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# Citizen Participation in Local Democracy Online: A Snapshot of Trends and Challenges in Adoption of Crowdsourcing Methods in Tanzania\*

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## Abstract

Although numerous studies concerning local democracy have been carried out in Tanzania, most of them have fallen short of analysing crowdsourcing citizen participation in local democracy online. Local democracy aims essentially to promote fundamental rights of the citizen to participate in policy and decision-making processes. On the other hand, crowdsourcing in the modern digital age - is increasingly expected not only to transform relationships between local politicians and voters in democratic processes, but also to engage and empower ordinary citizens to have a voice in monitoring electoral procedures by new electronic means from below. Promotion of citizen participation with better platforms for monitoring local elections and information sharing in near real-time is a vital element for healthy local democracy. This is why in recent times; we have witnessed emerging of digitally empowered citizen voice platforms such as Uchaguzi open source and social media pages like Facebook for citizens' crowdsourcing systems. In that regard this paper attempts to map citizen crowdsourcing methods, trends and challenges of online participation in monitoring local elections in Tanzania. Crowdsourcing methods through information and communication technologies create an agenda for collective citizen participation, collaborative production and sharing of local information.

**Keywords:** Local Democracy, Citizen Participation, Online Participation, Crowdsourcing, Digitalization, Tanzania

## 1. Introduction

In spite of the widespread success of the latest wave of democratization since 1989/1990 and the end of the Cold War, many of the newly democratized political systems have remained merely electoral democracies. This is because democracies have emerged in increasing numbers since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in which the waves of democratization - "the third wave" (Huntington, 1991), resulted in electoral democracies in order to

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create legitimacy for a political system (Kersting & Cronqvist, 2005). Electoral democracies have taken some stronger roots, but a number of them are still marred by manipulation which undermines the legitimacy of the newly elected government. At the local government level, there is a serious problem of monitoring democratic procedures compared to national-level elections. On the other hand, local democracy is a "cornerstone of a democratic society" (Pratchett, 2004, p.361). Citizens' crowdsourcing method is one of the cornerstones for participation and monitoring local democratic processes because of the growing digital information and communication technologies (ICTs). By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the crucial role of the internet in global society beyond mere commercial use had become undeniable (FES, 2017, p.5). But also, digital technology is increasingly expected not only to transform relationships between local politicians and voters in democratic processes, but also to engage and empower ordinary citizens to have a voice in monitoring electoral processes by new electronic means from below (Shayo, 2017). This is because engaging citizens in the forgotten level of local government can improve participation and the ability of local authorities to create more inclusive and cohesive communities and to champion initiatives made by ordinary citizens in promoting democratic society.

Crowdsourcing and digital information and communication technologies have changed the way of observing and disseminating electoral information. Digital technology has been presented as a means to promote transparency, openness and accountability, as well as new forms of participation and political communication (Kersting & Baldersheim, 2004). In this sense, crowdsourcing citizen participation with digital information and communication technology platforms for observation and information sharing among electoral stakeholders is a cornerstone for promoting integrity of local democratic processes. This is why in recent times; we have witnessed emerging of digitally empowered citizen voice platforms such as *Uchaguzi* Swahili word means "election" platform for citizens' crowdsourcing systems and social media accounts for generating and sharing election information at both local and national levels (Shayo, 2017). These initiatives for citizen participation in local democracy can be in terms of "invited" platforms (top-down) by government institutions and "invented" platforms (bottom-up) initiated by civil society organisations (Kersting, 2012). These initiatives of engaging citizens online (invented spaces) through crowdsourcing methods at the local levels are unexploited and undocumented in Tanzania (Shayo, 2017). This paper is an attempt to offer a snapshot of citizens' crowdsourcing methods, trends and challenges of online participation by drawing examples from 2014 civic elections and 2015 election of ward councillors in Tanzania.

The discussion that follows is divided into various parts. Part one follows after this introduction and highlights briefly invented spaces for citizen participation in local democracy online. New forms of online participation are being innovated and implemented by government and non-state actors in this age of electronic democracy. Also, in this part different spheres of citizen participation in democratic spaces are highlighted. In part two the discussion focuses on the context of local democracy in Tanzania. Part three, therefore, looks at crowdsourcing local democracy online, focusing who participates in online crowdsourcing system? Part four is a brief methodological note, following by exploration of trends of citizens' crowdsourcing such as availability and usage of digital tools, digital election watch and example of crowdsourcing platform for monitoring local elections. In addition, challenges are highlighted and these challenges need to be addressed for citizen participation to be a reality. Final part is about discussion and conclusion.

## **2. Invented Spaces for Citizen Participation in Local Democracy Online**

Crowdsourcing citizen participation through digital technologies and other innovations like innovated open-source platforms serve as an instrument of promoting integrity of local elections in developing and fledgling democracies. This is because eligible voters' need to be engaged in the electoral process in order to detect and generate incidents related to electoral malpractices and positive conduct of elections. As a result, online participation requires "people to be aware of what is happening and to be able to participate in the country's political processes" (Arias, Garcia & Corpeño 2015, p.185). Therefore, in recent years, different forms of online participation are being implemented by government (invited space) and civil society organizations (invented space) (Kersting, 2013). Here the question is who is engaged in local democracy online? This is because invented spaces include bottom-up approach where citizens and non-partisan organisations come together to monitor electoral incidents (Shayo, 2017). Digitalization

of local democracy using various forms of online participation reinforces the emergence of citizen-oriented monitoring and generating electoral incidents. In the context of this paper, the case of *Uchaguzi* platform and the use of social media page such as Facebook *Taarifa Za Uchaguzi Tanzania* and Twitter account *@ChaguziTanzania*, serves as an example of digitally empowered citizens to participate in local democracy online in Tanzania. These digital platforms promote novel forms of citizen collective action in monitoring integrity of local elections.

The invented space created by civil society organisations, citizens are invited to participate in democratic processes in the space which is already formalized using different digital tools and methods. These invented spaces are characterised by new digital instruments used to connect digital citizens and other stakeholders to participate in promoting integrity of electoral procedures (Shayo, 2017). Figure 1 shows that citizens can participate in democratic spaces into four different sphere namely - participation in representative sphere, participation in direct sphere, deliberative participation and demonstrative participation. In this case, all political systems have different forms of engaging citizens in their localities either in the invited space or invented space. Here “invited space” is initiated and controlled by the government (top-down) and “invented space” is initiated and controlled by civil society democratic monitors organisations together with active citizens (bottom-up).

Participation in *representative democracy* can be seen as the “default case of liberal democracies” (Kersting, 2013, p.272). Participation in representative democracy began in the third wave of democratization, the period of transition from mono-party to multi-party political system. In this sphere of democracy, citizens are given opportunities to participate through voting of their representatives and recently observation of electoral procedures through crowdsourcing methods to observe and share electoral incidents in dedicated digital platforms. This is due to the fact that “institutions of representative democracy are mostly highly formalised and defined in the constitution or in a legal framework” (Kersting, 2013, p.273). The principle of representation is a characteristic form of modern liberal democracies that promote democratic participation. Besides elections, this sphere involves direct contacts to politicians via e-mail, social media accounts and mobile short message services (Kersting, 2012). Representative sphere of participation developed new instruments, which not only inform the citizen, but also simultaneously ask the citizens the reasons for their vote, i.e. turning the citizen into an information subject (Kersting, 2012). It is at the local level that “the relationship between representative democracy and widespread citizen participation makes most sense” (Pratchett, 2004, p.361).

Participation in *demonstrative sphere* can be seen as an informal participation, and more often is associated with the invented space rather than the invited space (Kersting, 2012). This sphere of participation includes forms of participation which are not always instrument of the invited space provided by government or political parties, but are sometimes introduced and invented by civil society organisations (Kersting, 2012). Demonstrative participation includes different illegal waves of violent protests. Here demonstration is the typical occurrence, electoral conflicts or even violent post-electoral political protect. Demonstrative participation is a way of expressing dissatisfaction with democratic processes and other governance-related matters.

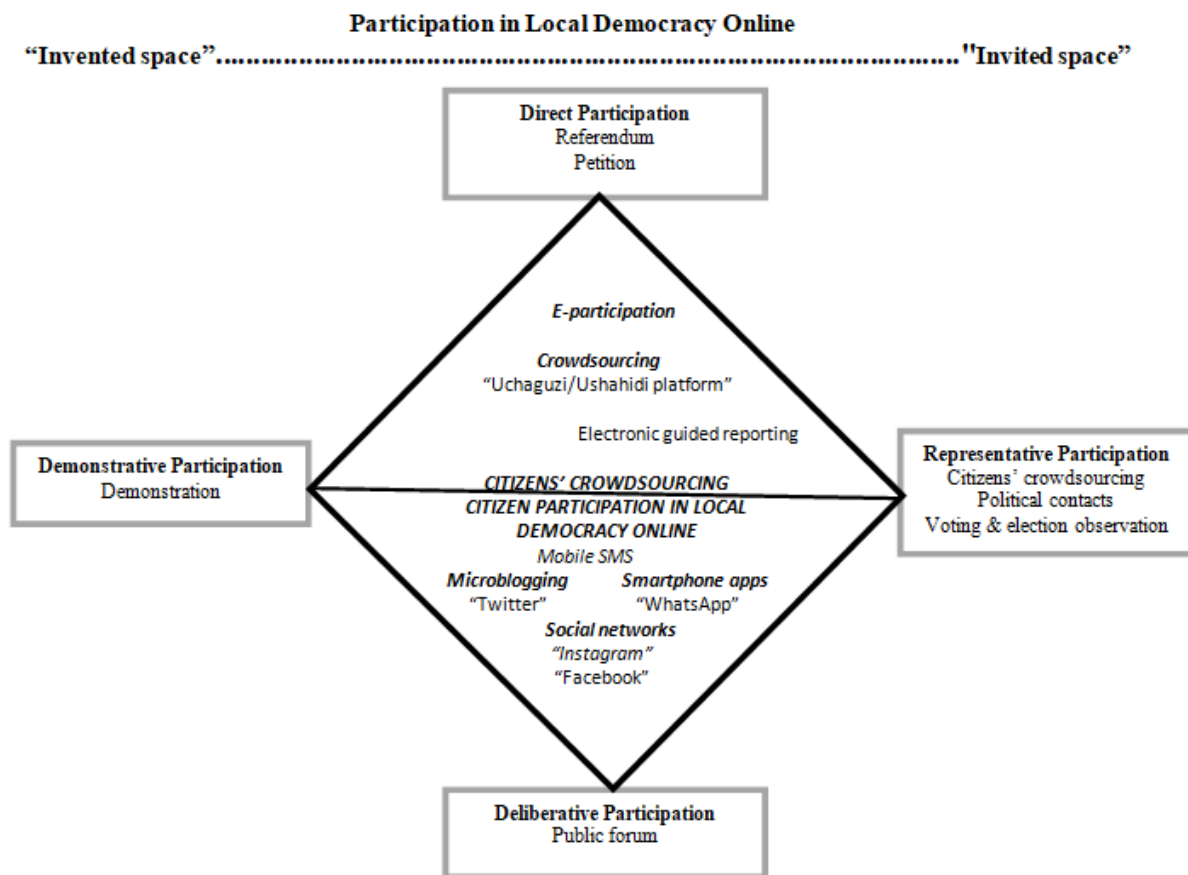


Figure 1: Invented and invited spaces for online participation

Source: Adapted from Kersting (2012, 2013)

*Direct plebiscitarian participation* is the area of democratic involvement, which vote-centric, and the focus is not on the election of incumbents rather on the policy-decision making process (Kersting, 2013). This is because direct democracy is defined as a direct participation in the issue-oriented to the decision-making process (Kersting, 2007). In this way, direct participation weakens the power of elected representatives and awards political veto-power to the citizens. On the other hand, representative and direct democracies are “both confronted with waning interest in politics. These types of democracy are not mutually exclusive political participation instruments rather they are two sides of one coin and complement each other” Kersting, 2007, p33). This is because “without a vibrant participatory democracy at the local level, representative democracy at both the local and broader level cannot flourish” (Pratchett, 2004, p361).

Deliberative participation has its origins in the deliberative turn of democratic theory in the last decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its nature is talk-centric because deliberative democracy bases on normative ambitious discourses (Kersting, 2013). Participation in deliberative sphere focuses on consensual deliberative decision-making or instrument of dialogue-oriented political participation and “with normative rigor applied to highly elaborated rational discourses also has elitist elements” (Kersting & Cronqvist, 2005, p.17). Dialogical democratic innovations often implemented to solve manifest or latent moral conflict and mediation when it comes to political electoral conflicts (Kersting, 2012). Deliberative participation “may produce higher rationality but not broader democratic control. The high normative standard includes empathy; political tolerance and a strong orientation to common consensus within a public reflective discourse but, neglect the articulation of particular interests” (Kersting & Cronqvist, 2005, p.17). Research shows that web forums, blogs and social media lack the quality of adequate deliberation (argument, respect, reflexivity) and have more aggressive dialogue or pure monologues (Kersting, 2012). On the other hand, on the internet exclusive homogenous group discussion in filter bubbles or “echo chamber” with sometimes radicalizing character is often observable (Chadwick, 2006). In the context of

this paper, the main focus is participation in the representative sphere because in this sphere citizens' crowdsourcing, political contacts, voting and observation are the key instrument for citizen participation in electoral democratic procedures. Here citizen participation in the invented space is at the co-production and co-dissemination of local democracy information in the digital platforms.

### 3. The Context of Local Democracy in Tanzania

According to African Charter on Democracy, Election and Governance of 2007, Article 3 requires observance of democratic principles such as to hold regular and transparent elections, and to have effective participation of citizen in democratic and development processes and the governance of public affairs, and the right of all people to participate in the politics of their country. In addition, the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) of 1977, Articles 8(1), 145 and 146 and the amendments that followed from time to time, emphasizes the supremacy of the people and underlining that the government is accountable to the people (URT, 2015). It also highlights that the people have a right to participate and establish levels at the region, district as well as at the village (URT, 2015, p.1). Citizen right to participate in political affairs is a much needed political right such as freedom of association, information, expression and freedom of assembly which together with participation are basic principles of a growing local democracy (TACCEO, 2015).

The local government in Tanzania consists of the country's constitution, various laws that operationalise the constitution and other policy pronouncements that issued from time to time. The URT constitution recognises local government as autonomous bodies with legal status operating with discretionary powers over local affairs (REPOA, 2008), and participation of the people in the affairs of local government such as decision making in democratic procedures and monitoring political processes, as well as information sharing. Surprisingly, the Minister responsible for local governments has authority over the coordination of local government affairs such as electoral matters and by-laws. Since the re-introduction of multiparty democracy in Tanzania, the country conducted five civic elections held from 1993, 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014. The local government elections in Tanzania are supervised and coordinated by the Minister of State, President's Office - Regional Administration and Local Government. The next local government elections will be held November 2019. There are two types of elections in local government systems for electing local authorities leaders. These are neighbourhood or civic elections held for the purposes of electing Village Chairpersons and Hamlet leaders in rural areas and *Mtaa* Chairperson in urban areas, and second type of election is ward level election for electing ward councillors conducted during general elections. Neighbourhood/civic elections are coordinated by the Minister of the State (Regional Administration and Local Government), while ward level election is managed by the National Electoral Commission (NEC).

Tanzania is one of the democratic states in Africa which respect the rights of the citizens to take part and participate in the governance of the state (TACCEO, 2015). This is because active participation in local democracy is necessary for improving a citizen's quality of life (Chaligha, 2014). In today's globalized world, there is a growing emphasis and recognition of the importance of the quality of democracy at the local level. This is the level closes to the citizens and the space where citizens experience the practice of democracy on a daily basis as they interact with democratic institutions and processes (IDEA, 2013). As a result, it is through democratic procedures that the right to take part in elections is realized for most citizens to participate in voting, and even monitoring and sharing information related to the conduct of electoral processes at the grassroots level.

### 4. Crowdsourcing Local Democracy Online

In the networked era which is characterized by a shift from offline to online participation or using hybrid participation, the crowd participation in local democracy is a means of promoting democratic principles. Technology has contributed to citizen participation in democratic processes through crowdsourcing systems. At the core of the concept of crowdsourcing is the idea that a large pool of "undefined" crowd through "open-call" (Howe, 2006, 2008) will be engaged in local democratic procedures. In this, the move toward crowdsourcing

systems allows a wider use of technology that enables ordinary citizens with mobile-cellular phones or the internet access to participate in local democracy online. The term "crowdsourcing" coined by Jeff Howe in 2006 *wired* magazine, describes the term as the process by which many (undefined) can be involved to accomplish tasks that were once performed by few individuals. Different explanation offered by Howe placed emphasis on engaging *large group of people* in the form of an *open call* to collaborate in performing the tasks. According to Bailard and Livingston (2014, p.355) defined crowdsourcing "the mobilization of the general public-the crowd-to perform what are usually small, incremental tasks that, taken together, accomplish significant goals." In his part, Fung (2011) defined crowdsourced election monitoring as a system in which "any individual can register an observation about an election, and that observation is pooled with other individuals' observations to create a public depiction of the reality of the election that is offered back to the public and to election officials in real-time on election day" (pp.194-195).

It is arguable that, the rate of citizen participation in monitoring electoral democracy has been increased because of the advent of information and communication technology (Kersting, 2012). The growth rate of online participation platforms offers opportunities to re-connect citizens in democratic processes. Also, the trend towards quality democracy has increased the demand for engaging citizens' crowdsourcing in order to protect their votes, livelihoods and welfare of the communities (Shayo, 2017). The idea behind crowdsourced citizen participation in local democracy online is the timely detection and near real time sharing of information of democratic processes (Bader, 2013). Because of the crowdsourced citizen online, "the possibility for citizens to consult political information is the most widespread function delivered by the new information and communication technologies. Information can be disseminated more effectively, and the democratic objectives of transparency, for example, can be achieved more easily" (Kersting & Baldersheim, 2004, p.4). After the third wave of democratization, political participation of the citizen has remained mostly limited to voting. But emerging digital technologies expand a wider range and spaces of participation in democratic processes (Kersting, 2013). In this context, we can argue that digital information and communication technology revives Athenian form of participation in the modern liberal democratic processes. Nowadays crowdsourced citizen participation in local democracy online is advocated because citizens are no longer satisfied to participate in voting and leaving the polling stations, but want to have more active roles in promoting the integrity of the electoral procedures (Kersting, 2012).

Most of the literature on crowdsourced citizen participation in electoral processes through digital information and communication technologies focuses on national-level elections. For example, Bailard and Livingston (2014) investigated the capacity of new technologies in facilitating crowdsourced promoting accountability in the 2011 Nigerian election. In their analysis, observed that "the number and nature of crowdmap reports generated by citizens are significantly correlated with increased voter turnout in the 2011 Nigerian presidential election as a result of providing officials with improved information about the functionality of local polling stations" (Bailard & Livingston, 2014, p.349). This study by Bailard and Livingston in the Nigerian general election, serves the positive contribution of crowdsourced citizen monitoring method and how new information communication technologies can be deployed to share timely actionable information from the citizens to inform relevant authorities about the state of the conduct of electoral processes.

The work by Bader (2013) assessed the collective ability of the citizen contributor in the 2011-2012 Russian elections. The question addressed by Bader was how effective is crowdsourcing a tool for collecting credible information about election fraud. Analysis shows that citizen observers were very effective in detecting and reporting fraud in polling stations on election-day and provide insight into how elections in Russia are manipulated (Bader, 2013). Other study by Bock (2012) focuses on citizen participation in the prevention of election violence using information and communication technologies in Kenya. As a result, Bock (2012) observed that georeferencing citizen generated data in the 2008 post-election violence created the potential to identify potential violence at a specific location for early warning at a local level.

The work by Hellström (2015) examined how and under what conditions access to information and communication technologies such as mobile phone devices and citizen monitoring crowdsourcing platforms can be useful for

political participation in Uganda. Analysis shows that with expanded mobile penetration, coverage and access to mobile devices in Uganda, facilitated platform such as UgandaWatch to be launched prior to the 2011 general elections. The role of crowdsourcing platform is to offer increased equality of political participation and to advance efforts toward increased citizen engagement in electoral procedures in Uganda. Also, Hellström (2015) shows that citizen election crowdsourcing monitoring platforms like UgandaWatch and *Uchaguzi* complement traditional ways of observing and sharing political incidents.

In Tanzania, study by Shayo (2017) analyses crowdsourced monitoring citizen-generated data for the 2011 Ugandan, 2013 Kenyan and 2015 Tanzanian general elections. This explorative work shows that information and communication technologies diffusion, and leapfrogged in the areas of mobile phones in the three enabled citizen participation in monitoring elections and makes it easier in detecting and sharing positive and negative electoral incidents. This study suggests that crowdsourcing systems and digital tools for citizen engagement and monitoring electoral events, create an agenda for partnerships among election watchdogs and collaborative production and dissemination of electoral integrity incidents in real-time. Also, Shayo and Kersting (2018) explore the role of digital citizens in monitoring election campaigns for the 2015 general election in Tanzania. Analysis found that digital citizen generated data on electoral campaigning were virtually mapped in the *Uchaguzi Wetu 2015* crowdsourcing platform. In addition, Shayo and Kersting (2017) attempted to analyse the ability of trained crowdmonitors to detect pre-election activities, especially in mobilization of women, youth and people with disabilities to participate in the electoral processes during 2015 Tanzania general elections. The findings show that technology usage enhances citizen participation in monitoring pre-election observation information that goes beyond the radar of traditional observers.

In the context of local democracy, limited literature attempted to address the component of information and communication technologies in Tanzania. The work by Babeiya and Masabo (2017) addressed the question of information and communication technologies, and citizen participation in decision-making in local governments in Tanzania. Particularly, the paper focuses in exploring the position of information technologies in fostering participatory decision making. In their analysis, authors observed that policy makers and researchers have accorded limited attention to the role of information technologies in promoting inclusive decision making at the local governments (Babeiya & Masabo, 2017). In this case, this paper attempts to focus on local electoral democracy using crowdsourcing methods and technology. The aim is to contribute knowledge to the literature on local democracy, crowdsourcing and technology usage in Tanzania.

#### **4.1 Who Participates in Crowdsourced Local Democracy Online?**

Crowdsourcing local democracy can either be carried out through ‘open or unbounded crowdsourcing (more informal, citizen-generated data where participation is non-discriminatory and, in principle, anyone is voluntarily allowed to participate and share information), through bounded crowdsourcing (more systematic and organised method that recruited and trained volunteers, workers or observers undertake), and through passive crowdsourcing (data mining from social networks or from a combination of both)’ (Hellström, 2015). Figure 2 is a presentation of the three types of citizens’ crowdsourcing methods namely: bounded, open/unbounded and passive crowdsourcing.



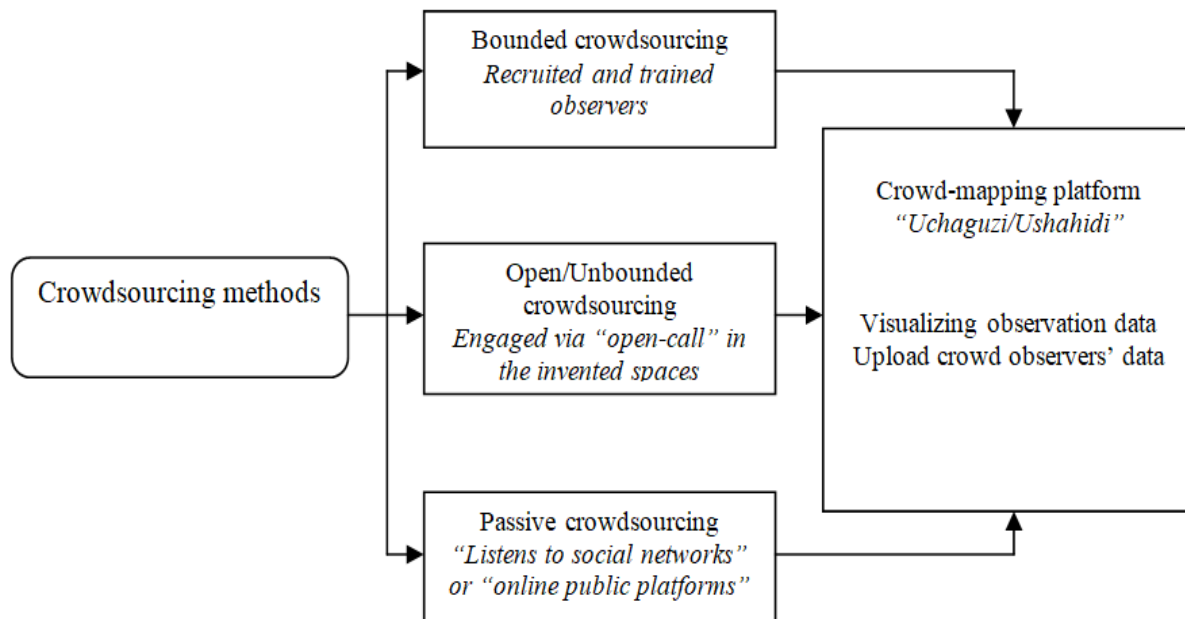


Figure 2: Crowdsourcing methods  
Source: Modified from Shayo (2017:28).

*Bounded crowdsourcing* involves recruitment and training of the crowd to participate in monitoring democratic processes actively. Unlike passive and open crowdsourcing, bounded crowdsourcing comprise few citizens, who are also called "trusted" or "trained" observers. For example, 2014 civic elections and 2015 elections of ward councillors, bounded group was recruited, trained and engaged to be active participants in generating election observation information through digital information and communication technologies. Bounded crowdsourcing as the method of recruiting trusted network of people is cheaper than the conventional way of recruitment because participants are recommended and attracted by those within their already established network (Meier, 2009).

*Open/unbounded crowdsourcing* citizens are engaged through "open-call" to participate in monitoring electoral processes through technology tools. Open groups of the crowd are invited to generate observation data in the digital platform such as social media pages and open-source platforms like *Uchaguzi*, but their election-related observation information are processed for verification by citizen data verifiers (Shayo, 2017). This group of citizen observers are engaged through digital tools such as short-message services, mobile short code, Facebook account, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram accounts, as well as e-mails and web form for them to share observed incidents. Therefore, unbounded crowdsourcing simply means that digital technologies can be used by anonymous individuals to monitor and share electoral incidents in a crowdsourcing platform (Shayo, 2017). Crowd generated information are treated as "untrusted information," in which these information require authentication to determine the genuineness of the incidents before sharing for public view. This type of crowdsourcing is also better known as untrained, undefined, open, untrusted crowd, who voluntarily participates in co-production of electoral information.

*Passive crowdsourcing* share election observation information in the online platform such as social media networking sites, microblogging and weblogs. Passive crowdsourcing are unengaged group of citizen in the crowdsourcing process and that could possibly be the majority of ordinary citizens on the grassroots (Shayo, 2017). This group of passive crowd do not report incidents to the crowd-initiators or calling and even sending messages to the medium established and advertised by the initiators, but the group complain in their own online initiated networks, especially illicit act in the electoral process. Digital volunteers through data mining from online forums or social networks can capture shared information by passive group on the online platforms. Passive crowdsourcing – citizens are indirectly engaged through the use of digital information and communication technologies and more specifically, social media platforms by feeding information to the crowd-initiators system.

## 5. A Methodological Note

This is an exploratory work using document review (election observation reports, survey reports, among others) to analyse the trends of citizen participation in local democratic processes and challenges of using digital information and communication technologies. This is because already there are some initiatives by civil society election observation organisations for engaging citizen online at the national and local level elections (Shayo, 2017). The national election in Tanzania involves election of president; member of parliaments and ward "councillors," and local elections comprises Village, *Mtaa* and Hamlet leaders.

For the 2014 local government elections (civic elections) the use of information and communication technologies amplifies citizens' concerns through participation in election observation. The use of social media platforms namely, Facebook page "*Taarifa Za Uchaguzi Tanzania*" and Twitter account "*@ChaguziTanzania*," as well as WhatsApp number serve the purpose of public communication during local elections (TACCEO, 2015). In the 2015 election of ward councillors, technology was used to generate and map observation data in an open-source platform called "*Uchaguzi Wetu 2015*", especially information related to campaign event. It is worth noting that for pre-election monitoring, bounded crowdsourced data were collected one month before voting day. In this context, bounded citizen observers were equipped with pre-election structured tool for observation and generating electoral incidents. Crowdsourced citizen observers used *magpi* application installed in their smartphones, tablets or laptops to generate electoral incidents visually mapped in the *Uchaguzi Wetu 2015* platform.

This explorative work will inform further research at the level of survey. The survey will be expected to look at the citizen views regarding awareness, satisfaction and usage of online platforms for participation in local democracy, and the extent to which technologies are used by ordinary citizens to generate local government-related election observation information.

## 6. Trends of Citizens' Crowdsourcing Methods

Democratic innovation for citizen participation, especially election monitoring in young democracies witnessed how digital technologies are transforming observation and generating electoral incidents in real-time. In this era of digital democracy, non-partisan monitoring organisations invented spaces for engaging with citizens in electoral processes. Citizen participation in the digital environment has the role to play in monitoring standards of democratic elections, in which every stage, and not just the election-day, counts. Technology represents the "dawning of a new age for democracy, offering new opportunities for citizens to participate in local through to global public spheres and grassroots movements" (Smith, 2009, p.142).

Tanzania experienced a digital revolution in electoral politics with the widespread use of mobile phone (short message services), smartphones instant messaging applications (WhatsApp), social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube) (Shayo, 2016; Shayo & Kersting, 2016), as well as open-source platform such as *Ushahidi/Uchaguzi* (*Ushahidi* "witness" and *Uchaguzi* "election") and similar innovations (Shayo & Kersting 2017; Shayo 2017). This modern information and communication technology and open-source platform opened the door for monitoring elections by new electronic means "from below." As a result, the 2014 local government elections, the use of technology like social media account (Facebook page and Twitter account) promotes citizen participation in electoral processes through generating and sharing election information (TACCEO, 2015). Also the 2015 election of ward Councillors, an electronic election monitoring platform called *Uchaguzi Wetu 2015* was created by Tanzania Election Monitoring Organisation (TEMCO) and Tanzania Civil Society Consortium on Election Observation (TACCEO) for monitoring and mapping pre-election, election-day and post-election day incidents. In order to observe the 2015 Tanzanian elections (ward councillors) through technology, TEMCO and TACCEO formed Coalition on Election Monitoring and Observation in Tanzania (CEMOT).

### 6.1 Availability and Usage of Digital Tools

Mobile phones and internet access have become relatively widespread, and constitutes a new important resource for citizen participation in local democracy and its decentralized crowdsourcing methods. Given the ubiquity of mobile technology and other creative innovations, citizen participation in electoral process through crowdsourcing using digital tools contribute in addressing critical problems of electoral integrity (Schuler, 2008). The growth of “mobile phones and other information technologies have dramatically reduced the cost of information. This in turn allows motivated persons to pursue solutions to endemic political ills [...] that would have been, in the absence of the lower costs, too difficult to sustain” (Livingston, 2011, p.11). Mobile phone technologies and other digital communication channels may help to promote citizen participation and improve election integrity, but not panacea for all problems of local electoral politics (Livingston, 2011). Availability of technology provides a number of opportunities for implementing and using different communication technology solutions regarding local electronic democracy (Haug, (2007). But the use of technology in electoral process brought worry in terms of digital divide (Norris, 2001; Kersting, 2012), especially the cost of technology and skills to use technology tools. Facebook launched “Internet.org” program for free use of Facebook page, which in turn enabled platform users to access and share information with limited data bundle (Shayo, 2017).

The trend of internet penetration in figure 3 by the end of 2018 (43%) and mobile penetration (81%) presents aspects of digital inclusion for mobile phones and to some extent digital exclusion in internet subscription rate. With mobile technology for texting, calling, sending and receiving mobile money system, suggests degree of public inclusion in political affairs compared to web-based usage and participation in political activities. The trends of internet penetration and mobile penetration for the year 2013 - 2018 show that there is a growth rates from (21%) to (43%) and (61%) to (81%) respectively.

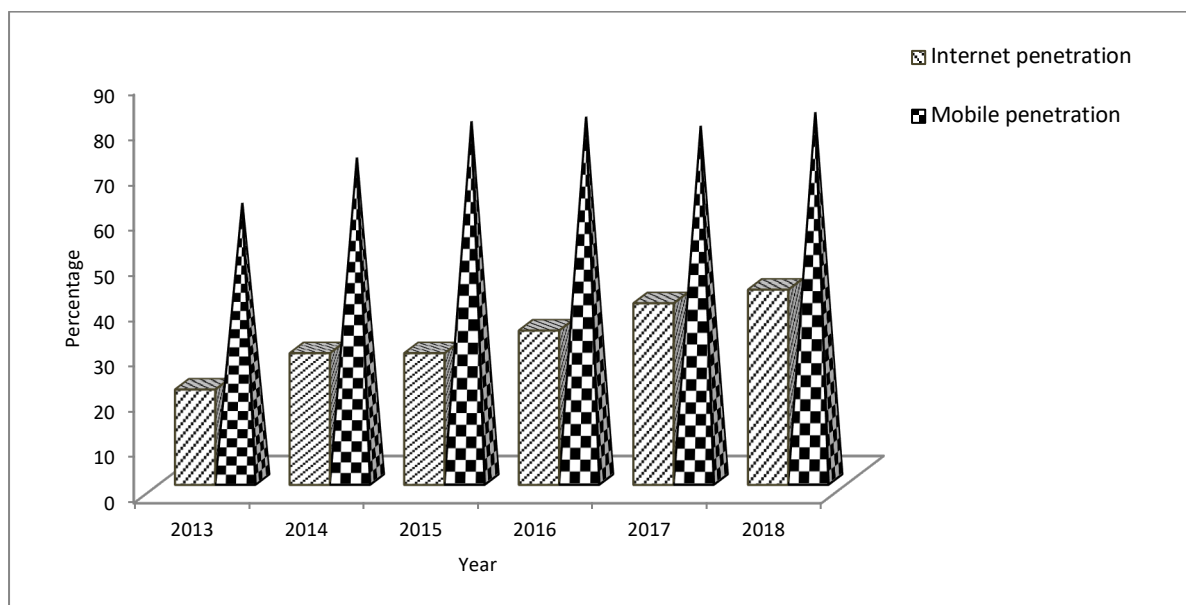


Figure 3: Trend of the Internet and mobile penetration in Tanzania

Source: TCRA 2018 Quarterly Communication Statistics

### 6.2 Digital Local Elections Observation

The use of emerging technologies and crowdsourcing in local elections creates space for citizens to participate in electoral processes using their digital devices. Citizens' participation assists in the creation of a more rapid reporting and early alarm warning or alert of electoral malpractices. Also, using technology helps to bring in citizens voices as a new dimension in election monitoring through crowdsourcing systems a method used multiple channels to collect and share information to a large group of people (TACCEO, 2015). In 2014 local government

election, technology-enabled citizens to become part of the election monitoring exercise. Also, the use of technology was considered as a golden opportunity to ensure maximum citizens' participation in the process of monitoring and that peoples observation in the electoral conduct are timely reported to the relevant authorities for action (TACCEO, 2015). In this context, the 2014 local government election multiple digital channels were deployed, such as mobile cell phones for texting, Facebook page and Twitter account, as well as WhatsApp number was provided for citizen to share election incidents in their localities.

The set-up of the TACCEO information and communication technology hub was used to filter/verify information from the public, and verified incidents were communicated back to the public through different channels, especially Facebook page “*Taarifa ya Uchaguzi Tanzania*” and Twitter account “*@ChaguziTanzania*.” The use of social media platforms facilitated the purpose of communication, collaboration and electoral incidents sharing during election for the public awareness and knowledge on the ongoing electoral processes (TACCEO, 2015). Also, deployment of crowdsourcing methods for local election monitoring, citizens observers were able to use social media to send videos and pictures, and even stories which were then shared on Facebook page and Twitter account for public consumption (TACCEO, 2015). Until December 2014, the Facebook page set for election observation had attracted about 682,142 people worldwide, and there were 12,659 Facebook subscribers who were interested to send in and receive local election reports (TACCEO, 2015, p.37).

The use of technologies for crowdsourcing local government elections of village chairpersons, *mtaa* and hamlet leaders, TACCEO was able to monitor and generate incidents on Election Day (E-Day). Most of the election issues presented in figure 4, among others, are delays in opening polls centre, insufficiency ballot papers, names of the registered voters missing at polling stations, corrupt environment, groups of political party members that intimidate voters and voting procedures were not followed. These reported incidents related to the election of village and *mtaa* chairpersons, as well as hamlet leaders. These reports show that the use of technology and crowdsourced methods can detect incidents related to irregularities of local elections. This is the real case for the data presented in figure 4 like station opened late (17%) and insufficiency of ballot papers (13%).

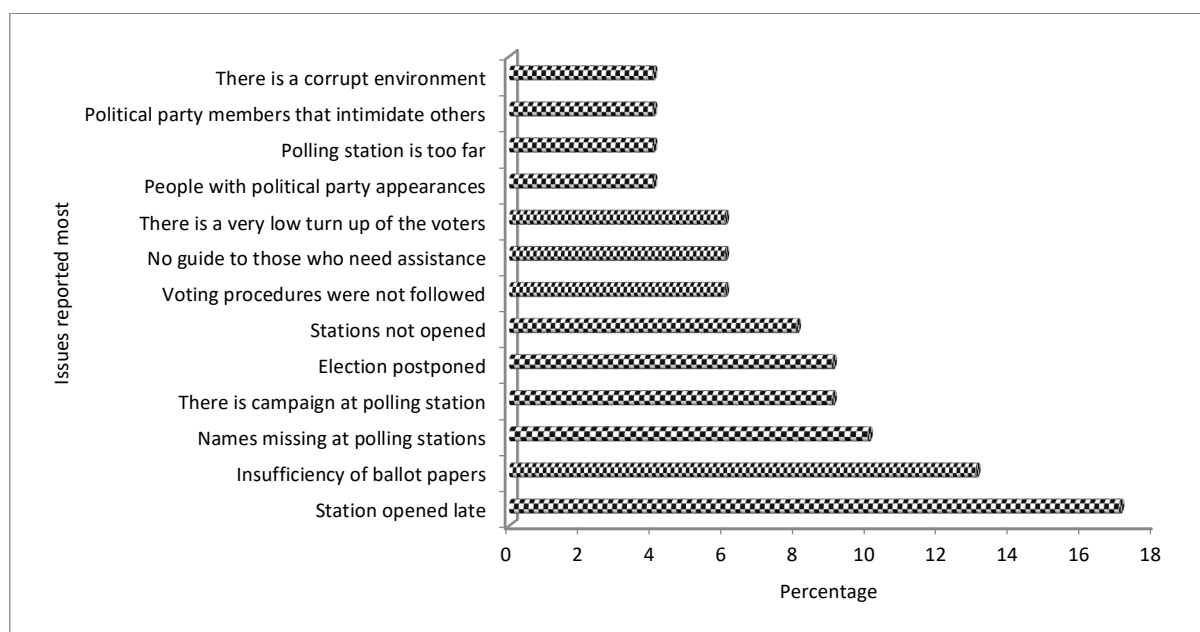


Figure 4: Percentage of issues reported most

Source: TACCEO, 2015, p.34

### 6.2.1 Crowdsourcing Platform in Monitoring Local Elections

*Ushahidi* means “witness” open source software, perhaps the most celebrated platform for citizen participation is a key example for crowdsourcing systems and problem solving platform in electoral processes. *Uchaguzi* platform

is a customized version of *Ushahidi* designed for monitoring, co-production and mapping electoral incidents in order to promote integrity of electoral processes (Shayo, 2017). *Ushahidi* platform was developed during post-election violence in Kenya 2008. The post-election violence was triggered by lack of trust of the electoral results due to electoral fraud and other executive abuse (Diamond, 2015). The platform was launched to gather information from citizens using digital tools, specifically mobile phone message services on hate speech and electoral violence. Citizen-generated data were uploaded and visually mapped in the crowd-mapping platform. Since then, *Ushahidi* platform has been gained popularity and deployed in more than 159 countries ranging from elections monitoring and violence to crisis response (Shayo, 2017). Since 2010 civil societies together with other local and international partners innovated *Uchaguzi* platform for election watch in East Africa' namely: Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The platform enables citizens to participation in monitoring the integrity of electoral processes in order to detect, deter and mitigate problems of election fraud, as well as mapping positive incidents. In the 2015 Tanzanian general elections, CEMOT as a non-partisan election monitoring group launched an Election Observation Center (EOC) whose bounded crowdsourced observers gather and share information about election incidents. CEMOT aims to enhance citizen participation in monitoring electoral processes. *Uchaguzi Wetu 2015* as a model of election observation and citizen participation was jointly initiated by TEMCO and TACCEO (LHRC & TACCEO, 2016; TEMCO, 2016). *Uchaguzi Wetu 2015* platform was designed to generate and share pre-election data from the deployed team of bounded crowdsourced observers across the country. Figure 5 *Uchaguzi Wetu 2015* platform was initiated in order to allow mapping of crowd election monitoring information from bounded group of citizen observers. Unlike conventional way of observing election and releasing reports several months after the election, using technology and crowdsourcing method – crowdsourcers managed to share generated election observation reports in the crowd platform in near real-time.

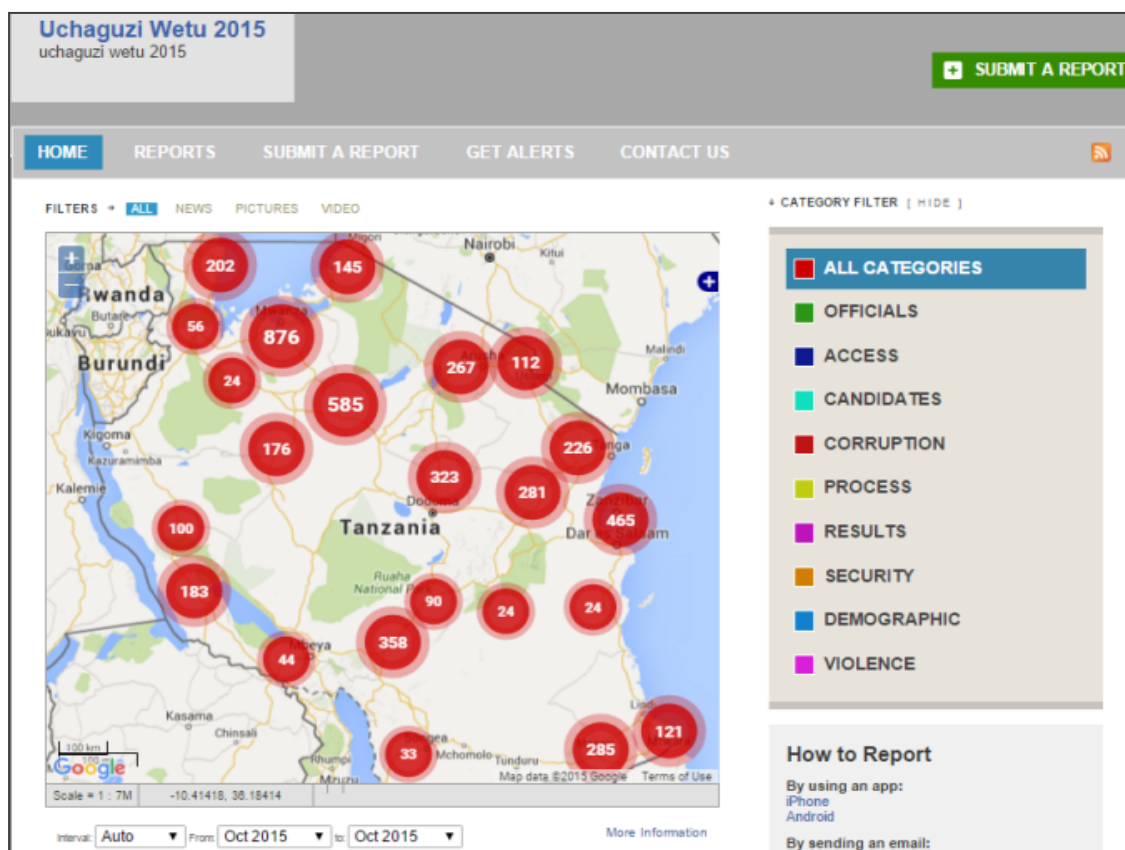


Figure 5: *Uchaguzi Wetu 2015* crowdsourcing platform

*Uchaguzi Wetu 2015* platform plays an increasingly innovative role in the ways citizens can observe, generate and communicate local elections. In this, any attempt to engage citizens' crowdsourcing in observing local elections aimed to promote credible local democratic procedures. Therefore, citizens' crowdsourcing methods initiated by

“non-partisan election observation and monitoring organisations can contribute significantly to improving the democratic quality of legal frameworks for elections, the conduct of election processes and broader democratic development” (GNDEM, 2012, p.3).

It is worth noting that bounded crowdsourced pre-election observation data were generated through magpi software application, and the reports were mapped in the *Uchaguzi Wetu 2015* crowd-mapping platform. Data generated by bounded citizens’ observers captured presidential, parliamentary and councilors related campaign incidents. For the purpose of this paper, figure 6 presents observation data generated from 22<sup>nd</sup> September to 24<sup>th</sup> October 2015 for the general observation data and more specifically, ward councillor campaign data. In this graphical presentation, one of the timeline data represents overall generated data for presidential, parliamentary and ward councillor campaigns incidents and the other timeline offer specific data on local elections for the ward councillors campaign incidents for the 2015 elections.

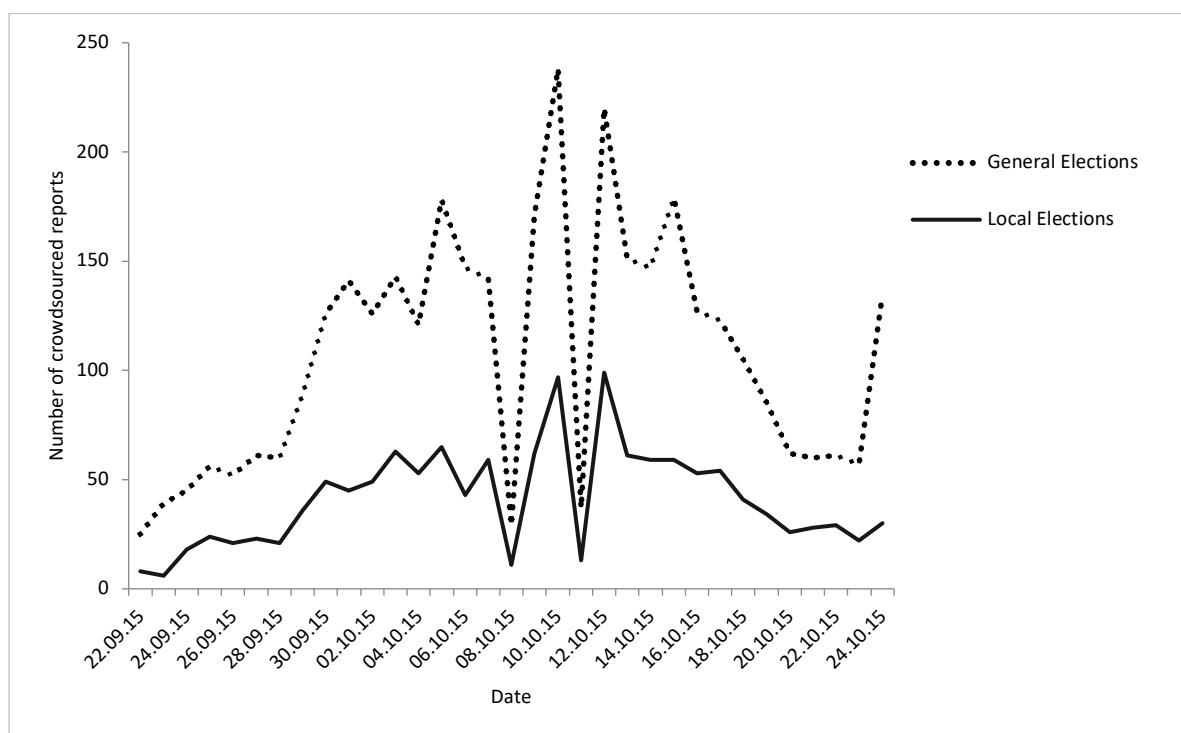


Figure 6: Timeline graph of general elections and local elections crowdsourced data  
Source: CEMOT 2015 Magpi Data (22<sup>nd</sup> September 2015 to 24<sup>th</sup> October 2015)

## 7. Challenges of Citizens’ Crowdsourcing

We are now living in the digital age and citizen participation in local democracy through technology and internet is indispensable. On the other hand, “alongside the countless advantages it offers, the internet creates almost as many challenges for society-in different ways and to different extents, depending on the country concerned” (FES, 2017, p.7). Because growth of modern means of communication technologies, internet and information sharing creates more opportunities of using available, accessible and affordable digital tools for citizens participation in democratic processes. In this, citizen participation in local democracy online through crowdsourcing systems does not exist without challenges.

Tanzania’s digital legal framework entails a contemporary government legal response to the challenges presented by digital transformation and the internet. This is because the internet does not automatically provide a space for citizens to express themselves freely - the internet must be regulated, administrated and governend (FES, 2017). Development of the new digital legal framework is to set the laws, rules and regulations for safeguarding the

cyberspace as more and more users and content gets online (Jeremia, 2017). In order to achieve this objective the government enacted a wide array of laws such as the Electronic and Postal Communications Act of 2010 (EPOCA), the Statistics Act of 2015, and the Cybercrimes Law of 2015. While the underlying rationale for enacting these laws seems to be useful for bolstering digital government, on the other hand the laws have challenges as regards to citizen participation in local democratic procedures. For example, EPOCA is one of the relatively old law that was enacted in the year 2010 with the aim of keeping pace with developments in the electronic communications industry, to create a framework for regulating electronic service providers, to establish the Central Equipment Identification Register (CEIR) for mobile phone SIM cards, to provide the duties for electronic communications licensees, agents and customers, and to provide for digital content regulation (Jeremia, 2017). The Act also addresses fair competition and practices in the digital economy, and delineates electronic offences and associated penalties (Jeremia, 2017). However, EPOCA has circumvented the freedom to get information through digital media.

The right to receive, search and impart information is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the country Constitution. And information and communication technology instruments are used as a tool for promoting freedom of expression, access and information sharing. But the decision of the government to enact Statistics Act and Cybercrimes Act of 2015 is perceived as a way to limit media functioning and generating self-censorship on the internet (EU EOM, 2015). This was the case "cybercrime law was 'quickly' passed and assented to by the President for implementation at the middle of campaigns. LHRC/TACCEO and a number of individuals were the first victims of this draconian law; LHRC/TACCEO had its data centre's equipment seized by the police (under this law) before the release of the presidential election results" (LHRC & TACCEO 2016). Arguably these kinds of laws often create new problems because they focus on various questions about content and not the *processes* of governing how users behave (Suzor, 2019). The raiding of the national observers group "TACCEO/ Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) by the police, where analysis of electoral data including results was being conducted, and the consequent arrests and confiscation of equipment and documents under section 16 of the Cybercrimes Act, raised concern over the use and implementation of the Act" (EU EOM, 2015, p.8). On the other hand, it argued that there is "no easy way to ensure either that the rules are consistently enforced or that they are enforced in a way that is fair and free from bias" (Suzor, 2019:14).

In order for crowdsourcing methods to be successful, it requires partnerships that are well agreed among the stakeholders (Shayo, 2017). Partnership may bring front electoral incidents and, in particular through crowdsourced whistle blowing incidents. But the core risks and challenges arise around the concept of trust in building for crowdsourcing partnerships and methods (Bott & Young, 2012). Lack of trust may affects partnership between civil society organisations as initiator of crowdsourcing and other networks of observers in general. Shayo (2017) observed that some civil societies opted for more decentralised modes of election observation and developed channels of communication between citizens and crowdsourcers in terms of generating data and feedback action. But using the case of *Uchaguzi* platform research found that some civil societies were not willing to collaborate because of different interests and lack of trust to each partner (Shayo, 2017). Deployment of crowdsourcing methods - the idea is to promote one-sourcing centre for generating electoral information and gain collaboration that will accommodate all interests and build trust among each stakeholders involved (Shayo, 2017).

Citizen participation in local democracy online requires adequate resources in terms of human and financial resources for the sustainability of crowdsourcing methods. In this, it is suggested that 'investments directed toward the betterment of enabling infrastructure can substantially enhance the participation of the crowd' (Bott et al. 2014). In low-income countries like Tanzania, "investments directed toward the betterment of enabling infrastructure can substantially enhance the participation of the crowd. In low-income countries, performance-based donor funding of local community development could be used to create a positive incentive for governments to allow greater citizen scrutiny and participation, for example, through crowdsourced monitoring and reporting platform" (Bott et al. 2014, p.6). It can be argued that "funding is typically the biggest concern and one of the most frequent sources of tension within observer organisations and networks, the availability of funds and the timely

disbursement of funds are all potential sources of friction amongst and within observation groups” (Nagore and Tuccinardi 2014).

## 8. Discussion and Conclusion

Although citizens are engaged in monitoring local electoral process – in general terms- are usually engaged in voting process of the candidates. In representative form of participation, the selection of the candidate is a crucial instrument for the quality of democracy. On the other hand, digital technologies and crowdsourcing open up more spaces and opportunities for citizen participation in electoral procedures. The on-going revolution in the sector of information technologies and the potential effect of citizen observers has expanded considerably and citizen observation is a means to promote credible local elections. The emerging crowdsourcing local election monitoring through technologies, changes the perception that elections with integrity is determined by a few specialized domestic observation groups. Mapping the trends of crowdsourcing methods and technology usage in local elections provides insight that the voice of the crowd generated through technology tools many contribute to the integrity of elections. This trend is a success story of citizen participation in local democracy driven from below on the one hand, but on the other hand, it seems obvious that citizen participation in local democracy online through crowdsourcing methods encountered various challenges. Because this trend of citizen participation in the modern wave of electronic democracy is a new dimension of using crowdsourcing and technology to be active participants in promoting integrity of local elections.

Citizen participation in local democracy online seems to be correlated with the growing access to and use of technology, as well as other different forms of participation initiated by electronic civil society organisations. On the other hand, “the potential for using ICT to increase and deepen citizen participation in political decision-making has lagged somewhat behind” (Smith, 2009, p.142). Nowadays non-partisan organisations focus on using online technology instruments to observe the electoral contest of representative democracy. For example, innovated space by TACCEO for initiating social media Facebook page in 2014 and *Uchaguzi Wetu* platform for 2015 local elections managed to engage citizen in local elections and become an instrument for monitoring electoral contest.

In the 2014 local government election, the use of social media platform like Facebook page and Twitter account has shown the importance of communication as it serves as an evidence-based outlet for information sharing from and to the public (TACCEO, 2015). Especially, the creation of the Facebook page and Twitter account for generating and sharing election observation information opened showcased evidence of the situation in the grassroots levels during local electoral processes. The use of crowdsourcing platforms and mobile applications like Magpi for pre-election observation managed to capture information on campaign incidents of ward councilors. According to TACCEO (2015) local government election monitoring information that was shared on social media and crowdsourcing platform, empowered people to dialogue, share and even become aware of the situations in the campaigning and voting processes. However, reaching out the majority of rural population was one among the biggest challenges in social media as its users are more prevalent in urban areas compared to those in the rural areas (TACEO, 2015). With technology like social media channels, and crowdsourcing methods, arguably it was easy to engage citizens on election process in order to generate and share verified information to the general public. The case of 2014 local government elections of village, *mtaa* and hamlet leaders, as well as 2015 election of ward councillors, digital information and communication technologies and citizens’ crowdsourcing offer an amplified opportunity to promote citizen participation in local democracy online. Through digital technologies for information sharing from and to large group of people, participants in the online platforms can monitor, share, question and receive timely response from relevant authorities about electoral concerns. In this, citizen participation in local democracy online and crowdsourcing method can successfully be deployed in order to improve the overall integrity of local electoral processes. Not only electoral process, but overall citizen participation could be enhanced in this way, strengthening democracy as such. But citizen participation through technology tools and crowdsourcing systems by itself is no panacea for all possible shortcomings of local elections, but one additional tool in conjunction with other existing methods. Crowdsourcing platforms, social media pages



and its possibilities of visualizing citizen voices offers a means for citizen participation in local democracy online and likelihood of promoting integrity of local electoral procedures. Digitalising local elections and crowdsourcing methods is a creative means of engaging ordinary citizens in the protection of their votes at the grassroots level.

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