



POVERTY AND VOTING TREND IN TANZANIA FROM 1990 TO THE 2010 GENERAL ELECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzed voting and poverty trends in Tanzania from 1990 to the 2010 general elections. It used documentary and historical trends to collect and analyze relevant data. Findings show that basic needs poverty has declined from 47% to 21% in urban areas, and 33% in rural areas. In the same period, the ruling party, Chama Cha Mapinduzi¹ (CCM) has lost about 35% support but enjoys considerable followings in regions with high incidences of basic needs poverty, although even in these areas elections are becoming increasingly competitive. Furthermore, while the ruling party, CCM appear to lose support, its macro economy policies have steered the economy to grow at an average of 5.8% per year in the review period but growth failed to reduce basic needs poverty in rural areas. Experts predict a sustained economic growth in the near future, but skeptical on poverty reduction. This paper recommends that for any party to enjoy sustainable support it will have to address woes of rural voters. Given the increases access to media and civil societies, it will no longer be possible to rely on ignorance of rural voters to win elections.

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Keywords: Basic needs poverty, Voting trends, Incidence of poverty.

Contribution/ Originality

This paper is one of the few studies in Tanzania that have attempted to link poverty and elections. Although in most literature, the two aspects are treated separately; they form the basis of political campaigns in the country. The study shed lights on voting behaviors of poor and relatively well-to-do voters, and predicts the future. This understanding will enables political strategists to re-align their policies which in the long run will improve politics and social development in general in Tanzania.

¹ Chama Cha Mapinduzi is a Kiswahili language phrase for 'Revolutionary Party'

1. INTRODUCTION

The current paper analyzed poverty and voting trends in Tanzania from 1990 to the 2010 general elections. Although there are many approaches and dimensions of poverty, this paper defined poverty as inability of individuals and households to meet basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing. In most literatures, it is estimated that income or expenditure of one USD per day would enable a person to meet basic needs, hence not poor. This means that those who cannot raise or spend one USD per day are technically living below poverty line² (United Republic of Tanzania, 2006.). In Tanzania, the National Bureau of Statistics (2013) provided that a person is said to be living in basic needs poverty if has an income which is less than Tanzanian shillings 36,482³ per adult per month.

Basic needs poverty in Tanzania has declined from 47% in 1991 to 28.2% in 2013 (Minot *et al.*, 2006; Mashindano, 2009); (National Bureau of Statistics, 2013). However, despite a decrease of 19% in a span of 22 years, still situation in rural areas is not encouraging. Household Budget Survey for 2012 indicates that 33.3% of the rural dwellers are living below poverty line compared with 21.7% in urban areas. This means that poverty has continued to be a rural phenomenon in Tanzania. Minot *et al.* (2006) suggest that Kigoma and Rukwa regions⁴ have highest incidences of basic needs poverty while Dar es Salaam, Arusha, and Kilimanjaro have the least incidence of basic needs poverty, hence relatively rich. Mtwara, Morogoro, and Mwanza have seen the greatest improvement in poverty rates, while Dodoma is the only region where poverty appears to have increased between 1991 and 2003.

United Nations Development Program (2013) indicates that aggregates value for Tanzania's Human Development Index⁵ for 2012 was 0.476 which position the country at 152 out of 187 countries considered. Although the country is still in the category of low human development category, between 1990 and 2012, Tanzania's HDI value increased from 0.353 to 0.476, an increase of 35%. The average value for countries in low income is 0.466. This value indicates that, on average; there is improvement on human conditions albeit in small quantities. During the same period Tanzania has recorded sustained macro economic growth averaging 5.8% per annum since 1990 (World Bank, 2013). However, trends show that growth happened in sectors which majorities of the poor are not participating, and there is no backward linkage with the rest of the economy. Sectors that stirred growth include mining, telecommunication, service and construction. With regard to Foreign Direct Investments (FDI), Tanzania has managed to attract over USD 700 million per year, which is average of 8.5% per annum (Ngowi, 2012). However, although FDI have flooded the productive sector with capital and foreign technology, multinationals are not interested

²The poverty threshold, or poverty line, is the minimum level of income deemed adequate in a particular country.

International poverty line is roughly 1 USD per day

³ Exchange rate at the time of writing was 1 USD to TZS 1, 600

⁴ 'Region' is an administrative division in Tanzania. Currently, the country has 30 regions

⁵The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite measurement of wellbeing of a country developed by the United Nations Development Programs (UNDP) in 1990. It takes consideration life expectancy, education, and income indices to rank countries

in investing or collaborating with local economy, as they perceive them poorly prepared to handle challenges presented by the knowledge economy (Goedhuys, 2005).

The foregoing analysis has shown that since 1990 Tanzania has experienced sustained economic growth and moderate reductions of basic needs poverty. However, in rural areas the situation has not changed much. This paper therefore, sought to analyze voting trends in relation to incidences of basic needs poverty in Tanzania since 1990. In the period, the country held five general elections, one under single party rule, and four under multiparty democracy. Specifically, the paper sought to:

1. Analyze voting trends before the re-introduction of multiparty democracy
2. Determine voting trends in regions with high incidences of poverty
3. Determine voting trends in regions with low incidences of poverty
4. Prospects of voting and poverty trend in Tanzania

2. METHODOLOGY

The paper used documentary review in collecting and analyzing relevant data. Mogalakwe (2006) describes the documentary method as the techniques used to categorize, investigate, and interpret written documents whether in the private or public domain. The main categories of documents reviewed are databases from the Tanzania National Electoral Commission (NEC), Households Budget Surveys, and a number of papers on poverty and development in Tanzania. The technique allowed collection of vast data in shortest time.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Voting Trends before and after the Re-introduction of Multiparty Democracy

Tanzania abolished multiparty democracy in 1963 and the first general election under one-party was held in 1965. Multiparty democracy was re-introduced in 1992. During the one-party era, the ruling party nominated two candidates in each parliamentary constituency and voters were required to choose from the two. In the presidential election, the party nominated one person and voters were asked to accept or reject the person. In this way, presidential election looked like a referendum. Candidates were required to share one campaign platform, and means of transport that were provided by the party Lodge *et al.* (2002).

Analysis of the six general elections when the country was under one-party rule indicates that on average, the ruling party (*Tanganyika African National Union*, TANU and from 1977, *Chama Cha Mapinduzi*, CCM) enjoyed support of over 95%. In comparison with the elections under multiparty era, CCM appears to be losing support. For example, in the 1990 general elections under one-party rule, the ruling party got 97.8% in the presidential elections but in the 2010 elections it scored 62.8% which is a drop of 35% (Table 1). This means, on average, the ruling party has been losing popularity at a rate of 8.8% per general election. However, it should be noted that during one-party era there was no voters' education hence electorates were fed with only propaganda like messages from the ruling party (Lodge *et al.*, 2002). Also, there were no free media or strong civil societies that would provide voters with objective view of political situation

in the country. The country then had only one state owned radio station, while currently it has more than 65 stations and myriad of newspapers, and television stations (Mpehongwa *et al.*, 2010).

Voters' turn over in all six general elections under one-party was more than 70%. High voters' turnout trends continued well into multiparty elections with the exception of 2010 general elections where it dropped into all time low of only 43% (Tanzania National Electoral Commission (NEC), 2013). Turnout is a proxy indicator of enthusiasm among voters to exercise their civic rights, and belief that their vote counts in shaping socio economic situation of the country. However, Lodge *et al.* (2002) argues that registration and voting during one party rule was somehow forced upon citizens as it was tied to access to basic commodities supplied only in cooperative shops. This means, it cannot reflect true will of the people.

3.2. Voting Trends in Regions with High Incidences of Poverty

Voting trends and poverty incidences were analyzed among three regions with highest incidences of poverty. A poverty incidence refers to the proportion of the population living in households with per capita consumption expenditure below the poverty line Minot *et al.* (2006). The ranking of the regions is based on the analysis of the 1991/92 Household Budget Survey and the Demographic and Health Surveys of 1991/92, 1996, 1999, and 2003. Regions leading in poverty incidences are Kigoma, Rukwa, and Dodoma. Regions with less poverty incidences are Dar es Salaam, Kilimanjaro and Arusha.

From these regions, we analyzed voting trends since the first election following under multiparty democracy in 1995 to the latest general election in 2010. The analysis was based on presidential elections only since, it is from the result of such election a political party may seize power and have upper hand in policy formation and implementation. Results show that in regions with highest incidences of poverty, still ruling CCM has continued its dominance in all the four general elections (Table 2). On average, the ruling party commands support of 73% while opposition takes the rest.

These findings are baffling because it was expected that since there are high incidences of poverty, voters would wish to punish ruling elites for the misfortune largely caused by policy failures, however, apparently they have continued to support them. However, although voters in regions with high incidences of poverty seem to support ruling elites, close examination of the two regions, Kigoma and Rukwa indicate very high competitive elections, and voters' drifting away to alternative political parties especially in the parliamentary elections. For example in Kigoma region, five out of eight members of the national parliament elected in the 2010 general elections are from the opposition, which is equal to 63%! This means that ruling elites have hard time to convince voters.

In a study of CCM dominance in Tanzania, O'Gorman (2009) indicates that average voters in Tanzania who are subsistence farmers vote for the ruling party mostly because of historical reasons and lack of information on viable alternative political parties. He argues that farmers with more access to mass media and civil societies are likely to vote for the opposition than the ruling party. This means that most voters have no adequate information on political parties, policies and candidates that would enable them to vote objectively.

3.3. Poverty Trends in Regions with Regions with Low Incidences of Poverty

Analysis was done in region with relatively low incidences of poverty in Tanzania to determine voting trends in the four general elections under multiparty democracy, from 1995 to 2010. The ranking of the regions were taken from the similar reports as in regions with low indices, namely 1991/92 Household Budget Survey and the Demographic and Health Surveys of 1991/92, 1996, 1999, and 2003. From the reports, three top regions with low incidences of poverty are Dar es Salaam, Kilimanjaro and Arusha. Findings show that on average the ruling party enjoyed 62% supports while other parties commanded 38% in the presidential elections in the last four general elections (Table 3).

When compared with regions with high incidences of poverty, which has average of 73%, it is obvious that voters in rich regions have relatively lower support for the ruling elites compared to the poor regions. Also, it is interesting to note that regions with low incidences of poverty are also highly urbanized compared with the poor ones. This is consistence with various studies such as [National Bureau of Statistics \(2013\)](#) that has shown that poverty is a rural phenomenon in Tanzania.

A close examination of voting patterns of regions with low incidences of poverty indicates that Kilimanjaro is the only region where the ruling party, CCM has received lowest votes in all four general elections under multiparty democracy. On average, the ruling party enjoyed only 51% support although in 1995 that support was only 20%. A number of factors are attributed to this trend. First, the region is one of the leading in terms of media concentration. [Mpehongwa et al. \(2010\)](#) noted that with the exception of Dar es Salaam, Kilimanjaro is leading in terms of penetration of radio broadcasts in the country. There are evidences that access to mass media enables voters to have broader views of politics and policies hence vote objectively [Lawson and Rakner \(2005\)](#), [Bushman and Smith \(2003\)](#). Secondly, majority of strong presidential contenders in the past four general elections hailed from Kilimanjaro region. Although voting in Tanzania is not influenced by ethnicity, still voters looked to the opposition candidates' regional affiliations as a short-hand for information about which candidate would best reflect their interests due to the relative lack of ideological and policy differences between political parties ([Weinstein, 2010](#)). For example, in 1995 general election candidate Augustine Mrema received over 78% of votes in his home region of Kilimanjaro. This result highlights the importance of regionalism as a foundation for opposition support ([Whitehead, 2003](#)).

With regard to Dar es Salaam, trends show that it has continued to vote for the ruling party, CCM albeit in small margin. The city is the richest in Tanzania and largest contributor to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Being the commercial capital of the country, seat of the government and major port, the city enjoys relatively well paved roads, and social services. Indeed, since the city has lowest incidences of basic needs poverty, at 4.1 % compared with national average of 28.2% ([National Bureau of Statistics, 2013](#)), its residents are leading beneficiaries of the economic reform undertaken since the 1990s, and indeed have all the good reasons to support the ruling party, CCM.

3.4. Prospects of Voting and Poverty Trend in Tanzania

The foregoing analysis has established that support for the ruling party has declined from 97.8% in 1990 to 62.8% in the 2010 general elections. This indicates a drop of about 35% in a span

of 20 years. However, the ruling party has continued to attract considerable support in regions with high incidences of basic needs poverty. At the same time the economy has grown at the average of 5.8% per year, however, poverty levels have remained almost the same, signaling that the growth is not pro poor.

Based on the levels of poverty and voting trends of the last 20 years, and the current social economic strategies in place, this subsection attempts to predict the prospect for the country in the next 12 years when the vision 2025 is due. The basic assumption is that people vote for personalities and parties that they believe will facilitate development.

Most experts⁶ paint a bright future for the Tanzanian economy. [African Economic Outlook \(2013\)](#) for example, argues that the country has maintained overall macroeconomic stability – which, along with institutional and policy reforms, has been a fundamental factor behind the strong economic growth of around 5.8% since 2000. Also, the economy has remained relatively resilient to both internal and external shocks. Growth prospects have been significantly enhanced by natural gas discoveries which could attract an estimated USD 10-15 billion in the next decade. However, many commentators such as [Mashindano \(2009\)](#), argues that the predicted growth will not have significant impact on poverty levels as it happens in sectors where the poor do not work. Most of the Direct Foreign Investment (FDI)⁷ concentrates in mining, telecommunications, construction, and service industry ([Mpehongwa, 2013](#)). Also, there is no clear linkage between Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) and local economy as is yet to incorporate domestic processing and service systems in its value chains.

Since much of the reform and growth do not happen in sectors where the poor works, it is unlikely that the number of people living below poverty will change significantly in the near future. Furthermore, given that the population increases at 2.5% per annum, it is likely that poverty will actually increase than decreasing. To complicate the matter further, possibilities of realizing the much anticipated development strategy known as *vision 2025*, which foresee Tanzania as middle income country by 2025 is bleak. The strategy hinges on science and technology, but [Mpehongwa \(2013\)](#) has established that given the current rate of admission of university students choosing sciences as career, the country will still have less than required science personnel come 2025. For example, when other countries⁸ entered middle income bracket, on average, 3.4% of their working population were working in sciences while estimates for Tanzania stands at 0.25% only.

Although [O'Gorman \(2009\)](#) predicted that because the ruling party support base is in the rural areas, and voters from that area form 80% of all voters, the party will continue to win comfortably in the near future, such prediction may not be true because of other emerging factors. One of such factors is the increasing access to media. [Mpehongwa \(2011\)](#), [Lawson and Rakner \(2005\)](#),

⁶ World Bank, African Economic Outlook, National Bureau of Statistics, Bank of Tanzania, Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA), and Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF)

⁷Tanzania has recorded an 8.5% increase of FDIs in 2010. The inflow of the FDIs in Tanzania increased from \$645 million in 2009 to \$700 million in 2010 [Ngowi \(2012\)](#).

⁸[Moyo \(2012\)](#). listed the comparator countries and the benchmark years in bracket as China (2000), Cote d'Ivoire (1975), Egypt (1983), India (2007), Indonesia (2004), Jordan (1976), Korea (1968), Malaysia (1968), Morocco (1991), Philippines (1976), Sri Lanka (1997), Syria (1975), Thailand (1987), Tunisia (1974), and Vietnam

Bushman and Smith (2003) have established that access to timely information affect not only voting behavior, but enable citizens to hold their leaders accountable. Before the 1990 reforms, access to information in Tanzania was very limited; there were only one state owned radio station, a handful of newspapers, no television station, and other new media such as mobile phones, and internet. Indeed, majority of the voters were relying on state controlled media for news and current affairs. However, following reform, and technological development, the county is teemed with myriad of media outlets. Mpehongwa *et al.* (2010) reported that 92% of the people in Tanzania had access to some form of radio services, and 89% of all households owned radio sets, and 31 owned TV sets.

Furthermore, O'Gorman (2009) established that most rural voters choose CCM because of historical reasons. However, looking closely at the age of voters it is obvious that majority who will be participating in the coming elections will have been born after 1997; hence do not have 'historical connection' with the ruling party. It means they will vote based on the strength of policy and campaigns and not history.

4. CONCLUSION

Voting behaviors in the four general elections under multiparty era in Tanzania indicate that voters drift away from the ruling party. On average, the ruling party is losing popularity at 8.8% per general election. Interestingly, the ruling party continues to enjoy considerable support in regions with high incidences of poverty than in low incidences. However, poor regions are also in rural areas where there are relatively little penetration of mass media and civil societies. In the same period under review, the economy recorded substantial growth and averaging 5.8% per year, and Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) has been increasing at 8.5% per annum. However, poverty levels especially in the rural areas where majority of the voters work and live declined very little. It could be that voters are punishing the ruling elites for dismissal performance in poverty reduction. The prospect indicates a sustained economic growth, but with poor impact on poverty reduction. If voters vote according to the poverty trends, and the current trend continues, it will take three general elections for the ruling party to get below 50% of the total votes cast. This means, that for the ruling party to have assurance of clinging to power, it will have to address the plight of rural voters. For the opposition, they will have to work hard to convince rural folks that they can deliver better results. Given increased access to the media, voting dynamics among rural voters is likely to change as channels of information increasingly penetrate the rural sector.

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Table-1. Trends of support for ruling elites during single party elections

Election year	Results	Total voters	Voters' turn out
1965	96.5%	2,289,602	82.7%
1970	96.7%	3,407,083	70.1%
1975	93.3%	4,557,595	81.7%
1980	95.5%	5,985,942	85.9%
1985	95.7%	4,983,321	75%
1990	97.8%	5,425,282	74.4%

Source: <http://africanelections.tripod.com/tz.html>, and Tanzania National Electoral Commission (NEC) (2013)

Table-2. Voting trends in regions with high incidences of poverty, from 1995 to 2010

		ELECTION YEAR				Average performance (%)	
PARTY		1995	2000	2005	2010		
KIGOMA	CCM	56	73	80	51	65	
	NCCR	30	-	2	1	11	
	CUF	12	23	8	2	11.2	
	CHADEMA	-	-	9	42	25.5	
	TLP	-	2	0.3	0.1	0.8	
	UDP	1.6	2	-	-	1.8	
	Others	-	-	1	4		
	Total:	100	100	100	100		
			ELECTION YEAR				Average performance (%)
	PARTY		1995	2000	2005	2010	
1	CCM	61	74	90	63	72	
	NCCR	36	-	0.5	0.3	12.2	
	CUF	2	6	2.5	1.1	2.9	
	CHADEMA	-	-	4.5	32	18.2	
	TLP	-	17	1.8	0.1	6.3	
	UDP	1.2	2	-	-	1.6	
	Others	-	1	0.7	3.5		
	Total	100	100	100	100		
			ELECTION YEAR				Average performance (%)
	PARTY		1995	2000	2005	2010	
	CCM	75	82	87	80	81	
	NCCR	18	-	0.4	0.2	6.2	
	CUF	4	13	8	4.5	7.3	
	CHADEMA	-	-	2.8	10.5	6.7	
	TLP	-	3.2	0.5	1.1	1.6	
	UDP	2	2	-	2	2	
	Others	-	-	1.2	1.7		
	Total	100	100	100	100		

Source: Tanzania National Electoral Commission (NEC) (2013)

Table-3. Voting trends in regions with low incidences of poverty, from 1995 to 2010

		ELECTION YEAR				
		1995	2000	2005	2010	Average performance (%)
DAR ES SALAAM	PARTY					
	CCM	72	56	71	52	63
	NCCR	21	-	0.11	0.17	7
	CUF	6	33	23	13	19
	CHADEMA	-	-	6	33	20
	TLP	-	10	0.54	0.05	4
	UDP	0.69	0.70	0.11	-	0.5
	Others	-	0.3	-	1.9	
	Total:	100	100	100	100	
	1					
		ELECTION YEAR				
		1995	2000	2005	2010	Average performance (%)
	PARTY					
	CCM	20	49	72	62	51
	NCCR	78	-	0.40	0.12	30
	CUF	2	9	2	0.54	14
	CHADEMA	-	-	21	34	28
	TLP	-	41	3	0.62	15
	UDP	0.43	1	0.19	-	0.54
	Others	-	-	1.41	2.72	
	Total	100	100	100	100	
		ELECTION YEAR				
		1995	2000	2005	2010	Average performance (%)
ARUSHA	PARTY					
	CCM	60	82	82	59	71
	NCCR	37	-	0.20	0.08	12
	CUF	2	9	1	0.35	3
	CHADEMA	-	-	15	37	26
	TLP	-	7	0.18	0.07	2
	UDP	0.84	2	-	-	1
	Others	-	0.00	1.62	3.5	
	Total:	100	100	100	100	
	3					

Source: Tanzania National Electoral Commission (NEC) (2013)

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