

Attitude of Voters Towards Elections in Morogoro Municipality: A Reflection on 2015 General Election in Tanzania

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Abstract: This paper examines the attitudes of voters towards elections in Tanzania following an observed trend of having a great proportion of registered voters who did not vote in the General Elections in 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015 respectively. The study out of which this paper is based on aimed at assessing the voters' attitudes towards election and their perception on the importance of participating in election in Morogoro municipality, an electoral constituent which recorded voters turn out of 34.6% below the national turnout of 42.8% in 2010 General Election. A cross-sectional study design and multistage sampling techniques were employed; data were collected using a questionnaire through Computer Aided Personal Interviewing [CAPI] platform from proportionate number of male and female respondents from four randomly selected wards from Morogoro urban in Morogoro region. A total of 14 Likert scale statements were used to assess the attitudes of voters towards elections. Cross tabulation was employed to associate attitudes with other variables. Statistical Package for Social Sciences [SPSS] computer software was used for data processing and analysis. The findings reveal that the minimum and maximum Total Attitudinal Scores were 39.0 and 56.0 respectively with mean at 44.2 and Std. Deviation of 4.01. The study findings show that the overall respondents' attitude towards elections was negative, with 60% of the respondents scoring less than 44.2 points out of 70, whereas 40% had positive attitude whereby they scored 44.2 points and above. The results show that 73% of the respondents perceived participating in election was important. It is recommended that initiatives should be taken to cultivate positive attitudes of citizens to motivate them to turn out to vote.

Keywords: Voters Attitudes, Tanzania 2015 General Election, Sociological Approach, Party Identification Model, Rational Choice Approach, Morogoro-Tanzania

1. Introduction

1.1. Background Information and Problem Statement

In any democratic political system, voting is one of the forms of political participation. Free and fair election is among rational and essential elements of a democratic government [1] [2] [3]. It is obvious that elections have been facing many problems and challenges worldwide [4] [5] [6] [7], which have in a number of ways distorted the meaning and value elections could add to the democratic functioning. These challenges and problems have notably among other resulted into voters' turnout drop-the percentage of eligible voters who cast a ballot in an election which in turn affect the processes of democratization [8]; [9]. There has been a

notable voter turnout decline for the past few years both internationally and in Tanzania in particular [10] [11] [12] [13] [8] [14] [15] [16] [17]. Voters' turnout in an election accounts for the level of citizens' civic political participation [18], voters turnout drop in elections reveal low political participation whereas a high turnout is generally seen as evidence of the legitimacy of the current system [19] [20].

There is evidence [see; [15] that most of African countries evidenced turnout decline in voting exercise in recently years; for example Senegal elections in 2012, Seychelles in 2007 to 2011, Zimbabwe from 2005 to 2009, Kenya in 2010 Constitutional Referendum. In 1995, Tanzania has witnessed 8 929 969 people registering for voting but only 6 846 681 voters' equivalent to 76% turned to vote. In 2000 Tanzania General Election, registered voters were 10 088 484 and

those who turned to vote were 8 517 598 that are equal to 84.4%. In 2005 Tanzania General Election, registered voters were 16 401 694 and voters who turned were 11 875 927 that is about 72.4%. In 2010 General Election registered and qualified voters were 20 137 303 where turnout was 8 626 283 which is equal to 42.8% [15]. The 2015 General Elections in Tanzania has witnessed 23 161 440 voters registering with only 15 589 639 turning out for voting marking 67.3% [21].

On the other hand, Morogoro region evidenced the same problem of turnout decline whereby in 2005 election registered voters were 894 179 but only 666 302 voters turn to vote which is about 74.5%. In 2010 Tanzania general election registered voters in Morogoro Municipality were 185 235 but 67 361 voters turn to vote that means on other way 65.4% of all registered voters did not vote [15].

There are various very general explanations provided on the cause of such decline in terms of voters turn out including unfavourable weather condition in the polling day, unfair and abusive campaigns, less access to media, long time spend in queues, low political parties performance, low civic and voter education, unavailability of information, long distance to polling stations, failure of leadership to meet people's expectations, a high degree of transience, parental influence on offspring's voting behaviour, political parties attachment, argument that voters believe their single vote do not matters and have no importance to bring development in their local setting and a negative perception of the community towards elections among others [[22] [23] [24] [18] [25] [26].

Incognizant of the intensity of the problem since 1995 several efforts have been taken by the government, nongovernmental organizations [NGOs], faith based organizations [FBOs] and others to solve or reduce low voter turnouts in Tanzania. These efforts include free and independent mass media campaigns, provision of awareness and education about citizens' right to participate in this political arena particularly on the importance of voting. Another effort made by the government was the establishment of Permanent National voters register [PNVR] in 2004, where in 2000 amendment of United Republic of Tanzania [URT] Constitution were made that facilitated National Election Commission [NEC] to establish a PNVR as one of the effort of promoting free and fair election hence rise voters turnouts. All these efforts were initiated in order to raise turnouts, but still the problem persists as it was observed that the 2015 General Elections in Tanzania has witnessed 23 161 440 voters registering with only 15 589 639 turning out for voting marking 67.3% [21]. It is against this background that this paper examines the attitudes towards voting in general elections in Morogoro municipality to better understand what drives non-voting behaviour in elections despite the efforts made by the relevant authorities to reduce low voter turnouts.

1.2. Theoretical Approaches to Voting Behaviour

1.2.1. Sociological Approach [SA] to Voting

The SA to voting behaviour emphasizes the impact of

social structure suggesting that social group memberships influence voting choices [see for example, [27] [28] [29] [30] [31] [32]. Voters are considered to be instrumental—i. e., they vote for parties that best reflect the interests of their groups. The SA, then, holds that group identities affect attitudes and interests. These attitudes in turn affect how people vote. By implication in any given society the effects of group membership should be the same on attitudes as they are on vote. It is difficult to deny the existence of social cleavages and their potential effects on attitudes and voting [33].

1.2.2. Party Identification Model [PIM]

The PIM assumes voters to be expressive rather than instrumental, and attitudes and issue preferences are considered to be endogenous to vote. This approach holds that voters have long-standing psychological ties to specific political parties, and seldom waver from voting for them [22], [23] [24]. These party attachments are largely due to early socialization, reflecting mostly family influences. Simply put, people are influenced by the partisanship of their parents. It holds that causation runs in both directions between attitudes and vote. As [23] pp: 128 state, "In the competition of voices reaching the individual the political party is an opinion-forming agency of great importance. The strength of relationship between party identification and the dimensions of partisan attitude suggests that responses to each element of national politics are deeply affected by the individual's enduring party attachments." This implies that the relationship between group membership and attitudes should be similar to that between group membership and vote.

1.2.3. The Rational Choice Approach [RCA]

Although instrumental like the sociological model, the RCA is much more individualistic, suggesting that voting decisions are based on cost-benefit analyses where voters match their individual issue preferences with party platforms. As [34] pp:51] states, "only a separate and 'selective' incentive will stimulate a rational individual in a latent group to act in a group-oriented way." According to [35] pp:39, if the voter "is rational, he knows that no party will be able to do everything that it says it will do. Hence he cannot merely compare platforms; instead he must estimate in his own mind what the parties would actually do when in power."

According to the RCA, then, policy preferences are exogenous, but vote choices depend on the interplay between voters' preferences and parties' policy positions. Although not explicit, rational choice theory allows for the possibility that social identities play a role in voting decisions since individual preferences can be determined by one's position in society. Moreover, not all rational choice theorists discount party attachments. Rather than see them as influencing attitudes, however, these attachments are considered to represent ongoing tallies of assessments of party performances [see [25]. Although social groups may affect attitudes, this does not mean that voting decisions are made solely on the basis of these group-determined attitudes.

Accordingly, the rational choice model implies that the relationship between preferences and vote will vary across different political contexts: if voters are given different political options from which to choose, then the relationship between attitudes and vote may also vary.

2. Methodology

2.1. Description of the Study Area and Justification for Its Selection

The study out of which this paper is based on was conducted in Morogoro municipality in Morogoro region. The municipality is about 195km West of Dare salaam city along the Tanzania – Zambia highway lying on the foot of the Uluguru Mountains with a total area of 260 Km² [square kilometres]. Morogoro municipality is bordered to the west and north by Mvomero district and to the east and the south by the Morogoro rural district. According to the 2012 Population Census, Morogoro municipality has a total population of 315 866, women being 164 166 [52%] and 151 700 [48%] are men with a population growth rate of 2.4% per annum. The municipality is subdivided into 19 administrative wards and 275 streets [36].

Morogoro Municipality was selected for the study because in 2010 general election 65.4% of registered voters did not turn to vote which was above 57.2% of registered voters who did not vote all over the country. Therefore, Morogoro municipality evidenced problem of turnout drop in 2010 general election compared to other places in Tanzania [37].

2.2. Research Design

The research used a cross sectional design in which data collected once at a single point of time for determining the relationship between variables [38]. The design was suitable for the descriptive study in which data collected at a single point in time and used for describing as well as determining the relationship between variables. The design was favourable because of time limit and resources.

2.2.1. Sampling

Population

The population for the study included both females and males aged 18 years and above from selected wards in Morogoro municipality.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Morogoro municipality was purposively selected due to having recorded a low turnout, whereby 65.4% of all registered voters did not vote in 2010 General Election. Four wards namely Mazimbu, Kichangani, Tungi and Mji Mpya were randomly selected; in each ward 60 respondents were randomly selected from the sampling frames created out of list of names of residents in the respective wards. A sampling frame is a listing of all the members of a population that met the sampling criteria [39].

Simple random sampling method was used to get a sample from both male and female. In addition, in order to get

proportionate balanced sample between female and male interviewees/respondents stratified sampling was employed to obtain a proportionate balanced sample. The total sample size comprised of 240 respondents [30 females and 30 males from 4 randomly chosen wards]. The sampling size is justified by the fact that a sub sample of 30 respondents is the bare minimum for studies in which statistical data analysis is to be done regardless of the population size [40]. The choice of this figure is based on the fact that 240 respondents are sufficient for a study of this nature and therefore representative.

2.2.2. Data Sources, Collection and Analysis

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources with qualitative and quantitative information through a Computer Aided Personal Interviewing [CAPI] platform using tablet devices and later the data were summarized, sorted, edited, coded, and analyzed. Analysis was done using the Statistical Package for Social Science [SPSS] computer software. Descriptive and inferential statistics were analyzed using cross tabulation, chi-square, frequencies and percentages on variables.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Eight aspects of socio-demographic characteristics namely age, sex, education level, religion, marital status, occupation, civic education and membership to political parties of respondents were asked about, and the results are presented as follows. Socio-demographic characteristics are considered to be important [41] [42].

3.2. Age of Respondents

The results in Table 1 show that 35% of the interviewed respondents were aged between 21 to 30 years, 37.5% were between 31 to 40 years, 12.5% were aged between 41 to 50 years, 5% were between 51 to 60 years while 10% were above 61 years.

Table 1. Age of Respondents [n = 240].

Variables	Values	Frequency	Percent%
Age	21 - 30	84	35.0
	31 - 40	90	37.5
	41 - 50	30	12.5
	51 - 60	12	5.0
	>61	24	10.0
Total		240	100.0

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents.

3.3. Sex of the Respondents

The sample of respondents interviewed comprised of 50% male and 50% female as presented in Table 2.

3.4. Marital Status of the Respondents

The results in Table 2 show that 57.5% of the interviewed

respondents were married, 35% were single, 2.5% were widow and 5% were separated.

Table 2. Sex and Marital status of the Respondents [n=240].

Variables	Values	Frequency	Percent%
Sex	Male	120	50.0
	Female	120	50.0
Total		240	100
Marital status	Married	138	57.5
	Single	84	35.0
	Widowed	6	2.5
	Separate	12	5.0
Total		240	100.0

Socio - Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents.

3.5. Education Level of the Respondents

The results in Table 3 indicates that 42.5% of the interviewed respondents had primary school education, 7.5% had adult education, 27.5% had completed form four, 2.5% had completed form six, 7.5% had certificates, 10% of respondents had diploma while 2.5 had attained higher education.

3.6. Occupation of the Respondents

The results in Table 3 show 25% of the interviewed respondents were peasants, 37.5% were businessmen/women, 15% were public servants, 5% were unemployed, and 7.5% were Retired Officers and 10% were employed in the private sector.

Table 3. Marital Status, Education level and Occupation of the Respondents [n = 240].

Variables	Values	Frequency	Percent%
Education level	Primary Level/ Adult education	102	42.5
	Secondary level [O]	18	7.5
	Secondary level [A]	66	27.5
	Certificate	6	2.5
	Diploma	18	7.5
	Higher education	24	10.0
	Total	6	2.5
Occupation		240	100
	Peasant	60	25.0
	Businessmen/women	90	37.5
	Public servant	36	15.0
	Unemployed	12	5.0
	Retired officer	18	7.5
	Private employee	24	10.0
Total		240	100.0

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents.

3.7. Civic Education

The results in Table 4 show that 10% of the interviewed respondents had civic education while 90% had no civic education. This implies that most of people in Morogoro had no civic education.

3.8. Membership to Political Parties

The results Table 4 show that 57.5% of the respondents were members to different political parties while 42.5% had no membership to any political party.

Table 4. Civic Education and Membership to Political Party [n=240].

Variables	Values	Frequency	Percent%
Civic education	Had civic education	24	10.0
	Had no civic education	216	90.0
Membership to political parties	Had membership	138	57.5
	Had no membership	102	42.5
Total		240	100.0

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents.

3.9. Attitude of Voters Towards Elections in Morogoro Municipality

Respondents' Attitudes towards Voting

A Likert scale was used to measure attitudes of voters towards election in which fourteen [14] statements were administered, whereby half of the statements had negative connotation while the other half had positive connotation. For each statement, the respondents were asked to indicate whether they strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, or strongly agree with the statement. For all positive statements the response "Strongly Agree" was given a weight of 5, while "Agree" was given weight of 4, "Undecided" was given weight of 3 and "Strongly Disagree" was given weight of 2 and "Disagree" was given weight of 1. For all the negative statements the response "Strongly Agree" was given a weight of 1, while "Agree" was given weight of 2, "Undecided" was given weight of 3 and "Strongly Disagree"

was given weight of 4 and "Disagree" was given weight of 5. Based on the statements provided an index for each respondent was constructed as measure of their attitude towards voting.

The scale had a mean of 44.2. The scores on the index were further categorized into those representing negative and positive attitudes. Scores below the index mean represented respondents who had a negative attitude towards voting, whereas scores above the index mean represented respondents who had positive attitudes towards voting. The overall results as presented in Table 5 [a] show that, 60% of respondents had negative [unfavourable] attitude towards voting whereby they scored less than 44.2 points out of 70, whereas 40% had positive [favourable] attitude whereby they scored 44.2 points and above. The mean score was 44.2 over 70.0, the minimum score was 39 while the maximum score was 56 with the Std. Deviation of 4.01.

Table 5a. Total Attitudinal Scores.

Scores	Frequency	Percent
39	24	10.0
40	18	7.5
41	18	7.5
42	18	7.5
43	36	15.0
44	30	12.5
45	42	17.5
46	12	5.0
47	6	2.5
49	6	2.5
50	12	5.0
52	6	2.5
55	6	2.5
56	6	2.5
Total	240	100.0

Table 5b. Respondents' Attitudes towards Voting [n= 240].

Variable	Frequency	Percent [%]
Negative attitude	144	60.0
Positive attitude	96	40.0
Total	240	100.0

The influence of Voters' Attitude towards Election and Voting

The influence of attitude towards voting and elections was determined by cross tabulation. The results in Table 6 show that 32.5% of respondents who had positive [favourable] attitude towards elections voted while 37.5% who voted had negative [unfavourable] attitude towards elections.

Table 6. Attitude and Voting [n=240].

		Attitude Categories		Total
		Negative attitude%	Positive attitude%	
Voted in 2015 Tanzania general election	Yes	90 [37.5]	78 [32.5]	168 [70]
	No	54 [22.5]	18 [7.5]	72 [30]
Total		144 [60]	96 [40]	240 [100]

Civic Education and Voting

Civic education is considered to be important to raise turnout as lack of civic education makes voters unaware of their political rights and responsibilities hence low participation in election [TEMCO, 2005]. The association between civic education and attitude towards elections was determined by cross tabulation. The results in Table 7 show that only 7.5% of respondents who had civic education voted unlike 62.5% of respondents with no civic education who voted.

Table 7. Civic Education and Voting [n=240].

		Voted in 2015 Tanzania general election		Total
		Yes [%]	No [%]	
Attendance to civic education workshop	Yes	18 [7.5]	6 [2.5]	24 [10.0]
	No	150 [62.5]	66 [27.5]	216 [90.0]
Total		168 [70.0]	72 [30]	240 [100]

From the Pearson Chi-Square test it can be observed that $[\chi^2] = 317$, $p = 0.573$. This indicates that there is no statistically significant association between attending to civic education and the likelihood of voting.

Attitude towards Voting based on Sex

The results in Table 8 show that about 60% of the respondents who had positive [favourable] attitude towards voting were males while only 36% females had favourable attitude, and 20% of females had unfavourable attitude while 30% of males had unfavourable attitude.

Table 8. Sex and Attitude towards Election [n=240].

		Attitude Categories		Total
		Negative attitude	Positive attitude	
Sex of respondents	Female	84	36	120
	Male	60	60	120
Total		144	96	240

Perceived Importance of Participating In Election

Importance of Participating in Election

To determine the importance of participating in election, respondents were asked whether they perceived that participating in election was important. Table 9 shows that 73% agreed with the statement, 15% had neutral attitude and 12% disagreed the statement that it is important to participate in election.

Table 9. Importance of Participating in Election [n=240].

Attitude	Frequency	Percent [%]
Disagree	30	12.5
Undecided	36	15.0
Agree	174	72.5
Total	240	100.0

The influence of Age on Voting

The relationship between age and voting was determined

by cross tabulation. The results as indicated in Table 10 show that 58.3% of respondents aged between 21 to 30 years did not vote, 33.3% of respondents aged 31 to 40 years didn't vote and 8.3% of respondents aged 41 – 50 years did vote unlike respondents aged 51 years and above who all voted.

Table 10. The relationship between Age and Voting [n=240].

Ages in years	Voting in 2015 Tanzania General Election	
	Who voted [%]	Who did not vote [%]
21 – 30	25.0	58.3
31 – 40	39.3	33.3
41- 50	14.3	8.3

Ages in years	Voting in 2015 Tanzania General Election	
	Who voted [%]	Who did not vote [%]
51 – 60	7.1	0.0
61 >	14.3	0.0

Marital Status and Attitudes

The results as indicated in Table 11 show that 20% of the respondents with positive attitudes towards voting were married, the other 20% comprised of single while none of the widowed and separated had positive attitudes, the negative category comprised of 37.5%, 15%, 2.5 and 5% for married, single, widowed and separated respectively.

Table 11. Influence of Marital status on Attitudes [n=240].

		Attitude Categories		Total
		Negative attitude [%]	Positive attitude [%]	
Marital status	Married	90 [37.5]	48 [20.0]	138 [57.5]
	Single	36 [15]	48 [20.0]	84 [35]
	Widow	6 [2.5]	0	6 [2.5]
	Separated	12 [5.0]	0	12 [5.0]
Total		144 [60.0]	96 [40.0]	240 [100]

Occupation and Attitudes towards Voting

The results in Table 12 show the distribution of favourable attitude towards voting based on occupation among the respondents whereby peasants comprised of 10%, business women/men 15%, public servants 5%, unemployed 2.5%, retired officers 5.0%, and private servants 2.5%. For the

negative [unfavourable attitude], the findings reveal that of the respondents interviewed 15% were peasants, 22.5% business women/men, 10% public servants, 2.5% unemployed, 2.5% retired officers, and 7.5% private servants respectively.

Table 12. Occupation and Attitudes towards Voting [n=240].

		Attitude Categories		Total
		Negative [%]	Positive [%]	
Occupation	Peasant	36 [15.0]	24 [10.0]	60 [25.0]
	Business	54 [22.5]	36 [15.0]	90 [37.5]
	Public servant	24 [10.0]	12 [5.0]	36 [15.0]
	Unemployed	6 [2.5]	6 [2.5]	12 [5.0]
	Retired officer	6 [2.5]	12 [5.0]	18 [7.5]
	Private Servant	18 [7.5]	6 [2.5]	24 [10.0]
Total		144 [60.0]	96 [40.0]	240 [100]

Political Party Membership and Attitude towards Voting

The results in Table 13 show that 25% of respondents had positive attitudes and were members to political parties, while the other 15% had favourable attitude towards election but had no membership to any political party. The negative attitude category comprised of 25% of the respondents who had political party membership and 35% who had no political party membership.

Table 13. Political Party Membership and Attitude towards Voting.

		Attitude Categories		Total [%]
		Negative attitude [%]	Positive attitude [%]	
Membership to political party	Yes	60 [25.0]	60 [25.0]	120 [50.0]
	No	84 [35.0]	36 [15.0]	120 [50.0]
Total		144 [60.0]	96 [40.0]	240 [100]

4. Discussion

4.1. Attitude of Voters Towards Elections in Morogoro Municipality

Generally the overall attitudes of voters towards election was found to be unfavourable. This implies that, people had

negative feelings about elections. This led to having 65.4% of registered voters who did not vote as it was revealed in Morogoro Municipality. These results reflect what has been presented in the National Electoral Commission Report about 2010 general election that majority of citizens had unfavourable attitude towards election. This is witnessed by only 34.6% of registered voters who turned to vote in Morogoro Municipality compared to 42.8% of registered

voters who voted in 2010 general election countrywide [37].

4.2. Civic Education and Voting

The results reveal that only a small proportion of respondents who had civic education voted followed by a significant proportion of respondents with no civic education who voted. The findings are in line with [43] as cited by [44] who are arguing that apparent relationship between education and turnout may not be causal rather represents a spurious correlation. This reveals that citizens with low education can also participate more effectively in voting as it has been the case with what was found in this study.

4.3. Attitude Towards Voting Based on Sex

The results reveal that men have favourable attitude towards election than women. This indicates the likelihood of more men participating in voting than women. The findings are in line with a study by [45] who asserts that men have favourable attitude towards voting than women.

Importance of Participating in Election

These results reveal that majority of respondents perceive elections participation to be important. This indicates how people have been in a position of seeing how important elections are in real terms. It tells that through favorable attitude, which can be due to the fact that, voting is very important component in promoting and exercising democracy and the freedom of choice among the people; people exercise their rights and democracy to choose the leaders of their choices [46].

4.4. The Influence of Age on Voting

These results reveal that less young people participate in election than old people. This shows that most young people have not realized how important it is to participate in elections, despite the fact that Young people seem to have a genuine interest in politics, yet political alienation often limits their participation. These findings conform to the study by [47] as quoted in pp: 103] that, “the larger the percentage of the population that is over 65 years of age *ceteris paribus*, the greater the expected voter participation”. Similarly, [48] asserts that older people vote more than the young ones since they are less mobile than the young ones.

4.5. Marital Status and Attitudes

The results indicate that more married people had favourable attitudes towards voting than the rest other in the marital status category. This conforms to the fact that with marital status being a strong predictor of whether one registers and votes. A study by [49] found that people who are married had favorable attitude where they are more likely to vote hence conforming to the findings of this study.

4.6. Political Party Membership and Attitude Towards Voting

The results reveal that a significant proportion of the

respondents who had membership to political parties had favourable attitude towards voting. It is obvious that membership to political party has an influence on voting much as one will like to see a party to which one belongs wins and form a government so as to further their interest. Literature [49] argue that being attached to political party increases political participation and political trust hence likelihood of voting.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

There are variations in terms of voters' attitudes. Attitudes of voters towards voting is likely to be influenced by a multitude of factors ranging all the way from demographic factors to socio-economic aspects in the society including the perceived importance of voting plus the likelihood of voting to yield anticipated results. Much as voting is one of the forms of political participation in a democratic political system, a lot has to be done to cultivate positive attitudes of citizens in a democracy that will make it possible to turn out to vote in countries where voting is not compulsory. Various stakeholders should take initiatives towards instilling the sense of valuing voting to the citizens through various platforms, by so doing the chance is that the run out rate is likely to increase too.

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