African Review Vol. 41, No. 1, 2014: 161-181

Fifty Years of the Union: the Relevance of Religion in the Union and Zanzibar Statehood Debate

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Abstract

On 26 April 1964 Tanganyika and Zanzibar united to form the United Republic of Tanzania. Though with many challenges, this Union has survived for a period of 50 years and remains the only one in Africa. Yet, one of the challenges facing the Union is the fact that, of recent, some groups and individuals in Zanzibar have labelled it as a barrier towards their statehood and the quest to join the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation and other international organisations. Using UAMSHO public lectures in Zanzibar and other evidence from literature, this article asserts that religion plays a very significant role to unite Zanzibaris against the perceived injustices, immoralities and economic marginalisation that the Union has allegedly inflicted on Zanzibar. For the Union to survive the current challenges there is a need to open it up for public debate to address all issues that confront it.

Introduction

The dawn of independence in many African countries came with lots of opportunities and challenges. At the time when many African countries were becoming politically independent, the world was enmeshed in a serious ideological crisis that bipolarised it. Several economic, political and security challenges associated with the Cold war politics as well as the politics of Pan Africanism made African countries to contemplate on the need of having regional and continental unity. It was out of this context that the Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar was formed in early 1964 resulting in the creation of the United Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar (henceforth URT). The Union adopted a federal form of government with Zanzibar retaining its own government while certain matters that were of benefit and impact to both Zanzibar and mainland Tanzania were taken up to be under the Union government (Kaiser, 1999). According to the Articles of Union, the

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Union matters were listed to comprise eleven issues but with time, the list has increased up to twenty two matters now. This and other factors have been at the centre of the Union opponents and critics both in Zanzibar and mainland Tanzania. Although the Union remains desirable, at least from the perspective of Pan Africanism, recent developments in Tanzania suggest that the life and integrity of the Union are questionable and increasingly shaky. Most people who challenge the Union couch their arguments on resources distribution and control, sovereignty, identity, and power. In Zanzibar, opponents have gone an extra mile suggesting the secession of Zanzibar from the Union on account that it acts as a constraint to Zanzibar's sovereignty and development efforts. To these, the Union is seemingly considered as a mechanism through which mainland Tanzania exerts its influence on a supposed to be sovereign Zanzibar (Kaiser, 1999). The resignation of Aboud Jumbe in 1984, the failed attempt of Zanzibar to join the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and other international organisations such as the United Nations, Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), East African Community, and the like are blamed on the Union and the supposedly *Mfumo Kristo* (Christian Hegemony) which some Muslims believe is the dominant force in the Union government. A common popular perception of the Zanzibaris is that the champions of the Union are mainland Tanzanians most of whom are Christians and that Christian churches in Zanzibar have connections with Mainland churches. Despite this obvious development, the link between religion and Union politics has not been adequately established.

Focusing on Zanzibar, this article addresses this anomaly by examining Union challenges and how religion is becoming significant in the lifeline of the Union. The article draws on secondary data to make an argument that although the Union is challenged by its structure, resource distribution and control as well as sanctity, religion is increasingly becoming an important force in its lifeline. It is becoming a rallying point for those who believe in the secession of Zanzibar from the Union. The article examines some of the UAMSHO public lectures and other related videos posited on social media (especially those on you tube) to support the argument that religion is becoming very important in the Zanzibar-Union debate. This argument is developed by examining how the Union was formed, how it has evolved over time and what challenges it has faced. Thereafter, the claim for Zanzibar statehood is examined in the context of religion.

The Origins of the Union

The Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar did not just come from nowhere. Debate has ensued on what exactly motivated the Union and why it came at the time it did. One account suggests that the Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar was made possible because of the Cold war politics of the time. It is argued that Tanzania mainland was uneasy with Zanzibar fearing security threats posed by the island if nothing was done. The United States too feared Zanzibar becoming the Cuba of Africa (Kaiser, 1999; Wilson, 1989; Tordoff, 1965). This argument locates the formation of the Union within the security concerns raised as a result of escalating Cold war conflicts and associated fears that Zanzibar would be used by communist countries as their base in East Africa. For mainland Tanzania, the concern was built around fears brought about by the 1964 army mutiny (Tordoff, 1965) thus making security concerns of critical importance for the future of the country. Although this argument cannot alone explain the motives behind the Union, it remains obvious that the Union came in 1964; and the fact that the process was hastened suggests that the war had a hand in the formation of the Union.

Moreover, the formation of the Tanganyika-Zanzibar Union is located within the Pan African ideas of the time. This argument would give credit to the first president of the United Republic of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, for having initiated the idea of uniting Zanzibar and Tanganyika on the basis of Pan-African ideas and as a means of achieving the then anticipated United States of Africa. According to Mwakikagile (2008) the Union was motivated by the desire to realise the pan African dream of having a united Africa so as to confront neo-colonialism:- "Nyerere had just failed, in 1963, to convince the leaders of Kenya and Uganda to unite with Tanganyika and form an East African federation. And now Zanzibar provided him with an opportunity to realize this Pan-African ambition although on a smaller scale" (Mwakikagile, 2008: 37).

By using this argument, it would seem logical to hold that the Union would have come even if there were no Cold war politics or security fears on the part of mainland Tanzania and the Western capitalist nations (Mwakikagile, 2008). This is because Nyerere had nurtured the desire for uniting the two countries for a long time and would want to see it to fruition. And of course, it is not surprising that he is the one who proposed the Union to Mr. Abeid Karume, the president of Zanzibar (Ibid). Therefore, the Cold war politics as well as the volatile situation of Zanzibar provided an opportunity which

Nyerere exploited to have his long cherished Pan African ideas and goals brought to action. The government of Tanzania also shares this line of thinking as it posits that the Union was made possible by Mwalimu Nyerere's and other East African leaders' determination to achieve African unity (Vice President's Office [VPO], 2009). This argument, notwithstanding the fact that it gives the context within which the Union was founded, leaves us with an unanswered question on whether the Union was a better thought out idea before it became realised. It shows how the conception of the Union was not owned by the people of both Zanzibar and mainland Tanzania and probably explains why the Union has come under increased pressures and criticism from the very people who are supposed to be its beneficiaries. Moreover, some scholars remain skeptical of the Pan African argument because it appears that the idea of forming the Union was based on political pragmatism rather than the vision of Pan Africanism (Shivji, 2008).

Another reason which seems to have been the dominant explanation especially in government circles is that the Union was a result of close historical relations between the people and societies of Tanganyika and Zanzibar and that this relationship needed to be strengthened and upheld (VPO, 2009). This relationship was in different levels-close blood, cultural, trade, and language relations, as well as close political ties between Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) and the Afro-Shiraz Party (ASP) of Zanzibar (Ibid). It follows, therefore, that such relations needed to be nurtured and taken further afield; and there would not be another way other than forging the Union between the two countries to that effect. Of course, it is undoubtedly true that such relations were a norm for quite long since the interior of mainland Tanzania was integrated to the coastal trade activities; however, this would not provide enough justification for the Union. In fact, that Nyerere made moves to convince Uganda and Kenya, though in vain, for an East African Federation earlier than he suggested the idea of uniting Zanzibar with Tanganyika (Mwakikagile, 2008) may suggest that closer historical relations between the two countries may not have been primary to forming the Union.

Of great relevance to this article is the fact that many Muslim scholars have tended to explain the formation of the Union from a religious point of view. Those who subscribe to this explanation are mostly discontented Muslims who believe the Union was Nyerere's strategy of curbing the growth and spread of Islam in the country and in East Africa. To many of these, Nyerere

was the West's ultimate anti-Islamic warrior in post independent Africa (Abdullah, 2009). To them,

> Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere, a devout Catholic, saw Islam in the islands of Zanzibar as a threat to the growth of Christianity in East Africa and Africa in general; so he saw every reason to practically prepare what is called "Zanzibar Revolution" of 1964... (Mujahiduun, 2011).

Supporters of this argument would conclude that:-

> … This is a clear testimony that the union of Zanzibar and Tanganyika was the creation of Karume, a racist dictator nominal Muslim from Nyasaland (Malawi) and Nyerere, an autocratic devout Christian from Tanganyika. And consequently, Zanzibar has lost her strong Islamicity [sic] and sovereignty to Tanganyika since April 26, 1964 when the dictator Karume, signed the Articles of the Union, drafted by British expatriates… to form Tanzania under the clique of the Christian Church Movement (CCM) of Tanganyika (al-Zinjibari, n.d.).

Such religious views about why Tanganyika and Zanzibar united into Tanzania have dominated in most popular debates about the Union among the Muslims in Zanzibar. As we shall see later, such views have also provided an opportunity for religious leaders in Zanzibar to make use of religious sentiments as way of mustering support from the Zanzibaris in the struggle for the secession of Zanzibar from the Union. Thus, explaining what motivated the Union in 1964 remains something debatable. What is obvious, however, is the fact that a combination of both external forces and internal factors was relevant for a hastened Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar in 1964.

The uneasy road: how the Union has evolved over time

The Union has turned fifty years. That it has survived for all that long time does not mean that the past fifty years have been easy. In fact, the Union has gone through turbulent years characterised on the one hand with an ever changing list of Union matters and increasing pressures and criticism against it on the other hand. The Union has both been challenged and opposed from within as well as outside the government. It has never enjoyed a smooth growth. Of recent, there has been increasing pressure for the secession of

Zanzibar from the Union in a move that aims at restoring the 'swallowed' sovereignty of the country.

Right from the time the Union was formed; some Zanzibaris have never wholeheartedly accepted its existence. The main concerns of the Zanzibaris have since then revolved around the basic issues of sovereignty, the structure of the Union, distribution of resources, and the legality of the additional Union matters beyond those spelt out in the Union Articles (Shivji, 2008). Above these, the fact that common citizens have never been directly concerted over what kind of Union they want compound the various challenges against the Union. Those who tried to openly challenge the Union or call for its review were greeted with state sponsored torture and were branded as the enemies of the Union (Shivji, 2008).

A combination of a number of factors ranging from limited participation and involvement of people, especially the Zanzibaris in the making and ratification of the Union; the ever expanding list of Union matters; and dissatisfaction over resource distribution and the structure of the Union have all been at the centre of the Union challenges. As Shivji (2008) argues, the Union was founded on shaky foundation and continues to be weak even today. Some cases need to be identified here to show the extent to which the past fifty years of the Tanganyika-Zanzibar Union have not been smooth.

In its first twenty years the Union seemed to enjoy a relatively smooth development with top leaders doing all they could to strengthen it, albeit, not without challenges. What we mean by the Union enjoying a relatively smooth development is that there were no open public criticisms of the Union during the time. Challenges to the Union remained internal and mainly to the government leaders of the time. This period was marked by deliberate contravention of the Union agreements and articles mainly on the part of Zanzibar while Tanganyika was using every legal possibility to expand the list of Union matters in order to bring Zanzibar closer to the grip of the Union government (Shivji, 2008). It is argued that during this period the president of Zanzibar, Abeid Amani Karume, was contravening the Union agreements in an attempt to consolidate his power base (Ibid). Such issues as forced marriages and violation of agreements signed by him (Karume) or with Nyerere were very common during the time (Shivji, 2008; Wilson, 1989). At times, Karume would threaten withdrawing Zanzibar from the Union and, the situation sometimes got out of hand so much that the two presidents, Karume and Nyerere, were at times not communicating to each

other directly; they communicated through Bhoke Munanka and Thabit Kombo (Shivji, 2008). While this was going on in Zanzibar, Nyerere was maintaining a low profile in the name of promoting and maintaining the Union and was using any legal opportunity to increase the union matters and tie Zanzibar tightly to the Union government (Ibid).

It was in this period that the two parties of TANU and ASP merged to form Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) and a permanent Union constitution in 1977. These measures seriously constrained Zanzibar's sovereignty, thus marking the end of Zanzibar's sovereignty. The merger of the parties also gave CCM an upper hand and control of the politics of Zanzibar. The permanent constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania came with an enlarged list of the Union matters, expanding the list to 22 from the originally agreed 11 issues at the time the Union was formed in 1964. This has been one of the hottest thorns in the history of the Union for most of the critics of the Union focus on this relative to its impact on Zanzibar's statehood, sovereignty and integrity. It is out of this anomaly that many Zanzibaris have been demanding having their own central bank, currency autonomy, a free and sovereign Zanzibar, and a fair electoral system that ensures the Union presidency is equally shared between the two parts of the Union (Mwangulumbi, 2012; Shivji, 2008; Bakari, 2000).

Although many Zanzibaris were not happy with the Union and the way it constrained the country's sovereignty, there were, generally, no open and serious sentiments and opposition to the Union during the Union's first twenty years. The main reason for this could be found in the political system of the time that did not give room for open discussion and challenge to the Union (Bakari, 2000). However, this does not mean that there were no discontents against the Union during the time. The first president of Zanzibar, Abeid Amani Karume, for example, is said to have been struggling hard to maintain the country's sovereignty (Shivji, 2008).

The first open challenge against the Union came in the mid 1980s when some Zanzibaris including the then Zanzibar's Attorney General, Wolfgang Dourado, openly castigated the Union on the ground that it was not benefitting the people of Zanzibar and that the union had swallowed Zanzibar (Shivji, 2008; Bakari, 2000). This was to lead to a major political consequence to Zanzibar that saw Aboud Jumbe, then president of Zanzibar, resigning from all his positions on allegations that he was shouldering anti-union sentiments and polluting the political atmosphere in Zanzibar (Shivji,

2008; Jumbe, 1994). Since then, things have never been the same: the Union has moved from crisis to crisis to the extent that it has now become fashionable and common to speak of "*kero za muungano*" (literally, union nuisance). Voices for the secession of Zanzibar from the Union have increased since then. For example, in 2005, a group of 10 people (G10) who called themselves activists led by Rashid Salum Adiy filed a constitutional case in the High Court of Zanzibar demanding the Attorney General to present the Union agreement (Mwangulumbi, 2012). In 2008, a petition from Zanzibar was made to the United Nations office in Dar es Salaam calling for the secession of Zanzibar from the Union; in 2012 a group of 30 youth gathered in front of the House of the Zanzibar Representative Council calling for the authorities to hold a referendum regarding the Union (Mwangulumbi, 2012). In the same year, several public lectures organised by the Association for Islamic Mobilisation and Propagation (UAMSHO) were conducted throughout Zanzibar with the aim of awakening the Zanzibaris on the menace that the Union has brought on them and their country. Although its frontline leaders were detained and their activities constrained by state coercive instruments, their ideas still influence popular views about the Union. All these are done in the context of popular belief that the Union has done more harm than good to the Zanzibaris, and therefore needs to be reformed or dissolved.

While this was the case in Zanzibar, similar sentiments were being raised by some people in mainland Tanzania who were questioning the efficacy of the Union and demanding a restoration of the government of Tanganyika. In the year 1993, a group of 55 members of parliament (G55) tabled a motion in the parliament in demand for a separate and independent government of Tanganyika (Shivji, 2008). This was in response to the Union structure which continued recognising the government of Zanzibar but did not recognise nor provide for the government of Tanganyika. Unfortunately, this call was forcefully withdrawn and the G55 members were branded as Union enemies. Despite forceful withdrawal of the motion, the idea has lived on and seems to be coming to maturation as the current draft constitution provides for three government structure which restores Tanganyika (Tume ya Mabadiliko ya Katiba, 2013b). Notwithstanding this, some mainlanders were also growing critical of Zanzibar's participation in the Union parliament which discussed and deliberated on both the Union and non-union matters for mainland Tanzania (Kaiser, 1999). It is, thus, obvious that the past fifty years of the Union have not been easy. In fact, the Union has turned fifty weaker than it, perhaps, was during early years of its existence: today the Union is

threatened by growing popular demand for its reformation or its disintegration. Of the growing forces against the Union, religion is increasingly becoming important in the Union and Zanzibar questions debate.

Religion, the Union and Zanzibar statehood debate

This section examines the relevance of religion in the Union and Zanzibar statehood debate. It starts by giving a brief sketch of how religion has become an important rallying point in different countries since the 1980s. The aim of doing this is to put Zanzibar's case in the context of, not only what happens locally but also developments in other parts of the world. This would help us determine the extent by which religion is becoming important in the Union and Zanzibar statehood debate and what the future implication of this is.

The relationship between politics and religion continue to attract attention of scholars mainly because it is a contentious issue. Although many governments have adopted a secular system, striking a balance between politics and religion has remained a challenge. Consequently, religion has in most cases been politicised and in many circumstances used for political mobilisation and as a tool for bringing about change. This is more visible as one considers the advent of neoliberal globalisation and its forceful imposition on the Global South. The consequence of this has been the erosion of socio-cultural bonds and norms as well as economic and political marginalisation. While political liberalisation has provided opportunities for political decentralisation in many developing countries, it has also created conditions for religious radicalism and fundamentalism to emerge and blossom. In the wake of governments' failure to adequately cater for the economic, social and political rights and needs of their constituencies, religious mobilisations, among others, have increasingly become significant in the struggle for political, social and economic wellbeing on one hand and challenging the western mainstream governance models on the other. There are several examples of countries where religion has provided a platform for political mobilisation. In Iran, for example, religion played a very vital role in the 1978-79 revolution. The Shi'a clerics organised an effective religious opposition throughout the country resulting into the collapse and destruction of the Pahlavi regime and its replacement with an Islamic republic (Bill, 1982). In this case, as Benson (1989) argues, the Iranian revolution demonstrated that, where secular ideologies fail, religion can be a more potent mobiliser of mass political action.

In Sudan, religion has been central to the long term civil wars between the Muslim dominated North and Christian dominated South Sudan culminating ultimately to the division of Sudan into South Sudan and Sudan in 2011. Playing on socio-economic and political factors, religion has constantly pitted the Northern Muslims against their fellow Christians and traditionalists in the South since the 1950s. While the Muslim dominated government of Sudan emphasised the inseparability of religion and politics and therefore ruled the country as per Islamic law, the South was always fighting for the separation of religion and politics and for the independence of South Sudan. Although debate ensues on whether Sudan's civil wars were motivated by religion or resources (see for example, Berkley Centre for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, 2013; Vale, 2011; Sandenbergh, 2006; Domke, 1997), it remains obvious that religion was used to subordinate the South Sudanese by the North and also as a rallying point for the South in their rebellions against the North. It has compounded the resource conflicts as well as other economic, political and social challenges to bring about civil and political turmoil in the country that ended with the independence of South Sudan in July 2011. As the Berkley Centre for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs (2013: 4) posits, religious tensions between the North and South were deeply embedded in overlapping historical, cultural, social, and economic grievances.

In Nigeria, the emergence of Boko Haram and its insurgency activities has both posed a security challenge to the state and complicated the relationship between religion and politics. The failure of secular governance model to respond to some pertinent religious issues has provided a ground for Boko Haram's demand for governance based on Islamic law. According to Adesoji (2010) the emergence and blossoming of Boko Haram in Nigeria has much to do with the religious sensitivity of Nigeria, economic dislocations, the advent of party politics, and the ambivalence of some vocal Islamic leaders. Since 2009, Boko Haram has been involving itself in violent attacks claiming more than 2000 lives in northern Nigeria (Adenrele, 2012: 21) in an attempt to forcefully impose a religious ideology on a constitutionally secular state (Adesoji, 2010). It claims that politics in northern Nigeria has been seized by a group of corrupt, false Muslims and therefore wants to wage a war against them so as to create a "pure" Islamic state ruled by sharia law (Walker, 2012: 1). Boko Haram gained many followers especially as it poised itself to speak for matters that were of concern to majority Nigerians: police brutality, political corruption and harsh government treatment (Johnson, 2011 cited in Adenrele, 2012).

What can be drawn from these three cases is the fact that religion is a very important tool for political mobilization, more so in an environment where mainstream governance and political models do not seem to capture the complex nature of socio-cultural, economic and political aspects of societies. In circumstances where the state structures have failed to respond to general and specific needs of some sections of the society, some people resort to the use of religion as a unifying and mobilizing tool to push for their demands. One could rightly argue that it is out of this anomaly that the Union and Zanzibar statehood debate has taken a religious character in Zanzibar.

I noted above when discussing the factors for the Union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar that religion is considered by some to be one of the factors for why Nyerere longed for a Union. Recently, religion has featured very well in the debate over the Zanzibar and Union questions with many Zanzibaris believing the Union was formed as a means of controlling Muslims and the spread of Islam in Eastern Africa. In the post Nyerere period, the debate about the Union has increasingly seen religion becoming important, especially in Zanzibar. I argue here that religion has compounded the Union challenges by providing a rallying point through which the Zanzibaris can chant their discontent over the Union. For UAMSHO and other religious leaders, religion is the only way for the liberation of Zanzibar from the claws of the Union because politicians have failed to ensure Zanzibar regains its sovereignty (UAMSHO, 2012a).

I argue that religion is becoming an important parameter in the Union-Zanzibar questions because of four major reasons. In the first place, the majority of the population of Zanzibar, 96%, are Muslims (Liviga and Tumbo-Masabo, 2006: 158) who would therefore want to see their Zanzibar governed as par Islamic principles. Secondly, to Muslims, politics and religion are inseparable because Islam is a complete way of life, politics being part of it. Any attempt to separate religion from politics cannot be welcomed by any devout Muslim. As Brents and Mshigeni (2004) argue, politics must be directed by a religious (in this case Islamic) worldview. An interview conducted by Brents and Mshigeni with one of the informants during the course of their research in Zanzibar shows how inseparable religion and politics are to Muslims:-

> We don't really differentiate religion and politics... to us it is the same thing, when we go to the mosque we get ideas from the quran [sic] on how to be pious and do good deeds, whether you're

> politician or not, and that is what we believe the country should be. Religion shows us the right path politically, on how to run the state affairs ... they are one ... inseparable (Brents and Mshigeni, 2004: 69).

Thirdly, to the Muslims, Islam is a religion of justice that is opposed to any form of domination and exploitation; thus, resistance to such injustices is part and parcel of the Islamic faith and practice (Liviga and Tumbo-Masabo, 2006). Lastly, conventional secular approaches have failed to restore Zanzibar's sovereignty, identity, culture and moral integrity. In fact, to many Zanzibaris, conventional modes of governance are the ones that have made Zanzibar what it is today. In this sense, as Mutch (2012) argues, religion is emerging to offer an alternative approach to the challenges facing Zanzibar in the Union. Religious leaders are taking a leading role in the debate over Zanzibar's place in the Union because the politicians and conventional political systems have failed to provide answers to the challenges that Zanzibar faces as a result of the Union, let alone resolving them. It is also acting as a platform through which common citizens can air their views and discontents after decades of political and governance systems that did not give room for voices of discontent from "marginalised" Muslims of Zanzibar. Moreover, it is only through religion that many Zanzibaris who are divided along the lines of political party affiliations can be brought together. This explains why UAMSHO leaders have been urging Zanzibaris to put their political differences aside and come together as Muslims for the "liberation" of their country from mainland Tanzania. These factors have been at the heart of Muslim discontent about the Union. It is out of this that the debate about Zanzibar's place in the Union and the Union in general has taken a religious character. I examine these with evidence.

From the earliest times of colonial rule, Muslims were opposed to the economic, social and political atrocities and injustices imposed by the colonial masters on the people of Tanganyika. They were at the forefront of the struggles for the country's independence and supported whoever joined their campaign against colonialism (Liviga and Tumbo-Masabo, 2006). Their major aim was to see an end to the colonial rule that had left them marginalised and excluded in many areas of life. They hoped for a post-colonial period where equality and justice would prevail. Unfortunately, although the first post-independence government took several measures to address the educational and other gaps between Christians and Muslims, steps were taken to separate religion from politics by building a secular state. Consequently, Muslims' efforts to create opportunities for their advancement

were curtailed and sometimes branded as mixing religion and politics (Liviga and Tumbo-Masabo, 2006; Said, 1989). For example, the East African Muslims Welfare Society (EAMWS) which, among other things, aimed to build a Muslim University in Tanzania was banned in 1968 (Liviga and Tumbo-Masabo, 2006; Said, 1989). This was taken by Muslims as government deliberate acts to constrain and weaken the efforts of Muslims to bring themselves development. Creating a secular state that separates religion from politics was similarly seen as a means of weakening Muslims' voice and influence in political affairs.

The formation of the Union between Tanganyika and Zanzibar and the subsequent loss of Zanzibar's sovereignty further aggravated Muslims' view that the Christian dominated government was deliberately sidelining and marginalising them in their quest for development. We saw above that Muslims have increasingly associated the Union with the grand plan of containing the growth and spread of Islam in Eastern Africa and as a means of making sure that Muslims would remain poor. The merger of Afro-Shiraz Party (ASP) and Tanganyika African National Unity (TANU) into Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) in 1977, the adoption of the permanent Union constitution and the enlargement of the list of the Union matters to 22 from the original 11 issues are all considered as steps towards tying Zanzibar, a Muslim dominated state, to what Muslims call *Mfumo Kristo* (Christian Hegemony) which allegedly dominates the Union. A review of the UAMSHO public lectures conducted in different parts of Zanzibar in 2012 as well as other lectures on *Mfumo Kristo* shows that most Zanzibaris are not happy with the Union on account that it has constrained their integrity, sovereignty and their cultural and religious identity (Africa Confidential, 1994, cited in Haynes, 2005).

The Union is cited as the major reason for Zanzibar's aborted effort at joining Organisation for Islamic Conference (OIC) in the early 1990s. In 1992 Zanzibar unilaterally joined OIC in an effort to solicit support for economic development of Zanzibar and its people (Aminzade, 2013). This decision generated heated debate with some leaders, notably President Ali Hassan Mwinyi and Vice President Salmin Amour defending the move while Julius Nyerere condemning it on account that it violated the Union constitution (Aminzade, 2013; Tanzanian Affairs, 2008). Consequently, Zanzibar was forced to withdraw its membership from OIC in 1993. This has made some Muslims hate the Union as they have come to see it as a constraint to their good development intentions. Thus, it is not surprising that the issue

continues to feature in popular debates about the Union and Zanzibar. Similarly, that Zanzibar cannot unilaterally join in different international organisations like the United Nations, the African Unity, FIFA, East African Community is something to be blamed on the Union and Zanzibar's loss of its independence and sovereignty to the Union government. The consequence of this has been that many Zanzibaris have come to associate their forceful withdrawal from OIC with the Union and the supposed *Mfumo Kristo;* thus seeing Christians as their enemy on this issue:-

> If an agenda is not approved by *Mfumo Kristo* it cannot be implemented just as Zanzibar could not join OIC and now Tanzania cannot join the organisation because the bishops do not like that, *Mfumo Kristo* does not like that (Sheikh Ilunga, cited in Mfumo Kristo Blogspot, 2012).

Such views are in line with what some scholars point out that Christianity, to Muslims, plays a role of frustrating their efforts at self development. Thus,

> ... Christianity is seen as synonymous with Western interests that have actively attempted to frustrate the Tanzanian Muslim efforts to build ties to an Islamic Middle East. ... activists reject the notion that religion should be separated from politics and reject the contention that Christians, despite their stated intentions, in actual practice adhere to this norm (Heilman and Kaiser, 2002: 701).

Moreover, these arguments are strengthened by the fact that the government itself has exhibited double standards in dealing with Christians and Muslims (Heilman and Kaiser, 2002). For example, although the state consistently maintained that politics and religion should not be mixed, in 1963 it nonetheless allowed the Catholic Church to run a slate of candidates in Bukoba to oppose the CCM candidates who were Muslim (Liviga and Tumbo-Masabo, 2001, cited in Heilman and Kaiser, 2002: 701). As pointed out earlier, another case that shows the government's double standard in dealing with issues of religion is the banning of Muslim societies such as the EAMWS while tolerating Christian organisations (Heilman and Kaiser, 2002). Such facts provide evidence to discontented Muslims to justify their claim that *Mfumo Kristo* has been the dominant force in day to day government activities and that this has been a major hurdle to Muslims' efforts at development and improvement.

Also, immoral practices, supposedly coming from mainland Tanzania, that go against Islamic law such as corruption and wearing mini-skirts and other clothes that do not adequately cover one's body are increasingly associated with the Union (UAMSHO, 2012b). Speaking at a public lecture organised by UAMSHO in Konde, Zanzibar, Sheikh Suleiman Hajj explicitly said he does not see any benefit of the Union to Zanzibar other than the mushrooming of prostitution, bars and churches (UAMSHO, 2012c). This was also reiterated by Sheikh Mussa Juma at Nungwi on another UAMSHO public lecture where he showed his disgust at the way the mainlanders have adulterated Islamic principles of life (UAMSHO, 2012a). This means that he and other Zanzibaris see the Union as an instrument for the adulteration of Islamic norms and principles. To many Zanzibaris, the Union and *Mfumo Kristo* have distorted Muslim culture and identity in Zanzibar (Brents and Mshigeni, 2004). Following such sentiments, it is not surprising that several bars in Zanzibar were vandalised by groups of unknown people (Sadallah, 2012). What is surprising, however, is the fact that those who vandalised the bars also stole money (Ibid). One wonders whether these were actually discontented Muslims in defence of their Islamic ideals and principles or just other opportunists taking advantage of the situation for their own benefits. Thus, it is not surprising that religion is taking centre stage in the ongoing debate about the Union and Zanzibar's sovereignty with religious and UAMSHO leaders campaigning for a free Zanzibar so that Islamic virtues can be restored. However, such a claim that immorality is brought in Zanzibar by mainland Tanzanians through the Union risks seeing Zanzibaris as passive recipients of change; as people who cannot critically analyse issues and choose what is right for them. Similarly, it remains unclear on how the secession of Zanzibar from the Union can actually make Zanzibaris uphold moral principles of Islam in this globalised world.

Moreover, the economic woes such as poverty and high youth unemployment are believed to be a result of the Union which has put revenue collection, natural resources and such other important resources for development under the Union. This is taken to mean a deliberate decision to constrain Zanzibar's efforts at developing itself; and thus an effort to make sure that Muslims remain poor (Brents and Mshigeni, 2004; Cameron, 2002). Speaking at a public lecture at the Alabama playground in Zanzibar, one of the UAMSHO leaders cited the Union as having swallowed, exploited, humiliated, terrorised and economically marginalised Zanzibar (UAMSHO, 2012b). Thus, it is understandable that UAMSHO and other religious leaders in Zanzibar cite this as a reason for their decision to engage themselves in

creating awareness to the Muslim community and demanding for the independence of Zanzibar from mainland Tanzania (UAMSHO, 2012a, b). They continuously urge their fellow Zanzibaris to forget their political party affiliations and come together as Zanzibaris and Muslims in demanding for the independence of Zanzibar. It is further posited that as long as the present structure of the Union continues to function, the people of Zanzibar cannot be free and their Islamic virtues cannot prevail. Therefore, religion acts as a rallying point for the Zanzibaris and as the only means of liberating Zanzibar from the 'Christian' dominated Union because politicians have failed to do so (UAMSHO, 2012a, b). In tandem with this, it is not surprising that of the 1,229 views collected from Zanzibar during the constitutional review process, 32.7% as opposed to 20% in mainland Tanzania were of the view that the Union should be dissolved (Tume ya Mabadiliko ya Katiba, 2013a: 69).

Conclusion

The Tanganyika-Zanzibar Union is the only surviving Union in Africa; a Union for which Africa has a lot to learn from should the revived Pan Africanism be of any value. This article has shown that the Union has survived fifty years since its formation with several challenges that revolve around the issues of legality, sovereignty, structure, resources distribution and the Union issues. As some scholars have argued, the Union has turned fifty years weaker and more challenged than it was in the past. The article has also examined the factors behind the hastened unification of Tanganyika and Zanzibar in 1964. Although none of the factors identified can adequately explain why the Union was formed at the time it did, it can conveniently be concluded that a combination of these factors was relevant in the formation of the Union.

In explaining how the Union has evolved and survived numerous challenges as it marks its fiftieth anniversary, I have argued that religion is increasingly becoming an important force in its lifeline. My argument is based on four major factors: the Muslim population of Zanzibar, the inseparability of politics and religion in Islam, the justice doctrine that Islam stands for, and the failure of mainstream political and governance systems to arrest immorality and economic woes associated with the Union. With cases from recent UAMSHO public lectures in Zanzibar and other evidence from literature and internet sites, I have argued that religion plays a very significant role to unify the Zanzibaris against the perceived injustices, immoralities and economic marginalisation that the Union has allegedly inflicted on Zanzibar. With long term grievances over the Union and

conscientisation lectures by UAMSHO, the Zanzibaris have been able to make their needs and demands heard in the constitutional review process so much that the draft constitution has reviewed the structure of the Union introducing a three governments structure with the restoration of the government of Tanganyika (Tume ya Mabadiliko ya Katiba, 2013b). The list of Union matters has also been drastically reduced to seven from the current twenty two (Ibid). It should, however, be noted that some religious leaders needed more than this and were opposed to a three government structure. Although most of them were arrested and detained by government forces, their ideas still live on and are likely to continue illuminating the debate on the Union and the place of Zanzibar in it. That the videos of their public lectures are readily accessible on YouTube means that many Zanzibaris can still refer to them in the absence of the UAMSHO leaders. Moreover, as long as Zanzibaris continue to hold a negative perception about it, the Union cannot remain strong. Thus, as we celebrate fifty years of its formation and envision a future of a strong and vibrant Union, there is every reason to see religion as an important force in the Union politics. This presents us with an interesting case for further research.

Religion is poised to continue being an important force in the Union-Zanzibar statehood politics and debate. Owing to the way the Union and Zanzibar governments have handled the issue of UAMSHO and its leaders thus aggravating the long held perception that the Union rules over Zanzibar and has a hidden agenda against Islam and Muslims, one wonders how religion can disappear from the debate about the Union and Zanzibar's sovereignty and statehood. Developments in other countries like Nigeria, Somalia, and the global war on terrorism (usually associated with Islam and radical Muslims) are also likely to continue influencing religious based mobilisations and struggles against perceived injustices and marginalisation. Moreover, as the dominant mainstream governance and state models continue to fail to deliver and respond to ever complex needs and systems of life and as there are no adequate new inventions yet in place, religion is poised to continue being an important rallying point for the mobilisation of people against injustices, marginalisation, subordination and moral decay. For Zanzibar, as secularism continues taking hold of the Zanzibari society, religion will continue gradually taking centre stage in popular political debates. As this article has shown, with a population of more than 96% Muslims, there is no way one can think of religion playing a diminishing role in the Zanzibari politics in the future.

As this is the case, the Union needs to be subjected to continuous open debate and discussions with a view of improving it and making sure that issues raised by Zanzibaris are worked upon. I have noted that one of the major challenges which has been facing the Union since its formation has been its closed nature; that is its opposition to open criticism and debate. Thus, it is the recommendation of this article that if Tanzania authorities want to cultivate a healthier Union, there is great need to open it to public scrutiny and debate as a means of identifying and ironing out concerns that bring discomfort. It should be noted that this is a people's Union and it should be the same people who have to determine how it should be structured and how it should function. Only when this is honestly done can the challenges be identified and resolved to make sure that the Union thrives.

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