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Power of ‘political will’ and its profound significance to peace and unity reconstruction in politically unstable societies: Lesson from President Hussein Mwinyi of Zanzibar

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Abstract

Zanzibar’s historically stagnant political development as far as a peaceful inclusive political environment is concerned is attributed to a lack of political will from both dichotomous fronts of Zanzibar politics. Although the semi-paleoconservative cadres still enjoy political strength within CCM Zanzibar, evidence suggests that the President’s political will is more powerful. Karume’s decision to change Zanzibar’s constitution to allow the Government of National Unity was not an easy attempt in 2010. The conservative Karume’s successors who previously opposed the introduction of GNU, disintegrated the formally established peaceful political environment due to a lack of political will and welcomed 10 years of new political turbulence. The current President in power, Dr. Hussein Mwinyi is trying to play both politics of negotiation and self-determination at the middle of the semi-paleoconservative CCM and the Zanzibar’s arrogant opposition to make sure a solution to political stability is realized.

Keywords: Women participation, electoral system, women in Indian electoral system

Introduction

Historical flames of political tensions and impasses in Zanzibar came to bake the political agendas of discrimination, hatred, and human rights violations (Omar, 2019) ^[11]. The accusations of the long-persisting, politically-rooted, multi-dimensional discrimination attitudes of the government and the ruling party, CCM on the grounds of racial origin, geographical location, and political affiliation which fabricated various discrimination-related jargons such as upemba, uunguja, uarabu, uswahili, uchotara, ukaskazini and ukusini were the main characteristics of Zanzibar society as far as the transition to democratization is concerned (Bakari, 2001) ^[12].

The state’s immaturity and failure to tolerate and survive the new democratic reservations imposed by the West strategically nurtured and revived the life and power of opposition politics for three decades. The historical question of human rights in the Isles crafted horrific stories along with several jargons and discourses such as Janajaweed, Melody, Zombies, etc. which have been very popular and common breaking news in the past, when it comes to the issue of arbitrary arrests, beatings, rape, and even murder, in the name of multiparty politics (Omar, 2019; Ramadhani, 2017) ^[11, 12].

Conceptualizing a ‘Political Will’

More often the success or failure of the statutory policies is linked with ‘political will’ – or the lack of it. But this term is wrongly applied by most political actors in the field. One may say, for instance, that this government doesn’t have the ‘political will’ to make changes desired by modern society. However, the incapacity of political or administrative instruments to achieve an outcome is excluded when understanding a ‘political will’ (Abazovic & Mujikic,).

Insufficiency of material resources, institutional (or other) impediments and opposition from interest groups which may prevent the desired outcome from occurring are also not

significant determinants of a political will. Political will is an individualized attribute or self-According to him Political Participation increased continuously over the last six to seven decades.

System possessed by individual political actors that intends to find solutions to problems (James, 1988; Saleem & Shaheen & Rafik & Arslan, 2024) ^[16, 14]. The political actors in a collective way apply 'political will' in policy implementation. Therefore, 'political will' begins with the senior politician who displays it while other stakeholders may come to share it.

President Hussein Mwinyi's Political Self-determination

For individuals, self-determination is the innate need to continuously grow and develop psychologically by mastering new skills and internalizing all experiences in preparation for the next consequences. (Drake, 2005) ^[4] asserts that when an individual is mature, evidence of self-determination will appear when there is an ability to make decisions affecting one's intelligence and course of action and to establish an influence on others.

By natural virtue, President Hussein Mwinyi is an honest man. The son of the highly respected former President of The United Republic of Tanzania, the late Mzee Ali Hassan Mwinyi. Mzee Ali Hassan Mwinyi has placed himself in a very respectful memory of political leadership in the country, despite the turbulent transitional times that characterized his administration. He is the only politician who got the chance to be president in both two governments which constitutionally compose the United Republic, i.e. The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania. (Keskin & Abdalla, 2019; Mwinyi, 2020) ^[9, 10] explain Mzee Ali Haasan Mwinyi's great role as a game changer who engineered significant but difficult changes amid a turbulent transition from revolutionary politics in Zanzibar on the one hand and from ujamaa politics of the Tanzania Mainland on the other hand.

President Hussein Mwinyi's most significant lessons from his father are honesty, politeness, tolerance, confidence to face CCM's 'business as usual' and conservatism; convincing and engineering changes despite the internal party's opposition; and a man with visionary efforts to seek significant changes. Mwinyi's politeness is beyond political personality. He never mocks or insults his political opponents. Furthermore, he never takes revenge against those who have made him angry and uncomfortable in exercising his political role.

Despite being the obedient cadre trained and politically grown-up within a semi-conservative CCM, he has significantly demonstrated political self-determination. He started to manifest a matured political personality when he was a Minister in the Government of The United Republic of Tanzania. The most remembered symbol of his political maturity was his decision to resign from the Ministerial post to show political accountability following the Gongolamboto military facility explosion which killed twenty-five people and injured five hundred, the decision of which was rejected by President Jakaya Kikwete.

Mwinyi's Promises Ahead of 2020 General Elections

Like all candidates in Tanzania electoral politics, Dr. Hussein Mwinyi's key promises during the 2020 General Election campaigns, emphasized the CCM Manifesto prescriptions. Though not openly paraphrased in the CCM

Manifesto, he was far confident enough to mention his desire and intention to restore and perpetuate the inclusive power-sharing Government of National Unity (GNU) which was missing for five years following the disputed 2015 general elections.

The Zanzibar GNU question is a dividing agenda in the CCM internal politics. Most CCM cadres in Zanzibar are not comfortable with GNU's existence, thereby preaching openly that they would remove it from the constitution if they get the chance. While some have no problem with it but unconfident to campaign for it. Mwinyi's early confidence to defend GNU in the 2020 General Election campaigns was indeed a good sign for his future unifying leadership in the volatile Zanzibar politics.

Initial Steps in Power

From the very beginning, indicators showed that Mwinyi was not comfortable with the one-sided political environment to dominate his government. Immediately after being sworn in as the new president, he launched negotiations with Zanzibar's Main opposition, ACT-Wazalendo, to seek the possibility of forming a Government of National Unity. More than that step, President Mwinyi agreed on all reservations raised by the late Maalim Seif Sharif Hamad on behalf of the opposition as their conditions must be fulfilled so that they can join GNU.

The first reservation was releasing all 2020 General Election prisoners. The second reservation was treating all victims of election brutality. The third reservation was paying compensation to victims of the 2020 General Election brutality. The fourth reservation was a revision of the legal framework governing the election process to make significant changes that can make future elections free and fair. The fifth reservation was about forming an investigative committee on the causes of the 2020 election unrest and legal measures to be taken against all behind such atrocities.

Reconciliation, GNU, and Political Trust

Reconciliation, unity, and political tolerance are the main topics of forth and back in Zanzibar politics. Though providing a permanent remedy for the volatile Zanzibar politics, reconciliation, and GNU issues are still controversial (Roop & Tronvoll & Minde, 2018; Haji, 2022) ^[13, 7] were the main Mwinyi's political aims. His first steps in power were characterized by building social reconciliation, unity, and political tolerance. He started using different forums such as political rallies, national ceremonies, social events, and religious institutions to preach the need and importance of peaceful co-existence. Soon, President Mwinyi enjoyed political trust from a large segment of the society irrespective of political affiliations and demarcations.

Unlike the 2010 – 2015 GNU in which the senior and junior wings of the government worked in fear of each other, without close proximity, cooperation, and trust, Mwinyi's GNU is quite different. He stayed so close to opposition cabinet members Mr. Nassor Mazrui and Mr. Omar Shaaban. He praised openly both two ministers from the opposition for the good job they were doing in helping his government perform well. From among the respondents interviewed concerning the stability of Zanzibar's GNU, 73.2% responded – that the GNU is stable, ministers from both political sides are peacefully co-existing and working together, 18.7% responded – that the situation is the same

and 4.8% responded – at least we can see a certain degree of stability in Mwinyi's GNU compared to 2010-2015 GNU. Mwinyi's reconciliation issue can never be separated from the implementation of political reservations laid down between him and the late Maalim Seif Sharif Hamad. Unlike past Presidents who finished their entire time in power without taking any significant steps to solidify the reconciliation environment, Mwinyi showed goodwill on this issue. The implementation of the first reservation, i.e. releasing of election prisoners, took off immediately after the President came into power while the second reservation i.e. treating the victims of election brutality took off sometimes later.

The implementation of the fourth reservation successfully started with the formation of a Special Taskforce which was given a duty to collect opinions from stakeholders concerning the political situation in Zanzibar. The task force completed its work and submitted a report to the President on 10th October 2022. Due to the conservative nature of Zanzibar's CCM, it was not easy for President Mwinyi to immediately convince his party to accept the implementation of the opinions as laid down in the report, the issue of which by nature cannot be decided by 'political will' of the President alone. It is mostly believed that the President and his party are still working on the report.

Following the freezing of the implementation of President Mwinyi-Maalim Seif's agreement for nearly three years, especially the third, fourth, and fifth reservations as explained above, there have been provocations, mocking, insulting, and discrimination language from the opposition against President Mwinyi. The attitude of referring to President Mwinyi by names such as 'rais mabati' (from multiple construction projects surrounded by iron sheet fencing), 'mtalii' (Meaning tourist) - from opposition notion that President Mwinyi is not true Zanzibari by birth, etc. have been making cracks in the political reconciliation strengthening efforts.

(Govier & Verwoerd, 2002) ^[6] describe political reconciliation as having the main aim of building or rebuilding the trust between political groups. Political trust is more expensive on the powerless side. It needs a high degree of patience and commitment. Trust also needs to place oneself in a relation of vulnerability and dependence; i.e. if you trust someone to take you to the airport for example, you run the risk that he won't in fact turn up and you'll miss your flight. (Festenstein, 2020) ^[5] makes further clarification on the vulnerability of goodwill where one depends on another's goodwill, one is necessarily vulnerable to the limits of that goodwill.

Political trust is viewed by political scientists as containing a moral aspect. Political trust needs moral commitments from all parties who need to trust each other. The lowest level of this morality of trust is respect. Respecting each other is a very significant tool to narrow the distance between antagonistic political interests. Cadres from CCM Zanzibar have shown their disappointment in the opposition's attitude to mock and insult the President, thereby hesitating to give their blessings concerning reconciliation development steps initiated by the President.

When respect is shown, even an enemy can respond in an unexpectedly positive way. From among the respondents interviewed concerning the role of the opposition in recognizing its moral role in reconciliation efforts, 56.3% responded – that the opposition is disappointing the President and ruling party through their mocking and

insulting attitudes, 42.1% responded – the opposition can't be condemned about the decline of reconciliation efforts in the past three years and 1.6% responded – they are not sure. When the opposition decided to negotiate with President Mwinyi respectfully reminding him of his delayed promises as far as the reconciliation issue is concerned, the doors and windows of trust were reopened. The two sides met in the State House and talked on reconciliation freezing. The talks seem to have good outcomes as the third reservation i.e. paying compensation of 10,000,000/= (4,000 USD) to each victim of 2020 General Election brutality immediately took off. Currently, only one complete reservation i.e. the formation of an investigative committee has not yet been realized.

The status of the current political relationship between President Mwinyi and the opposition gives the green light to evidence that the remaining reservations are under political negotiation inside CCM. From among respondents interviewed concerning Mwinyi's efforts to strengthen reconciliation and political trust between CCM and opposition, 79.6% responded – that a good job has been done by President Mwinyi to cement political reconciliation and trust, 12.3% responded – that the situation is the same and 8.1% responded – at least some significant efforts have been taken by Mwinyi's administration to strengthen political reconciliation and trust.

Good Governance and Human Rights Questions

The institutionalized corruption fighting efforts seem to have taken off successfully despite some challenges. Different corruption and abuse of public office cases have been reported and concerned officials taken to court by the Zanzibar Corruption Fighting Authority, ZAECA. A new tradition of public submission of the Report of the Zanzibar Auditor General has been witnessed since President Mwinyi entered office. Actions against reported misuse of public funds by the Auditor General such as dismissal from office and filing court cases against the officers concerned have been taken into action. Among respondents interviewed about the issue of misuse of public offices and resources, 76.4% responded – misuse of public offices and resources has been largely controlled in Mwinyi's administration, 20.7% responded – business is as usual and 2.9% responded – they are not sure.

The establishment of a special program called 'Sema na Rais' (Speak with the President) has been an important factor in controlling accountability, especially in public offices. People have easy access to report misuse of public offices directly to the President through mobile applications. Several cases reported have been followed and actions taken. The 'Sema na Rais' program has created fear among public servants and officials who at least now manifest some degree of accomplishment of their responsibilities.

President Mwinyi has demonstrated excellent confidence in maintaining the status of good governance even when he comes to differ from his senior colleagues within the party. The recent controversial move announced by the CCM's Deputy Secretary General for Zanzibar, Dr. Mohammed Said Dimwa on behalf of Zanzibar Party's Secretariat on the issue of presidential term extension, President Mwinyi did not hesitate to refuse the proposal and remain bound to principles of good governance and rule of law although Dr. Dimwa's political proposal favored him.

For decades Zanzibar has been regionally and globally recognized as a famous place for political and election-

based human rights violations especially, attacking, abducting, torturing, arresting, and killing. Since President Mwinyi entered into power, a period of three and half years, no significant events of politically based human rights violations have been recorded, except for one very popular case of Baraka Shamte, a prominent provocative CCM cadre who was abducted and tortured by unknown people following his unexpected style of criticism against the President.

In general, arbitrary political-based arrests and tortures which have been witnessed in Zanzibar for years have been suppressed to a large extent. From among the respondents interviewed concerning the issue of human rights, 88.4% responded – there is no indicator of state-related human rights violation and power abuse since President Mwinyi took office, 9.5% responded – the situation is the same, and 1.1% responded – at least there is a significant change in human right protection compared to past administration.

Inclusion of the Discriminated and Marginalized

Marginalization is a multi-layered concept. The whole nation can be marginalized at the international level while classes and communities can be marginalized from the dominant social order. Similarly, ethnic groups, families, or individuals can be marginalized within localities. Marginalization has never been fixed but shifting phenomenon, attributed to social status. For example, one group might enjoy high social status at one point in time, but as social change takes place, it loses this status and becomes marginalized (Kagan and Burton, 2005) ^[8].

Discrimination and marginalization in the name of politics have been the predominant attitudes in Zanzibar thereby stereotyping the society in layers including race, tribe, geographical locality, and pre-revolutionary history identification. Evidence suggests that for nearly thirty years since the introduction of multiparty politics, some segments of society didn't enjoy the national cake compared to others due to strategic marginalization.

In Mwinyi's government, major steps have been taken to eliminate discrimination and marginalization. Despite some of the middle state officials and politicians who are trying to maintain the status quo thereby weakening the President's effort on this issue, the outcomes are not so much disappointing. While ten years ago a native of Pemba, a child of the opposition leader, or a white-skinned citizen had a very low chance of getting employed especially in the important government offices and positions, currently under Mwinyi's administration, the whole segment which represents the marginalized in the past enjoys every available opportunity provided by the government. From among the respondents interviewed concerning an issue of discrimination and marginalization, 48.7% responded – only minor discrimination and marginalization practices have remained, 27.1% responded – the situation has remained the same and 24.2% responded – no significant indication of discrimination and marginalization is prevailing.

Research shows a large number of people of Pemba origin and white-skinned are distributed elsewhere in the Mwinyi's government from the State House to all government branches and offices. Concerning employment based on political party affiliation, several youth interviewed have confirmed that currently a chance to be employed is not so much surrounded by political or racial obstacles as it was in the past. At least after one year or two of graduation from college or university, one can get employed by the

government. What still has remained as a universal challenge in the area of employment is the government's inability to create enough new jobs as compared to the growing number of jobless youth.

The common discrimination jargons and discourses from the mouths of politicians and those that have been displayed on the propaganda walls of CCM prominent corners called maskani cells have been abolished completely. Kachorora and Muembe Kisonge, the main spots for propaganda and discrimination jargon have now taken a new course and turned into entrepreneur centers.

Pemba's Special Consideration

In the history of previous regimes, from the Portuguese rule, the Sultanate, the British Protectorate, and even after the Revolution, Pemba has never been taken seriously as one of the two sister islands that make up Zanzibar. Efforts to bring about the development and welfare of the people on the island of Pemba have been completely inconsistent with the importance of the island, its size, and even its population. However, Dr. Hussein Mwinyi is the only President from CCM who recognized the backwardness of Pemba Island as he stated several times that he has a sincere desire to unlock the Island socially and economically. Thus, he gave Pemba special political, social, and economic considerations from the beginning of his term.

The public opinion on the issue of Pemba special consideration by Mwinyi administration, data suggests some changes. Among the respondents interviewed about this issue, 43% responded – at least we can see some significant development efforts in Pemba since Mwinyi administration started, 36% responded – the situation is the same and 21% responded – they are not sure.

The Existing Challenges

About the effort to strengthen political reconciliation with the opposition, there is still a doubt of mistrust. ACT-Wazalendo is complaining about whether the President is committed to implementing the remaining reservations agreed upon between him and the late Maalim Seif Sharif Hamad or not. There is still doubt if the 2025 General Election will be under the same legal framework as 2020 which according to the opposition was the main reason behind the 2020 general election chaos.

In a motivational dimension, political trust and responsiveness are inter-dependable. If those in power adhere to the interests of others, political trust operates freely (Festenstein, 2020) ^[5]. In other words, person A can rely on person B's goodwill or responsiveness to trust him. President Mwinyi has no choice in completing the remaining reconciliation reservations with the opposition to restore political trust.

There are still complaints over the issue of discrimination and marginalization. Many respondents interviewed condemn CCM's middle and grassroots political actors who keep playing the business-as-usual games. For example, the provision of services and opportunities by the government to the public is arrested by political actors who seek to benefit their children, relatives, or party sympathizers.

Another challenge is the President's goodwill to develop Pemba. Although significant efforts have been made, opinions suggest that more steps need to be taken. Pemba is highly affected by stagnant economic growth and poor circulation of money. The livelihood of inhabitants is still attributed to lower per-capita incomes and poverty levels are

high. Important infrastructures such as efficient seaports and an airport need to be established; social and economic institutions such as high-class tourist hotels, referral hospitals, universities, factories, and headquarters for some state matters need to be established in Pemba Island so that the Island can attract residents and visitors hence stimulate the growth of the economy.

Conclusion

Despite his working within the semi-conservative politics of CCM, President Mwinyi has demonstrated profound self-determination and a philosophy of governance. Mwinyi has been very firm and confident in breaking the status quo in the government and the party. It seems like he is the President who has created a large number of political enemies within his own party, but evidence suggests that existing enmity comes from his steps to break the 'business as usual game', both within the party and within the government.

Past records on CCM efforts to strengthen political reconciliation and GNU have never been so good. Mwinyi's promises on the need and significance to strengthen political reconciliation and GNU stability have taken big steps despite some challenges. More commitments are needed from both political sides to reach the most expected outcomes.

The opposition needs to adopt wise criticism more morally, with patience, respect, and a negotiable relationship. President Mwinyi on the other hand, has no option but to extend his commitment and responsiveness. He needs to make an urgent commitment to the remaining reservations agreed upon between him and the opposition, especially those concerned with seeking of solution to the disputed legal framework of the electoral process.

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