

## Chapter 60

# Civic Engagement on Voters Turnout in General Election: A case of Tanzania, Africa

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The concern of voter turnout during general election is a serious problem. As such, the study found that civic engagement influences significantly voter turnout during general election in Tanzania. The findings based on primary data and descriptive statistics and a logistic regression model identified how civic engagement influences maximum voters turnout. These include putting names of voters before election day, authority to enforce law protecting voters, communities to know the importance of voting, Further, logistic regression model also deepens the finding that civic engagement influences voters turnout by establishing gender system on voting and emphasis youth's registration before election and .to encourage voters so that they know importance of voting. Conclusion is that voter turnout requires well organised and arranged packages of civic engagement. Recommendation is to emphasis on civic engagement as it explores voters' interest specifically democratic system and transparency.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Theory of Civic Engagement on Voter's Turnout**

Involvement of citizen towards improving prevailing situation in the country is considered important. Generally, criteria of involving citizen in decision making existed even during ancient periods. Hence, it is likely influence of civic engagement theory as an attitude where an individual or group of citizens

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in the country intervenes to rectify prevailing situation. Due to such view, it is imperative and making sense that this theory aligned on civic engagement and tries to educate citizen to transform necessary pressure in order to smoothen valuable direction.

Moreover, a question of voter's turnout is traditionally well thought out as a free decision left for an individual to decide on what he/she feels is the best. The word "best" is used here for individual voter to evaluate whether to participate in voting or not. For that matter, the theory assumes that voting turnout does not need any force.

Since conventional theory of voter's turnout is a free issue, then, thus why turnout is fluctuating either increasing or decreasing. For instance, Almond and Verba (1963) noted that voter turnout in USA decreased from 74% in 1968 to 65% in 2008. As a result, Putnam (2000) asserted that civic engagement is in great decline and that this will have grave consequences for the health of democracy.

However, it is possible that turnout is changing and could be due to feelings that voters are either dissatisfied on return from voting or satisfied. This means satisfaction could be captured through various techniques including engaging democracy. Well, this evidence show that democracy plays significant role on knowing what voters need. That is why several social theorists including Hobbes (1651) and Locke (1690) noted an idea of democracy in the seventeenth century (17<sup>th</sup>). But more established by Rousseau (1762) that democracy builds human freedom and desired development. He further pointed that; it was a key pillar on political issues including voting. Yes, such argument suggests how voters turnout correlates with democracy. However, democracy is not the sole prerequisite condition influencing voters turn out. There are other factors described in the next sub-section.

## **Empirical Background Information on Voters' Turnout**

An attitude of eligible voter participating in electing an official representing the interest of the community is highly motivating aspect worldwide. As it is known that participation in voting is a humble civilisation and creates a pleasant situation which stimulates voters electing a representative of their own choice. That is imperative although the decision is attracting, the noticed problem facing many developed and developing countries is the trend of decreasing proportion of voter's turnout during general elections. As Niemi and Weisberg, (2001). noted that this dilemma faces developed and developing countries that established democracies since early 1950s. Even recently, the decreasing trend of voters' turnout is frequently occurring in most established democracies since the 1960s. For instance, IDEA (2010) represented by a sample size of 16 countries selected using purposive technique from a list of more than 120 countries illustrated the decrease trend. Such countries cover between 1950s and 2011. Some of the observed features were the existence of positive correlation between voting for parliamentary and presidential. However, correlation varies from country to country. Taking example in East African countries, correlation is very high and this also prominent in Rwanda, Burundi, Malawi, Zambia, Nigeria and Brazil. But the trend is inversely correlated in United State of America.

Besides correlation, the literature from IDEA (2010) noted that voters turnout below 50% appear in several countries, however the leading ones are Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Pakistan. This could be due to economic hardship humiliating voters and therefore they do not grasp the logical reason to vote. Moreover, countries with voter's turnout above 70% include Tanzania except in the year 2010 where voters turnout was around 40% although other countries above 70% are Uganda, Rwanda, United Kingdom, Brazil and Australia. Moreover, But IDEA (2011) noted that countries with voters' turnout over 80% were Rwanda and Israel. Apart from that countries with high voter's turnout around ninety percent (90%) were Chile

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