The Permanent Voters' Register (PVR) and the Quest for Free and Fair Elections in Tanzania

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Abstract
Historically, every time there was an election in Tanzania a fresh voter registration was conducted. This turned to be not only a tedious and expensive exercise but also it was fraudulent. After the re-introduction of multipartyism questions were raised on the fairness of this system of registering voters. Recommendations were made that a permanent voter register be introduced to address some of the problems caused by a less sophisticated and easy to manipulate temporary voter register. Prior to the 2005 General Elections, for both the Union and Zanzibar Governments, a permanent voter register was introduced. The way the exercise was conducted, both in the mainland and Zanzibar, is the subject of this article. Attention is paid to whether or not the voter register creates a foundation for free and fair elections. Our analysis shows that the exercise of registering voters itself, especially in Zanzibar, was in no way free and fair, hence creating a weak foundation on which to build subsequent electoral stages.

Introduction

The advent of multiparty political systems in many African countries, including Tanzania, paved the way for constitutional reforms. The reforms were in response to emerging interests, needs and challenges, and the desire to accommodate and include other actors in a country's political processes so as to preserve the existing order. After the 1995 and 2000 multiparty general elections in Tanzania, it was obvious that the electoral process had many problems and weaknesses, which required drastic changes. Voter registration stood out as one of the serious problems. Elections require clear, transparent and fair rules of competition and the previous system of voter registration

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was inadequate for building mutual trust amongst key political actors in the country. As a response to this problem a Permanent Voters' Register (PVR) was introduced. The PVR was completed for both Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar and will be operational for the October 2005 general elections. About 96% and 91% of estimated eligible voters were registered on the Mainland and in Zanzibar respectively (TEMCO, 2005: 7).

This article examines whether or not the PVR created a foundation for free and fair elections in Tanzania. In addressing this key question, the rationale behind the establishment of the PVR in Tanzania is reviewed. An assessment is made of the extent to which the voter registration process adhered to electoral laws; and finally some implications of the PVR for the quest for free and fair elections are examined. In the course of this analysis, an attempt is made to show that the discussion of the PVR goes beyond elections and touches on the larger question of the essence of democracy and how it is being conceptualized in Tanzania.

Voter Registration and Elections
Often the registration of voters is regarded as a mundane administrative exercise consisting of issuing voter identification cards. Yet, it is evident throughout history that the voter registration process can be characterized by exclusionary tendencies, leaving a significant segment of the population out of the electoral game. Historically, some people in a polity were excluded from exercising the right to vote on the basis of gender, social status, race or property. Universal suffrage, history informs us, was won by struggles of the disfranchised. Of course once the right to vote is won, activists are restricted to the more passive role of voters who give legitimacy to the competitive electoral interests of established parties and institutions (Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens ,1992: 46).

If democracy is both exclusive and inclusive, by its very nature, so is the right to vote. Voter registration thus is one of the mechanisms for determining who is, or is not, eligible to vote. In the so-called 'third wave' of democracy, though on a small-scale, the exclusionary and inclusive nature of voter registration has persisted in various forms. In an attempt to remain in power, some leaders have manipulated registration rules by redefining who is eligible to vote and who is not. As a result, in many African countries, citizenship laws have become controversial for their use and abuse in determining who can and cannot vote (Herbst, 1999: 267). Herbst (*ibid*) cites various examples, of citizenship being manipulated, including an incident

involving Kenneth Kaunda, President of Zambia from 1964-1991. Kaunda lost in the first multiparty election and was barred from taking part in the next election, which took place in 1996, after he was declared a non-citizen. In Kenya, some questions began to emerge on the status of Asians and their right to vote. An official state review of citizenship laws in Cote d'Ivoire led to the exclusion of a good number of Africans who had regarded that country as their home.

Thus, although the notion of the 'rule by the people' is widely embraced by new democracies, such as Tanzania, the intrinsic ambiguity of 'who are the people' is still prevalent today. Indeed, Robert Dahl (cited in Rustow, 1970: 351) was right when he wrote, 'people cannot decide until somebody decides who the people are.' But that decision, whoever makes it, responds to struggles of those who are excluded and want inclusion in the political process.

However, within the realm of democracy, those in power strive to keep a grasp on power by responding to the threats and opportunities of democratization by using various means, including defining the boundaries of participation. In this regard, the boundaries of participation are set in consideration of protecting a vital interest, which is, to remain in power. The dynamics of the PVR in Tanzania mirrors this discourse to a large extent. Whereas the voter registration exercise was rather inclusive in the Mainland, cases of mass exclusion of people from registering as voters were observed in Zanzibar. This varied response to the PVR between leaders in the Tanzania Mainland and those in Zanzibar is largely a function of the ruling party's perception of the threats and opportunities brought about by democratization.

The Rationale for the PVR in Tanzania
Under single-party rule, voter registration was not a contentious issue. However, variations in the number of registered voters from one election to another were nonetheless politically important. This is because in a system where dissent or opposition had little space to be expressed, variations in voter registration and turnout were related to possible discontent with the party leadership, the political system, or the electoral system itself (Sheriff, 1994: 159). Thus, low turnout figures were a warning to the political leadership of what to expect if they do not act according to the people's expectations or wishes. Under such conditions, voter registration retained political significance. Two examples can attest to the political nature and

significance of voter registration. The first example is related to the 1985 general election when there was initially a low turn-out for registration. This, according to Bavu (1990: 22), was interpreted as a warning to the party that both 'CCM members and others, would not turn out to register to vote before knowing who the presidential candidate(s) would be.' The warning is understood to have originated from the belief that the most likely candidate to succeed *Mwalimu* J. K. Nyerere was not the most preferred by the electorate. This became a norm in subsequent elections as people waited until they knew who was going to be the candidate before they decided to register as voters. It is for this reason that some studies of previous elections in Tanzania suggested that in order to have a high turn-out for voter registration, it was imperative to let the registration process last into the early days of the campaign period (Liviga, 1997). The second example is from the 1990 elections. Sheriff (1994: 159) reports a situation in Zanzibar where political tension arose following the expulsion from the ruling party of senior party leaders from Zanzibar. In the context of this tension, supporters of those who were expelled from the party tried to mount a widespread campaign to boycott the elections. This was intended not only to de-legitimize the electoral system but the entire political system.

Under single-party rule the numbers of registered voters was an important statistic for the state. If it was low, it sent a negative message about the popularity and legitimacy of the government and the electoral system. That is why the period to register voters was often extended and coupled with a campaign to mobilize people to register (Bavu, 1990: 24; TEMCO, 2001: 46). So the state would use all the machinery at its disposal to make sure that as many eligible voters as possible turned out for registration. In this case the effort was not towards barring people from registering but it was geared toward encouraging them to do so. Force and intimidation were utilized were necessary (Sheriff, 1994: 160).

Whereas the situation described above is possible under a single-party, it cannot be the same under a multiparty system. Under the single-party system it was possible to cover up or ignore irregularities in the process of registering voters. For example, inaccuracies in the number of registered voters compared against estimates, double registration, and other irregularities were not likely to cause serious concern. As a result voter registration, with the exception of isolated cases, was generally a smooth exercise under a single-party system.

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Under the multiparty system, as the 1995 and 2000 general elections have demonstrated, every stage of the electoral process is important. This is because stakes are high in a competitive political system. Because of the win and lose nature of elections, all key actors in the electoral process have vested interests in the voter registration process. In this regard political parties, for instance, are involved not only in mobilizing their supporters to register but also they watch zealously to make sure that only those qualified supporters of the opposing parties register. Political parties may go as far as flouting the laws, if they can, in order to register unqualified people who are likely to boost their vote base at the expense of a competing party. Parties may seek ways to discourage partisans of opposing parties from registering. It is in this context that parties place their agents in voter registration centres to ensure transparency, fairness and that a party's vested interests are protected. In a sense this stage of the electoral process has been deemed important because the rigging of elections can start at this point.

The 1995 and 2000 elections recorded several shortcomings in voter registration. Double or multiple registrations was a common problem (Liviga, 1997: 83; TEMCO, 1995 and 2001). The voter registration system was so loose that it did not provide enough checks to curb such problems effectively. Because of this, it became a common phenomenon to read reports about people selling their registration certificates. In the 2000 elections, for example, TEMCO noted that '… there were many accusations that party zealots were buying voter registration certificates and that people were registering with the goal of obtaining voter certificates that they could sell' (TEMCO 2001). Although a few culprits were arrested, not all of them were nabbed (Liviga, 1997). Nor did a few arrests prevent incidences of double or multiple registrations in subsequent elections (TEMCO, 2001).

Moreover, the previous system of voter registration had a tendency to include some voters not entitled while excluding some of those entitled. In the 2000 Zanzibar Elections, for example, TEMCO (2001) reported that the registration exercise was accompanied by charges and counter charges of people being registered without qualifications while those entitled vote were being denied registration. In the Mainland the problem was mainly under-age registration (those below the age of 18) and non-citizens trying to register, which was common in border areas. In Zanzibar this problem was related to the importation of voters from either the Mainland to Zanzibar or from Unguja to Pemba. The purpose of this was two-fold: firstly, is to increase the number of popular votes for presidential elections; and secondly

to increase chances of winning parliamentary or House of Representatives seats in areas where a party felt the election will be close. It has been alleged that for both the 1995 and 2000 elections voters were imported into Zanzibar from the Mainland. In the 2000 elections in Zanzibar, for example, election monitors and observers declared that the registration process in Zanzibar was flawed.

The problem of 'voter importation' has to be understood in the context of multipartyism as it did not exist in elections conducted under the single-party. It only became noteworthy in the democratization era. There could be many reasons why this is the case but one source is the residency qualification introduced in Zanzibar Electoral laws in 1995. In 1995, the constitution defined an ordinary resident as a person who has lived for five years consecutively in a constituency. Only ordinary residents were eligible to vote in an election. The law was further amended in 2002 by reducing the residency qualification from five to three years. This was provided under Section 12 (3)(ii)(a) - (e) of the Zanzibar Election Act of 1984.

Related to this is the accuracy of the voters list. There were cases where the list of registered voters exceeded the number of estimated voters. The Commonwealth Report (2000: 11) noted that 'There are many instances where the total number of voters on the provisional voters' list exceeded the estimated number of electors by more than 30% - in one case by 66%.' Also, there were incidences of registered voters missing from the voter register, hence causing problems and complaints on election day. These problems, and others, became cause for concern over the fairness of the voter registration process. Following this, political parties, as well as various monitor and observer reports, suggested that a PVR was necessary in order to improve voter registration.

As a result of malpractices in voter registration and in other stages of voting, including the counting of votes, elections in Zanzibar became a source of political volatility. After both the 1995 and 2000 elections, CUF (Civic United Front) refused to accept the results leading to a political standoff. The killings of about 30 people in the January 2001 demonstration in Zanzibar compelled CCM to come to the table with CUF to negotiate over the creation of new rules for the game through the so-called *Muafaka*. It was in the *Muafaka II* where the PVR was introduced.

Apart from the above rationale, it also became apparent on the part of the government that registering voters for every election was expensive. In the 1995 general elections, for example, NEC estimated to have spent Shillings 7.6 billion for registering voters. Generally, voter registration costs between 25 – 30% of the entire election cost. In the 2005 elections voter registration consumed Shillings 30 billion (TEMCO, 2005: 2). It was the practice under single-party rule and for the two multiparty general elections to register voters for each election. Usually the National Election Commission announced a date for the commencement of voter registration and also stated how long the process would take. In 1995, for example, voter registration began on 4th August and was supposed to have culminated on 6th September, lasting a total of four weeks. The exercise had to be extended though, because by the closing day of registration only 26.73% of the estimated eligible voters were registered (TEMCO, 1997).

In order to introduce the PVR, electoral laws both for the Union and Zanzibar were amended. For the Union, the 13th Amendment of the Union Constitution amended Article 5(3) of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, 1977, and section 12 of the Election Act, 1985 and thereby legally introduced the Permanent National Voters Register. According to this amendment the 2000 elections were supposed to take place under the PVR. In Zanzibar the 8th amendment of the Zanzibar Constitution introduced Act no. 2 of 2002 section 7(3)(a) that established the PVR. As a result, further amendments were made to the Election Act of 1984. It is also important to note that it had already been made clear in the laws that a permanent voter register would be in place before the 8th amendment was introduced. This is found in a flimsy idea in the Zanzibar Election Act of 1984 issue of 18 September 2000 where it provides, under Section 13(2), that all voter registers prepared for the 2000 elections will be made permanent. The provision further states that such registers would be updated in accordance with the law and procedures to be prepared by the electoral commission. This suggests that it was already legally established that the 2000 elections would be based on a PVR. However, for both Zanzibar and the Union elections there was no PVR. Accounting as to why the PVR was not prepared for the 2000 general elections, NEC (2001) stated 'time constraint, shortage of funds and resources.'

PVR: A Basis for Free and Fair Elections?
As a foundation for free and fair elections, the PVR was supposed to be clear, transparent, accurate and non-discriminatory. Indeed, an inclusive, accurate

and fair voter register is a prerequisite for smooth elections. In Tanzania, the PVR was used for the first time in the 2005 elections. This would be a litmus test to the extent to which the PVR could ensure free and fair elections. Four criteria are used to assess the voter registration process, namely, the legal framework that guided the voter registration process, the fairness and transparency of the voter registration process, the credibility of the institutions charged with the task of preparing the PVR, and the perceptions of key actors towards the PVR.

Legal Framework
Given the dual character of electoral laws in the Union structure there are two separate voters' registers, one for the Union elections and one for the Zanzibar elections. Electoral laws in Zanzibar are guided by the Zanzibar Constitution (1984) and Elections Act no.11 of 1984. The application of these laws is confined only to Zanzibar covering the Zanzibar Presidential elections, House of Representatives, and local authority elections. For the Union President and Union Members of Parliament elections, it is the Union Constitution (1977) and the Election Act (1985) which applies. In this case, there are two separate electoral commissions, the National Electoral Commission (NEC), which oversees Union-level elections, and the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC), which oversees elections in Zanzibar. As a result of this duality in electoral laws, Tanzanian voters are subjected to two separate electoral legal regimes. Thus, different people are eligible to vote in different types of elections. Whereas all citizens aged 18 are eligible to vote both in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar for the union elections, residential requirements in Zanzibar exclude some people from the Zanzibar-level elections. The justification for the Zanzibar 36-month residential requirement is made as a solution for double registration, double voting and other electoral malpractices. It is also important to point out that given the small size and proximity of the constituencies in Zanzibar, any increase in the number of voters in a constituency can change the electoral results. Some constituencies in Zanzibar have only 7,000 - 10,000 estimated voters compared to the Mainland constituencies of between 70,000 to more than 100,000 eligible voters.

The application of the Zanzibar 36-month residential requirement was a source of great mistrust and conflict throughout the registration process. In the 1995 elections, a five-year residential requirement disqualified a significant number of potential Zanzibar voters. The ensuing *Muafaka*

between the major contending political parties in Zanzibar, CCM and CUF, reduced the duration to three years.

The residential status accorded to security personnel and other state employees has also raised concerns, particularly among opposition parties. The police force, the army and the state intelligence fall under the Union jurisdiction. Thus, personnel from these organs can serve both in the Mainland and in Zanzibar. Accordingly, electoral laws exclude this category from the 36-month residential requirement. This loophole has caused many complaints as it has been alleged that the party in power, through its control over the government, transfers military personnel in order to boost its electoral strength in certain Zanzibar constituencies.

For Tanzania Mainland the qualifications for a voter are inclusive. All citizens of voting age (18 years), with the exception of legitimate restrictions of citizenship, mental health and criminal record, have the right to register as voters (See Article 5, 1977 Constitution). Thus, whereas laws, rules, and regulations guiding voter registration have been contested in Zanzibar, there seems to be a consensus on the legal framework for voter registration in Tanzania Mainland.

To put this scenario in context, it is worthwhile revisiting the socio-political history of the two partner states. The divisive nature of politics in Zanzibar is socially constructed around issues of race and ethnicity. The sense of insecurity and mistrust among the major contending political formations - CCM and CUF - has made the operation of democratic institutions, like elections, highly partisan. In contrast, since independence, Tanzania Mainland has enjoyed a cohesive social structure under the political dominance of the ruling party CCM. As a consequence, the leadership of the two partner states responds to the threats and opportunities of democratization differently. In Mainland Tanzania, the political leadership adopts a more accommodative strategy as they are confident of electoral victory. The Zanzibar leadership, however, opted for an exclusive and preventive strategy in order to ensure continuity in wielding political power in a less certain electoral environment.

Fairness and Transparency of the Voter Registration Process
An analysis of whether the process of voter registration was fair and transparent brings to the fore a number of issues. In the Tanzania Mainland, where a total of 15,942,824 voters were registered, voter registration seems to

be fairly and effectively done, with a high degree of transparency. According to TEMCO, 80 percent of the registration centres experienced no serious complaints affecting the process. Only 20 percent of registration centre had some problems, largely related to managerial shortcomings (Ndumbaro, 2005: 6). There were a few cases of objections against perspective voters based on claims of non-citizenship, particularly in regions bordering neighbouring countries. For instance, in the northern zone of Arusha, Kilimanjaro and Tanga, TEMCO observers recorded four cases of such objections (TEMCO 2005 (a) and (b)). Other cases were reported in Kigoma, Mtwara and Kagera. TEMCO reports also indicate that, overall, Assistant Registration Officers (AROs) administered their functions in an impartial and professional manner, notwithstanding isolated cases of inefficiency. Two cases are cited by TEMCO observers to demonstrate the extent of impartiality and professionalism on the part of the AROs. One ARO in Hanang refused to register 20 women who came to the registration centre dressed in CCM uniforms. Electoral rules prohibit turning registration centre into campaign sites. When Prime Minister Fredrick Sumaye went to register at Endasak centre in Babati on the 4th March 2005, the ARO stopped a CCM youth group, who escorted the Premier. He asked them to stay some 20 meters away from the centre and then he invited the Premier to enter the registration centre without his CCM entourage (ibid, 6).

In places where inter-party competition is stiff, there were more complaints from political parties over the registration of ineligible voters. Most of these were centre on accusations of under-age registration. This was reported in Temeke and Bukoba Urban constituencies. In Bukoba Urban, where there was a tight competition between CCM and CUF, CUF supporters filed complaints that CCM supporters stayed in the vicinity of the centre and barred some people from registering (Ndumbaro, 2005: 9). In addition, among the 18 political parties, only two major political parties, CCM and CUF, had agents to monitor the voter registration process. Other political parties either had none or had agents who had an occasional presence at the registration centres. Indeed, some political parties did not place agents even in Dar-es-Salaam, where their headquarters are situated (Mukandala and Ahmed, 2005: 15). The absence of these political parties at registration centre may result from a lack of adequate funds as well as the party's weak social base. Another possible reason, as suggested by Mukandala and Ahmed (2005), is that over time, opposition political parties have grudgingly relied on NEC's improved performance in managing elections. As a result,

'opposition parties have tended to be relaxed a bit and let NEC do its work' (ibid, 17).

Overall, the system of handling complaints and objections was impartial and efficient. Observers' reports concluded that 'this trend is largely attributed to the fact that, generally speaking, there is no tense political competition between and among political parties. In this respect, most objections were genuine and not biased by partisan inclinations' and that 'the registration process was conducted in a free, fair and transparent manner' (Mogela, 2005: 12, 22).

There were shortages of registration materials that slowed the registration process in many centres. Missing materials included form 1, photo film, camera batteries, lamination pouches, and glue sticks. In some centres the registration exercise was suspended for the whole day waiting for NEC to bring the registration materials (Mogela, 2005: 4). However, despite these irregularities, NEC was able to respond and supply most materials. TEMCO reports conclude that, 'in general the management system established by NEC proved quite effective and efficient in coordination, monitoring and supervision of the registration from the national to registration center level' (ibid, 4). Indeed, the voter registration process continued without the formal closure of any registration centre. As TEMCO reports explain, the voter registration process in the Mainland was peaceful.

Unlike in the Mainland, the voter registration exercise in Zanzibar was marred by instances of irregularities, gross violations of laws and rules guiding voter registration, chaos, and violent conflicts. In Pemba, as a result of violent confrontations in which two people were killed, ZEC ordered the closure of 9 centres for about 12 days. At the core of the violence was the question of the eligibility for registration of military personnel. Conflicts emerged when civilians attempted to prevent security personnel from registering. The invasion of the armed Zanzibar security units (*Jeshi la Kujenga Uchumi*, *Valantia*, *Kikosi Maalum cha Kuzuia Magendo*, Prisons, Volunteers, and Fire Brigades) of registration centres demanding registration created a sense of insecurity, which ultimately bred chaos (TEMCO, 2005(b)).

Also, in many such centres supporters of the opposition CUF, popularly known as the 'blue guards', unilaterally took charge. They stood guard outside the registration centres barring some people from entering. This created problems. Indeed, all the problematic centres in Pemba were situated

near military barracks (TEMCO, 2005a) Neither CUF members nor CCM members were ready to let the rules guide the system of handling complaints with regard to eligibility requirements. On a larger scale, the lack of trust between relevant political actors contributed to the breach of ZEC regulations on the modality of registering complaints.

> Another incident that led to the exclusion of a significant number of people from registering as voters was the shortage of Form 2D in all five regions of Zanzibar. Many centres received about 3 to 9 forms. In other centres form 2Ds were not supplied at all until the second week of registration. Of all the regions, the problem was more serious and wide-spread in Unguja urban. This caused a great deal of discontent amongst people because those who were objected to and denied registration could not fill in Form 2D simply because they were not available at the registration centres. Form 2D is a special form completed by those who want to challenge an objection made against their registration. It is, thus, an important form as it allows those who feel that justice has not been done to appeal to higher authorities within ZEC structures. Complainants failing to complete Form 2D do not have complaints heard and are barred from voting. Indeed it was surprising as to why ZEC, which was able to provide all other registration materials, failed to ensure an adequate supply of form 2Ds despite their importance and increasing demand. ZEC attempts to intervene and supply those barred from registration with a Form 2D faced a great deal of resistance from CCM and the police force (TEMCO, 2005a).

Furthermore, in various Zanzibar registration centres, some of the Assistant Registration Officers (AROs) failed to follow the prescribed rules for voter registration, particularly for the sequencing of procedures. Rules require AROs to begin the process of voter registration by interrogating an applicant in order to establish his/her eligibility. In the absence of any objection, the applicant's details are recorded, followed by photographing. Shading of OMR forms was supposed to be done after the applicant's details were recorded. In many centres, however, the sequential rule was widely violated. In Pemba South at Kilindi centre, for instance, the District Commissioner (DC) visited the centre and ordered the AROs to register a group of about 250 people who were alleged to be soldiers. During this process, the DC ordered the AROs to speed up the process by taking the applicants' photos prior to the interview. Nor were the applicants subjected to any inquiry in

order to establish their eligibility. Some higher ZEC officials were present inside the registration centre but took no steps to rectify the situation. In certain centres in Unguja North region, similar patterns were observed where civilians had to stand in a queue for a long time waiting for groups of soldiers to be registered (Kamata, 2005).

> The effectiveness of the supervision and monitoring done by political parties in many ways was affected by partisan tendencies of registration officials. This is because political party agents were not given an opportunity to air their views or defend their members if they were denied registration. As a result, the presence of political party agents inside registration centres became irrelevant. This was compounded by the role of *Shehas* in the registration exercise. In the registration process, *Shehas* were given positions as ZEC agents. Their responsibility was to verify voter eligibility, especially in relation to the residency qualification. They were accused of taking over the powers of the AROs by becoming the ultimate authority in determining a potential voter's eligibility (Kamata, 2005).

Shehas are appointed by Regional Commissioners, and their loyalty is to the party in power. They have many functions, which include resolving disputes in their areas, planning and implementing development plans, receiving directives from higher government authorities and overseeing their implementation. They used a book of residents' records known as *buku la sheha* to verify voter eligibility. Apparently, only the *Sheha* looked into the *buku*, and then he would state whether the applicant is or is not a resident, and his words were final. Because of this, many people were denied registration for the *Sheha* proclaimed them non-residents. Cases of rejection on this basis were rampant in Unguja Urban-West. Agents from the opposition parties, and particularly CUF, expressed their disappointment and frustration over the voter registration exercise (Kamata, 2005). Incidences like these rendered the registration exercise to lack transparency and become tainted with unfairness.

Turnout figures were also a matter of concern in some centres, especially when they exceeded estimates. For instance, in Unguja South all 9 registration centres near military barracks registered over 100 percent of the estimated voters (TEMCO, 2005(a)). In certain centres, the number of registered voters exceeded by far the total population residing in the area. Likewise, in those where incidences of massive objections were reported, such as in Unguja Urban West, voter turnout figures suggest that a significant number of potential voters were

not registered. For instance, only 51.7%, 56%, 58.6% of the estimated voters were registered at Skuli ya Sekondari Jang'ombe centre, Chuo cha Kiislamu centre and Skuli ya Kinuni centre respectively (TEMCO, 2005(b)).

Credibility of the Institutions Charged with Preparing the PVR
Since the introduction of the multiparty system in 1992, the status and autonomy of NEC and ZEC has been contentious. Opposition parties have demanded far-reaching changes in these institutions. The changes proposed include a re-composition of the membership of the institutions, financial independence, and other procedural reforms (TEMCO, 2005(b)). During the voter registration process, the question of ZEC/NEC credibility came to the fore. At the beginning of the voter registration process, an alliance of nine political parties threatened to take legal action against NEC. As *Mwananchi* newspaper of 13th May 2004 reported, the ultimate aim was to bar NEC from being a supervisory body of elections until reforms were made. However, as voter registration continued, NEC was able to gain the trust of opposition political parties given its improved performance and ability to respond to various issues raised by the opposition political parties (Mukandala and Ahmed, 2005: 12).

Things are rather different for ZEC, which has two members of the opposition political parties as electoral commissioners. Prior to and throughout the voter registration process, ZEC was accused of partisanship in favour of the ruling party. In certain instances, ZEC failed to act promptly in cases where senior government officials interfered with the voter registration process. For example, ZEC did nothing when government officials went into registration centres and started giving orders. This made ZEC appear to be favouring the ruling party - CCM. At times, ZEC failed to timely intervene to enforce its rules and regulations. For instance, the use of the *Sheha's* residents' register (b*uku la sheha*) was used to justify objections against many would-be voters. In some places, and particularly in Unguja Urban-West, many people were denied registration simply because the *Sheha* said they did not exist in his *buku*, and ZEC did not timely and effectively rectify this.

Perceptions of Key Actors towards the PVR

In the Mainland, political parties and the electorate at large had faith in the established PVR. The PVR was seen as the basis for free and fair elections in October 2005. In Zanzibar, however, there was a great deal of mistrust, suspicion and disappointment among key actors. As the election approached CUF continued to contest the number of registered voters in some centres. It

also maintained a struggle to have those denied registration to be provided with the opportunity to register. After completion of the voter register, the situation was uncertain and the PVR did not give hope for a free and fair election in Zanzibar.

Conclusion

The above analysis indicates that the dynamics of the voter registration process are different in the two sides of the Union. This variation is largely explained by the leadership's response to the threats and opportunities brought about by the democratization process, conditioned by the urge to remain in power. It can also be observed that when there is no state interference in the voter registration process, electoral commissions usually perform their duties in an impartial and professional manner. This was the case for NEC in the Tanzania Mainland. In Zanzibar, interference in the voter registration process by government and its security organs significantly contributed to ZEC's failure to administer the process in a non-partisan manner. This left the future of Zanzibar's electoral process and its results hanging in balance, with the potential for after election political turmoil to recur.

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