hyden 1980, 1983 for Tanzania; cf. Seibel, Damachi and Holloh 1988 for Nigeria) that finally would have to be overcome. After two case studies in Kenyan companies Blunt (1980) refuted these claims and hinted at the positive effects of ethnic recruitment for organisations. Other scholars coined the word "rational nepotism" and defended its advantages for African enterprises (Iyanda 1999). Generally, this strand of discussion remained highly ideological. Only occasionally arguments were grounded in empirical evidence.

Empirical research on recruitment methods of private employers in Africa is nearly absent in the literature (but cf. Arthur, Woehr, Akande and Strong 1995, pp. 352-353). This is also the case for Tanzania. For instance, a paper by Debrah (2004) entitled 'HRM in Tanzania' only vaguely summarizes anecdotal stories and overemphasizes the socialist past with its public sector. From Debrah's paper it becomes apparent that empirical research is missing on the demand side of the labour market. The lack of data is surprising, as studies on Tanzanian enterprises

(especially small and medium enterprises) have mushroomed in the last two decades. For Tanzania, research on enterprises has focused on competitiveness and productivity (Admassie and Matambalya 2002; Grenier, McKay and Morrissey 1998, 1999; Rankin, Söderbom and Teal 2006; van Biesebroeck 2005), growth and enterprise development (RPED 1997; Danielson 2000; Harding, Söderbom and Teal 2002; Harding, Kahyarara and Rankin 2002), social networks (Egbert 2001, 2004, 2009; Kristiansen 2004), or privatization (Fischer 2003, 2006; Mbowe 1993; Sabea 2001).

To our knowledge only three studies have discussed recruitment methods in the Tanzanian context in detail. Trulsson (1997) addressed the question in a qualitative study with 26 entrepreneurs in Mwanza. He summarizes (1997, pp. 245-247) that entrepreneurs very often rely on friends and other contacts when searching for new employees. The main reason for this strategy is seen in finding personnel who can be trusted. Egbert (2001, pp. 70-72) used a sample of 76 private small and medium enterprises in Tanga. He asked employers which criteria had been most important for the last recruitment of employees. The criteria trust and qualification were mentioned first (similar to Trulsson's results), followed by experience and age. Referrals from trustworthy persons were mentioned to be of only minor importance. Fischer (2006, pp. 26-49) investigated the recruitment practices of a big industrial company in Dar Es Salaam before and after privatization. In the Socialist era production workers were mainly recruited through current employees' referrals. This was an official company policy which enhanced the use of personal networks (based on kinship, ethnicity, etc.) in the job search. Nevertheless, applicants had to prove basic formal education. Their permanent stay in the factory depended on their ability and diligence evaluated after a probationary period. After privatization qualification standards were lifted and given top priority in the recruitment process. Personal ties, however, remain crucial for the placement of highly skilled permanent and low skilled temporary workers.

3. RESEARCH

In the period between May 2008 and January 2009 we conducted research in Mwanza, Tanzania's second largest and fastest growing town with approximately 700,000 inhabitants in 2009 (National Bureau of Statistics, Mwanza 2009).¹ Since the country turned away from socialism in the mid-1980s private enterprises were set up and had to face international competition. This is especially true for companies in Mwanza, as the city on the shores of Lake Victoria is in proximity to Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

We collected data by half-standardized questionnaires and additional open interviews. Partly we used questions which had been applied in previous studies (e.g., DeVaro 2005; Mencken and Winfield 1998; Russo et al. 1997, 2000; Gorter and van Ommeren 1999) after having adjusted them to the Tanzanian context.²

We focused on privately owned companies for two reasons. Firstly, public employers are restricted by formal regulations in the recruitment process. Thus they cannot (officially) rely on informal recruitment methods. Secondly, in most of the studies discussed above private enterprises are analysed. In order to achieve comparability we excluded public employers from our survey. All companies have a minimum of 5 full time employees and have been operating for at least 3 years. Furthermore, the companies are Tanzanian in the sense that their owners are of Tanzanian-African or Tanzanian-Asian origin. We set these limitations with the aim to exclude (a) micro enterprises which are often not formally registered, (b) very young enterprises which have not yet established themselves, and (c) foreign owned companies (joint ventures as well as fully owned by, e.g., American, European or South African expatriates) which may rely on very different recruitment methods as compared to Tanzanian companies (cf. Newenham-Kahindi 2009 for the transfer of South African HRM concepts to Tanzania).

¹ Oral communication by National Bureau of Statistics, Mwanza. A national population and housing census is conducted every 10 years. The census of 2002 indicates 2,929,644 inhabitants of Mwanza region without distinguishing between rural and urban inhabitants (United Republic of Tanzania 2004). For 2008 internal statistics of the National Bureau of Statistics count 556,733 inhabitants of the two city districts of Nyamagana and Illemela. The head of the office estimated a city population of approximately 700,000 people in 2009.

² Seven advanced sociology students of Saint Augustine University of Tanzania in Mwanza assisted in the research process under the supervision of Fischer.

Another restriction relates to district boundaries. Mwanza city comprises the two districts of Ilemela and Nyamagana. Only companies within these districts were studied. Further local limitations were not set in order to avoid a bias in data. The sample shows a sufficient mean variation of companies across different areas of town. This is one reason why we consider the sample as representative for privately owned businesses in Mwanza. Another indicator of representativeness is the size of the sample. Our sample consists of 84 companies. The 'Central Register of Establishments' of 2007 (United Republic of Tanzania 2008) lists 297 private profit making companies in Mwanza city engaging five or more persons. Our study thus covers a large section of the existing companies that meet our criteria (a change in registrations between 2007 and 2009 not considered).

The 84 companies studied are mainly active in service related industries (87%) such as education, transport, garages, trade, hotels and restaurants, and security. The rest of the enterprises (13%) can be classified as belonging to the production and manufacturing sector. Nearly all companies of the sample can be classified as small (7.5 to 50 employees) or medium (51 to 400 employees).³ In detail, 25% of the enterprises employed 7.5 to 20 employees, 33% had 21 to 50 employees, and 39% between 51 and 400 employees in 2008 (average 81 employees, median 36.75). Concerning the size of the companies our selection criteria matches the one employed by the Central Register, as only companies engaging five or more persons are considered.

The comparatively large number of companies in the service sector (e.g., transport, garages, hotels and restaurants) reflects that Mwanza is a transport hub in North-West Tanzania. Moreover, we included enterprises in the educational sector. Such enterprises were not considered in former studies on Tanzanian SME. The general mushrooming of private primary, secondary and even tertiary learning institutions comes in the wake of the government's decision to liberalise the provision of social services in 1991. The success of these institutions is due to inadequacies in the public education system. In order to check the representativeness of our sample, we compared the sectoral distribution of companies in our sample with the respective distribution indicated in the Central Register for the districts Nyamagana and Ilemela. Our sample includes companies from all branches mentioned in the official data, with

³ Many companies employ full time *and* part time employees. We calculated the number of total employees by adding part time employees with the factor 0.5 to the number of full time employees. The following data refers to the number of total employees.

the exception of companies in the primary sector and in public administration. Companies from the primary sector are rather to be found in the proximity of the city but not in the city itself, thus they are not part of our sample. We compared the distribution of companies over branches in our sample to the distribution over branches in the Central Register. The results of our comparison show that the shares of enterprises in our sample do not differ much from the respective shares in the Central Register, except for two sectors: the share of enterprises in the transportation sector in our sample exceeds the respective share in the Central Register by 19 percentage points, for the education sector in turn the share in our sample is almost 25 percentage points lower.

More than half of the companies (54%) are registered under sole proprietorship, 40% are run as liability companies. Those in the form of sole proprietorships are smaller with respect to the number of employees. The average existence of all companies studied is 14 years. More than one third (36%) of the enterprises have been operating between 3 and 8 years, another 35% between 9 and 14 years and the remaining 30% have existed for 15 to 58 years. According to ethnic ownership, the enterprises can be classified as Tanzanian-African (70%), Tanzanian-Asian (21%), and Tanzanian-African-Asian (7%). Although the sample consists of a comparatively large number of enterprises with a Tanzanian-Asian ownership background (as compared with the Tanzanian-Asian percentage of total population) this is representative for business activities if compared to other studies on private SME (e.g., Egbert 2001, 2004).

In 51 of the 84 enterprises our interview partners labelled their own position as “manager position”. In 28 cases we interviewed the General Manager or the Human Resource Manager. On the whole, 68 of our respondents declared that the General Manager or the Human Resource Manager is responsible for the recruitment process in the enterprise. This indicates that the majority of enterprises in our sample assign high importance to the recruitment of new employees. Not surprisingly, enterprises employing a Human Resource Manager (formally trained or trained on the job) as mainly responsible for the recruitment process are on average larger (in terms of employees) than the other enterprises. The average number of employees for those enterprises is 125, the median amounts to 65 (compared to 81 and 36.75 for the whole sample).

4. RESULTS

In accordance with our first hypothesis we tested whether employers recruit highly qualified personnel significantly more often through informal than formal methods. As formal methods we defined help-wanted signs, advertisements in the media (newspapers and internet), and recruitment through agencies; informal methods include the re-recruitment of former employees, walk-ins and all kinds of referrals (from friends, business partners, schools or current employees). If the interviewee indicated more than one method, we considered only the first method used in the recruitment process. In the following we distinguish between high- and low-ranking positions. In the questionnaire a high-ranking position was described as a management position, such as that held by a supervisor or accountant.

Table 1: Recruitment methods for high- and low-ranking positions

	Method	High-Ranking Position (n)	Low-Ranking Position (n)
Formal	newspaper advertisements	22	4
	help-wanted signs	2	5
	internet	1	0
	employment agency	1	0
	Total	26	9
Informal	walk-ins	9	31
	referrals from current employees	11	19
	referrals from friends	14	9
	referrals from business partners	10	4
	referrals from schools	2	2
	re-recruitment	1	0
	Total	47	65

Note: Number of enterprises does not total 84 due to missing values.

Our results show that enterprises rely on different methods when filling vacancies (Table 1). Especially for high-ranking positions newspaper advertisements (a formal method) are used. Referrals from friends, business partners or employees constitute

another important method when hiring qualified personnel. For low-ranking positions informal methods, particularly walk-ins, are generally applied more often.

We tested for differences in the recruitment method with respect to the *most recently* appointed high-ranking and low-ranking employee. While in 45 cases the newest high-ranking employee was recruited through informal methods, the corresponding number for low-ranking positions amounted to 59 as shown in Table 2.

Among the 68 enterprises in Table 2 there are 42 companies which used informal methods for selecting the latest high-ranking as well as the latest low-ranking employee. In contrast, 6 companies only relied on formal methods in both cases. The remaining 20 companies employed different methods for both positions. The p-value indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship at the 10%-level between the method employed within an enterprise in order to recruit employees for low-ranking and for high-ranking positions.

Table 2: Choice or combination of recruitment methods for filling the most recent high- and low-ranking position

High-ranking Position	Low-ranking Position	<i>n</i>	Expected numbers under H0 (independency of both attributes)
Informal	Informal	42	39
Formal	Formal	6	3
Informal	Formal	3	6
Formal	Informal	17	20

Note: Expected numbers under H0 (independency of recruitment method for high-rankings and low-rankings). Number of enterprises does not total 84 due to missing values.

$p(H_0)=0.052$

Next we tested whether the probability of observing a formal or an informal recruitment method is equal for a high- and low-ranking position and found that the probability of observing a formal recruitment method is significantly higher for a high-

ranking position.⁴ These results are in remarkable contrast to the findings for other countries.

Since it is possible that characteristics of an enterprise correlate with the choice of recruitment methods, we tested several variables. Using crosstabulations, we discovered that enterprises registered as sole proprietorships recruit significantly more often using informal methods than limited companies. Similarly, we observed a correlation between the age of an enterprise and its recruitment methods. If the company is younger than 9 years it is more likely that informal methods are applied than formal ones. Concerning the size of the company we noticed that for companies with more than 50 employees it is more likely to recruit formally as compared to smaller companies.

These results allow us to reject the first hypothesis. For our sample we can summarize that formal methods (especially newspaper advertisements) are relatively more often used for high-ranking positions. In particular larger and on average older enterprises legally registered as limited companies prefer formal methods. Smaller companies with fewer employees run under sole proprietorship tend to recruit informally.

Our second hypothesis states that vacancies are filled faster if informal methods are employed. We tested the relationship between vacancy periods in weeks and the application of formal or informal methods. Our results show that vacancy periods are significantly longer when formal recruitment is employed for both high- and low-

⁴ We ignore all 51 cases in which recruitment methods for high-ranking positions and low-ranking positions are equal and focus on the 20 cases where the respective methods differ. The null hypothesis is that the probability to observe an informal method for high-ranking and a formal method for low-ranking positions equals one half, as does the probability of observing the opposite case if one of the 20 enterprises is randomly selected. The respective random variable is binomially distributed. The null of $p=0.5$ can be clearly rejected for a binomial experiment with $N=20$ and 17 “successes” (or “failures”).

ranking positions.⁵ Moreover, high-ranking positions generally remained open for longer periods than lower positions.⁶

To further investigate the determinants of the vacancy period we employed the Cox proportional hazard model (hereafter: Cox model). This model investigates the determinants of several covariates on the hazard rate, i.e. the probability that a state ends in a certain period, given that it has lasted until that period. The influence of a covariate on the hazard ratio is assumed to be proportional over time (for a detailed description of the Cox model see, e.g., Cameron and Trivedi, 2006, pp. 592-597; Therneau and Grambsch 2000). Thus, the Cox model is apt to figure out whether a certain covariate decreases or increases the hazard rate related to the duration of the vacancy. A negative impact of the covariate on the hazard rate is associated with a lower probability of observing the end of the vacancy in each period and consequently with a longer duration of the vacancy. Besides a dummy variable that takes on the value of one if a formal recruitment method was employed and zero otherwise, we include the age of the company, its size measured by the number of employees and the existence of a Human Resource Manager.

⁵ We use the Mann Whitney Test in order to obtain this result. This test separates all vacancies in two groups, dependent on whether a formal or informal recruitment was employed in order to fill the vacant position. Then all observed vacancy periods are sorted in ascending order. The positions of the vacancies in the resulting series are summed over both groups. The sum for formally filled vacancies is significantly larger than would be expected if the recruitment method had no influence on the duration of the vacancy.

⁶ The procedure we use in this context is similar to the one described in footnote 3. There are 37 companies that spent more time to fill the high-ranking vacancies than to fill the low-ranking vacancies and 5 companies where the opposite is true (and 30 ties). The null of $p=0.5$ can be clearly rejected for a binomial experiment with $N=42$ and 37 “successes” (or “failures”).

Table 3: Results of the Cox model estimates

Covariate	Hazard Ratio (z-Statistic)	
	high-ranking	low-ranking
formal	0.5705 (-2.13*)	0.5856 (-1.59)
HR-Manager	0.7894 (-0.87)	0.6574 (-1.40)
number of employees	1.0002 (0.18)	1.0008 (0.66)
age	0.9826 (-1.00)	1.0102 (0.80)

* Indicates significance at the 5%-level; robust variance estimator used, ties were handled using the Efron-method.

In Table 3 we show the results of the Cox model estimates for the vacancy of high-ranking positions as well as for the vacancy of low-ranking positions. The displayed hazard ratios are the proportional effect of the rise of the respective covariate by one unit on the hazard rate. The z-statistic shows whether this effect is significantly different from unity. The estimate results for the high-ranking position indicate a decline of the hazard rate by over 40% (old hazard rate times 0.5625) if the recruitment method changes from informal to formal, everything else kept constant. This decline of the hazard rate implies a lower probability in each period to observe an end of the state of vacancy, which in turn means that formal recruitment causes – conditional on the other covariates in the model – a longer vacancy period.

In the low-ranking case, the estimators are of the same magnitude as in the high-ranking case, but the estimator associated with the formal dummy is not significantly different from unity any more.⁷ To sum up, the Cox model estimates confirm the high importance of the recruitment method on the duration of the vacancy, at least for high-ranking positions.

⁷ The dataset contains one outlier for the low-ranking vacancy period. The displayed results include this outlier, however in this case the assumption of a proportional impact of all covariate on the hazard rate – which is crucial in the Cox model – is rejected for the HR-manager covariate. If the outlier is removed the proportional hazards assumption holds and the formal dummy is significant on the 5%-level.

5. INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSION

The findings of our study in Mwanza can be interpreted on two different levels. Firstly, they can be read in the light of actors and managers who take decisions in a specific micro-setting influenced, e.g., by the legal form, the age, the size of their respective company. Secondly, results can be analyzed in connection with the general conditions of the labour market in Tanzania. The latter includes a reflection on how different recruitment methods relate to the make up of the supply side. In what follows we will first focus on the micro-setting and then conclude the paper with thoughts related to the labour market in Tanzania.

In contrast to data for industrialized countries our investigation shows that in Tanzania formal methods are more often applied for high-ranking positions. Considering the size and legal form of the companies studied several interpretations are possible. A first interpretation is related to the observation that larger companies are significantly more often registered as limited companies. In limited companies managers are employed. They need to justify their decisions to capital owners. The use of formal recruitment methods – it can be assumed – is a managerial strategy to achieve (at least superficial) transparency in decision-making processes. Thus, the organizational structure of the company may relate to the choice of recruitment methods. In the case of large private companies external accountability is added to internal accountability. Advertising for personnel on a national level and therefore adhering to the rules of equal opportunities (as laid down in the Tanzanian labour law) may influence the public image of the company (and its products) positively.

A second interpretation refers to small companies which are significantly more often run as sole proprietorships. In case of bankruptcy owners of these companies (unlike managers) are at risk to be liable with private capital. As a result they must have a vital interest in preserving their company's existence. The employment of people who are trusted, e.g., friends or kin (cf. Trulsson 1997; Egbert 2001) can be seen as an attempt at reducing the risk of fraud. Moreover, informal recruitment channels may be cheaper for the company (cf. De Soto 1989). In case of less qualified positions they allow to scan and reduce the vast pool of job seekers with low or average education to a manageable group which fits the company requirements. Thus the vacancy period is shortened.

If we analyze the results on the macro level we have to ask what we can learn about the make up of the Tanzanian labour market. In our study companies seek to fill high-ranking positions by newspaper advertisements on the national level. This is an

indicator that regional labour markets do not provide sufficient or sufficiently qualified personnel. A lack of well-trained professionals in, e.g., management, IT, health and educational sectors is persistent and due to severe inadequacies in training institutions from the primary up to the tertiary level (United Republic of Tanzania 2000). These inadequacies include, among others, understaffing and low salaries, facilitators who in many cases have not received appropriate training themselves, large classes and insufficient infrastructure and equipment. In spite of government efforts to improve training and the mushrooming of private training institutions, only few graduates enter the job market with acceptable skills and knowledge (see also Byemelwa 2009). The placement of advertisements is thus an attempt to attract more applicants from a small pool which is not accessible by social networks only.

Comparing vacancy periods for high- and low-ranking positions the patterns found in Tanzania are similar to those in industrialized countries. High-ranking positions are vacant for a significantly longer period than low-ranking positions. The acceptance of longer vacancy periods for high-ranking positions may be related to what has been revealed in recent fake certificate scandals in Tanzania. In some areas of the labour market (e.g., education) large numbers of applicants gained employment through forged documents. In 2008 the National Examinations Council of Tanzania warned private and public organizations to be wary of forgeries and to screen certificates carefully when hiring staff (Machira 2008). A longer vacancy period could then be the outcome of intensified processes of screening the submitted documents. As a consequence, transaction costs (information, search and screening costs) increase.

Linking our results to the labour market discussions initially mentioned, different degrees and forms of segmentation become visible. Mobility between the primary and secondary tier of the labour market seems to be extremely restricted due to low standards at national educational institutions. The lack of well-trained workers in the primary sector weakens the impact social capital could have as a criterion for further segmentation. In the secondary sector, however, the state of being unemployed or employed is frequently determined by who you know. Social networks which often rely on stratifying criteria such as ethnicity, gender and religion contribute to the rise of further divisions within the lower tier. A combination of insights from labour market theory and human resource management prepares the avenue for an understanding of these fragmentations.

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