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## **East African Federation: Tanzanian Awareness of Economic and Political Integration Remains Poor, But There Is Growing Support for Political Links**

*By Josie Knowles*

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### **1. Introduction**

The current East African Community (EAC) was formally launched in 2001 comprising of Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. In 2007, the community expanded to include Rwanda and Burundi. Within this regional framework, the grouping has achieved two primary stages of integration: a Customs Union (2005) and Common Market (2010). Nevertheless, despite apparent economic progress, there are inter-state agreement and national implementation challenges which have negatively impacted upon further bargaining between the EAC partner states. Against this backdrop, hopes for imminent political integration, known as the East African Federation (EAF) appear illusive. This paper will draw attention to the national implementation challenges of the EAC by exploring Tanzanian public opinion towards the economic and political goals that the EAC continues to grasp for.

A central principle of the EAC framework is people-centred cooperation, where the main beneficiaries of the Community are East African citizens. Under Article 127 of the EAC Treaty, member states agree to promote, “an enabling environment for the participation of Civil Society in the development of activities within the Community.” The EAC secretariat highlights that for any stage of regional integration to be successful and sustainable, it is essential to incorporate full ownership and participation by the people, especially through their institutions of choice, for example, political parties, membership organisations and civil society organisations.<sup>1</sup> It follows then that inadequate involvement of the population of East Africa has serious consequences for the legitimacy of the Community and indeed, the ultimate objective, East African Federation. Anchoring the EAC in civil society is an admirable goal, but what does the average Tanzanian *actually* think of integration and federation?

To address this question, an Afrobarometer survey conducted in 2008 sought the opinions of Tanzanians towards regional integration. A follow up briefing paper by Research in Poverty

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<sup>1</sup> EAC Secretariat (2012) ‘Strengthening popular participation in the East African Community: An EAC guide to EAC structures and processes’ East African Community Secretariat, Arusha, Tanzania.

Alleviation (REPOA)<sup>2</sup> indicated that a majority of Tanzanians have little or no knowledge of the proposed Federation of the East African States, particularly in rural areas. Nevertheless, despite lack of awareness, a large majority of Tanzanians are positive about the proposed economic aspects of integration, including free movement of people, goods and services, customs union and monetary union.

Support of economic integration is perhaps associated with the finding that a plurality of Tanzanians support the economic *consequences* of integration. More than forty percent think that economic integration would improve “the availability of jobs, markets and trading opportunities,” relative to twenty-one percent who believe such initiatives would make economic circumstances worse for Tanzanians. This is a somewhat surprising figure given that Tanzania has been a fairly tentative EAC participant. Elite figures commonly highlight that Tanzania’s membership in SADC is problematic and further, that there are various negative consequences associated with integration (e.g. land grabs, a flooded labour market from Kenya). Nonetheless, a majority of citizens diverge from this opinion, believing in the economic benefits of integration regardless.

There is considerably less support among Tanzanians for the political and military aspects of the proposed East African Federation. While Tanzanians generally acknowledge that integration will offer some political benefits, i.e., improving democracy and reducing conflict and corruption in the region, there is a higher proportion of respondents who believe that political integration will make matters worse.

Availability of data from the 2012 Afrobarometer survey - that gauges the attitudes of Tanzanian citizens towards democracy, governance, leadership and among other specific issues, attitudes towards East African Federation - provides us with an opportunity to investigate whether Tanzanians’ awareness of the East African Federation has increased and if support of economic integration continues.

## 2. Afrobarometer Survey

The Afrobarometer is a comparative series of public attitude surveys that began in 1999-2001 (Round 1), covering twelve countries, and which has expanded since to include thirty-five countries (Round 5: 2011-2013). The recent survey in Tanzania was the fifth in a series conducted in the country. The first four rounds were conducted in 2001, 2003, 2005 and 2008 respectively.<sup>3</sup> From 28 May 2012 to 30 June 2012, the Afrobarometer surveyed a nationally representative, random stratified probability sample of 2,400 Tanzanians above voting age. The Afrobarometer National Partner in Tanzania, Research in Poverty Alleviation (REPOA) carried out face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondents’ choice. Local language translations were conducted in one language: Kiswahili.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Katera, L (2008) ‘East African Federation: Tanzanians favour greater economic integration, but wary of stronger political links’ *Afrobarometer Briefing Paper No.54*

<sup>3</sup> The 2008 round was the only previous round to include a question about the integration of East African member states. Therefore a trend analysis is possible between round 4 and 5 (2008-2012).

<sup>4</sup> For further details, see: ‘Summary of Results: Round 5 Afrobarometer Survey in Tanzania, 2012’ compiled by REPOA and Michigan State University (MSU).

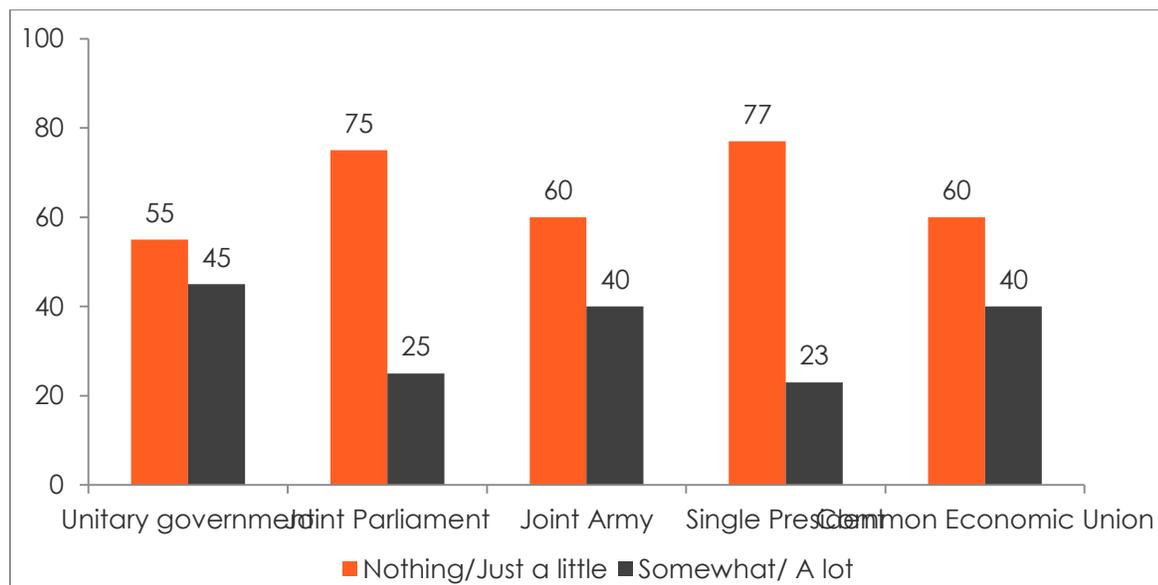
The sample was drawn by specifying Census Enumeration Areas (EAs) and stratifying according to regions and geographical areas (regions include 21 on the mainland and 5 in Zanzibar; geographical areas include urban-rural). 300 EAs were then randomly selected with the probability proportionate to its size in the overall population as represented in 2012 population projections.<sup>5</sup> This ensured that every eligible adult had an equal chance of being selected. Eight households were randomly selected within each EA and a respondent of 18 years of age or older was randomly selected from each. A gender quote ensured that every other interview was conducted with a female. The sample size was sufficient to yield an overall margin of error of +/-2 percent at a confidence level of 95 percent.<sup>6</sup>

### 3. Key Findings from the Survey

#### *Awareness of the Proposed East African Community*

In the 2012 Afrobarometer survey, respondents were first asked how much they have heard about five distinct aspects of the proposed federation of the East African States, including the formation of a unitary government, the formation of a joint army, the establishment of a joint parliament, having a single president and a common economic union. A majority of Tanzanians have heard ‘nothing’ or ‘just a little’ about each aspect of the East African Federation.

**Figure 1: Awareness of the East African Federation**



*Question: How much of the following aspects of the proposed federation of the East African States have you heard about?*

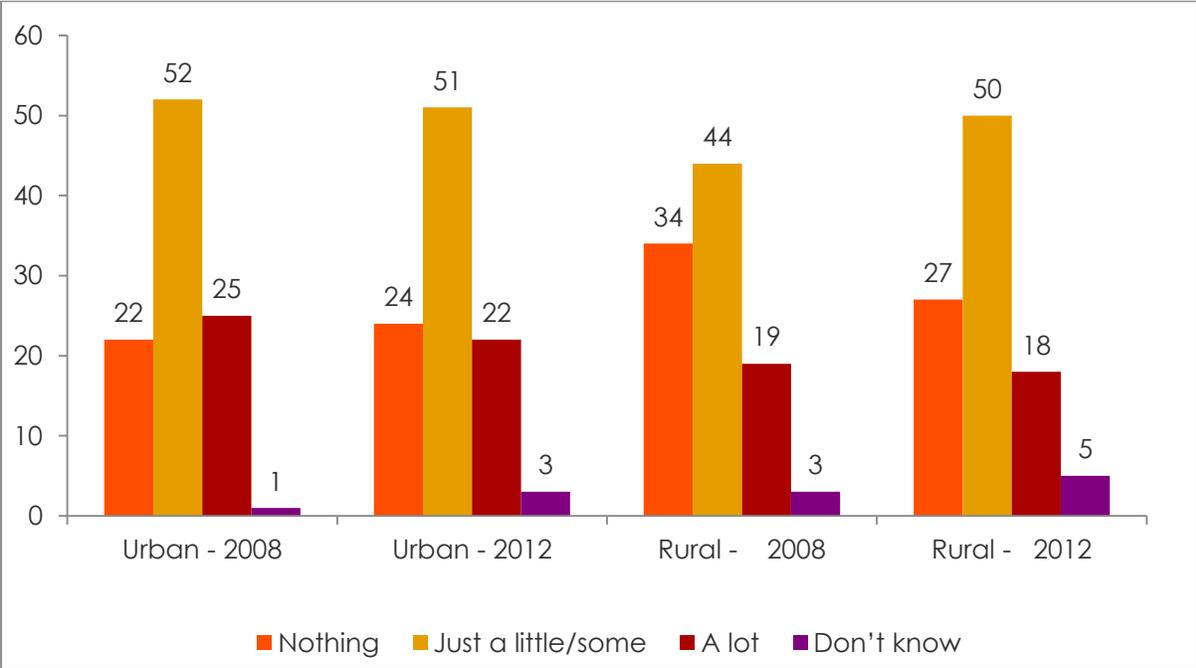
<sup>5</sup> Population projections were provided by the National Bureau of Statistics. The only exception is Zanzibar, where an intentional over sample was completed to produce an analysable sub-sample.

<sup>6</sup> Since a trend analysis will be highlighted in this report, it is important to note that the Round 4 Tanzanian survey (2008) was also conducted in all regions of the country, with each region sampled in proportion to its share of the national population (with Zanzibar being over-weighted); however, the sample size was smaller. It was based on a nationally representative random sample of 1,208 adult Tanzanians drawn from the national Master Sample. A sample of this size gives an overall margin of sampling error of +/- 3 percent at a 95 percent confidence level.

Awareness of a joint army and single presidency are particularly lacking: more than three-quarters of respondents (75 percent and 77 percent respectively) have heard ‘nothing’ or ‘just a little’. Respondents’ knowledge of a joint parliament and common economic union is similarly weighted towards lack of awareness: over half of respondents’ have heard ‘nothing’ or ‘very little’ (60 percent for both dimensions). Respondents are relatively more aware of a unitary government, perhaps due to contestation in the national domain regarding the imminence of such political integration. Nearly half of respondents’ have heard ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ (45 per cent), yet, a majority of respondents remain unfamiliar with the topic.

Rural respondents’ are less informed about the proposed Federation compared to those located in an urban area. Relative to 2008, there are somewhat more rural respondents in 2012 who have heard ‘a little’ or ‘some’ about the proposed East African Federation. There are similar percentages of respondents in 2008 and 2012 in both urban and rural settings who claim they know ‘a lot’ about the Federation of East African States. This stable figure suggests that solicited efforts by East African Community Ministries to improve communication with citizens in respective member states is still lacking.

**Figure 2: Awareness of the East African Community by Urban and Rural, 2008-2012**



*Question (2008): ‘How much have you hear about the proposed federation of the East African States, that is, the formation of a unitary government for Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, with a joint army, parliament, presidency and economy’.*

*Question (2012): ‘How much of the following aspects of the proposed federation of the East African States have you heard about? A: Unitary Government’.*

### ***Approval of Economic Integration***

In the previous section, it was demonstrated that citizens have low levels of knowledge regarding the EAC, but despite such knowledge deficit, are they supportive of economic integration measures? In 2008, it was established that a majority of Tanzanians are positive about economic aspects of the EAC, including free movement of people, goods and services (67 percent), customs union (60 percent) and monetary union (54 percent).<sup>7</sup> Approval of economic integration is also demonstrated in 2012: approval of the free movement of people, goods and services has risen to 70 percent, approval of a customs union has slightly declined to 55 percent, and approval of monetary union remains exactly the same (54 percent).

Notably, however, while a majority of respondents remain positive about economic integration, there are higher levels of disapproval towards all aspects of economic integration in 2012 relative to 2008. The percentage of respondents who disapprove of the free movement of people goods and services has risen from 14 to 21 percent, disapproval of a customs union has risen from 19 to 25 percent, and disapproval of monetary union have risen from 27 to 37 percent.

These results might not be surprising given the acknowledged challenges that the EAC face in terms of national implementation. Examples abound, the Common Market Protocol requires the introduction of machine-readable National Identification Cards, but this requirement has only been fulfilled by Rwanda.<sup>8</sup> In 2008, it is likely that citizens were optimistic about the economic potential surrounding the free movement of people, goods and services, which was to be accompanied by a customs union (in 2010) and eventually a monetary union. Perhaps, in line with the EAC knowledge deficit mentioned earlier, citizens had a rose-tinted vision of the EAC in 2008, not knowing what economic integration would ultimately deliver. However, following the implementation of the Customs Union, discrepancies between member state agendas are evident, leading to inadequate economic policy harmonisation and prioritised national interests.<sup>9</sup> Among the challenges, poor infrastructure, information flow, language barriers and cross-border crime have meant that the Customs Union protocol signed in 2010 is far from being implemented efficiently on the ground.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps Tanzanians in the 2012 survey are showing declining signs of optimism about the future of economic integration.

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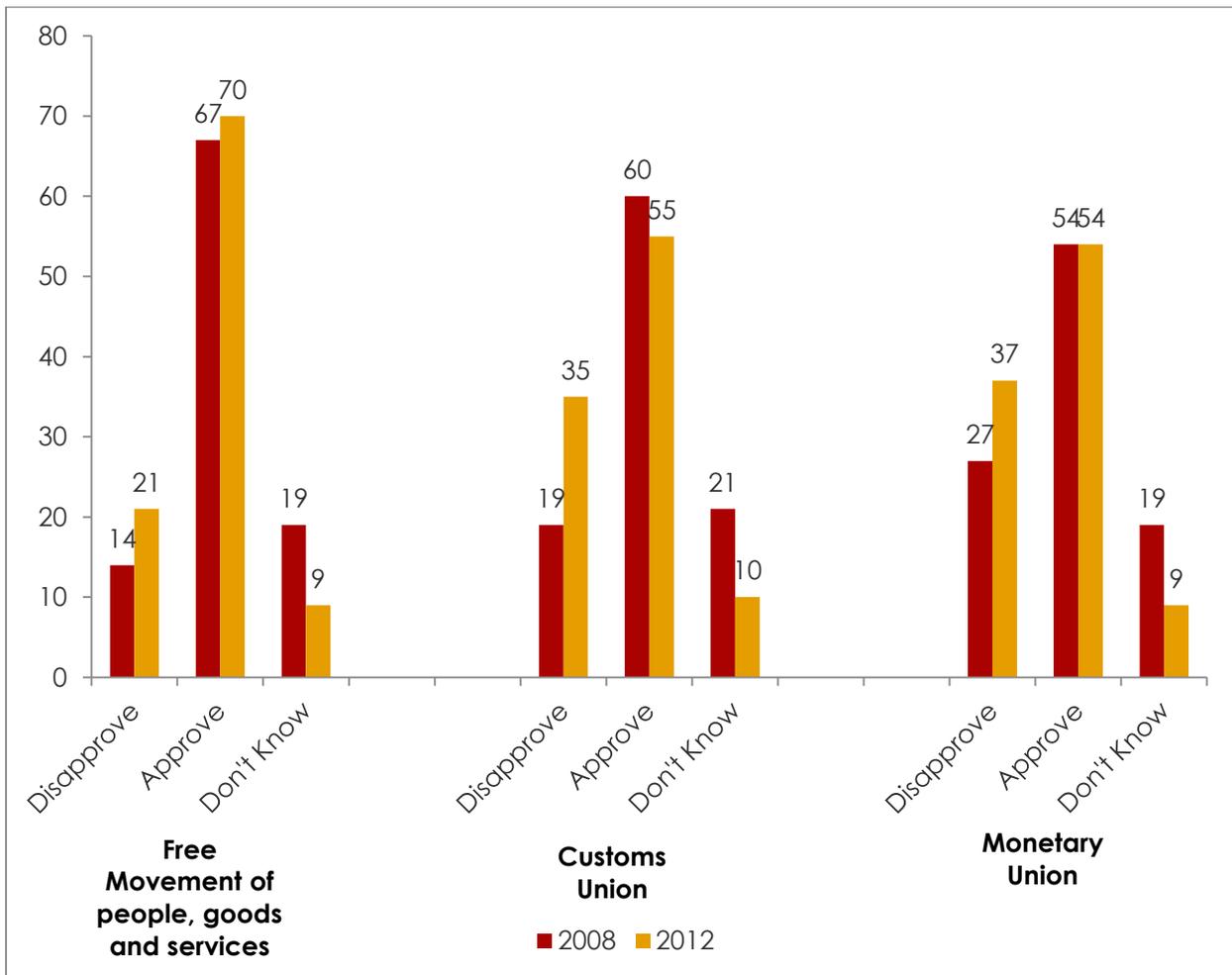
<sup>7</sup> Katera, L (2008) 'East African Federation: Tanzanians favour greater economic integration, but wary of stronger political links' *Afrobarometer Briefing Paper No.54*

<sup>8</sup> Makame, A (2012) *The East African Integration: Achievements and challenges*. GREAT Insights, 1 (6).

<sup>9</sup> Buigut, S (2011) 'A fast-track East African Community monetary union? Convergence evidence from a cointegration analysis' *International Journal of Economics and Finance*, 3 (1) pp.255-261.

<sup>10</sup> Okoth, J (2013) 'East African Community citizens yet to benefit from regional integration' *Standard Digital News*, October 8, 2013.

**Figure 3: Approval of Economic Integration, 2008-2012**



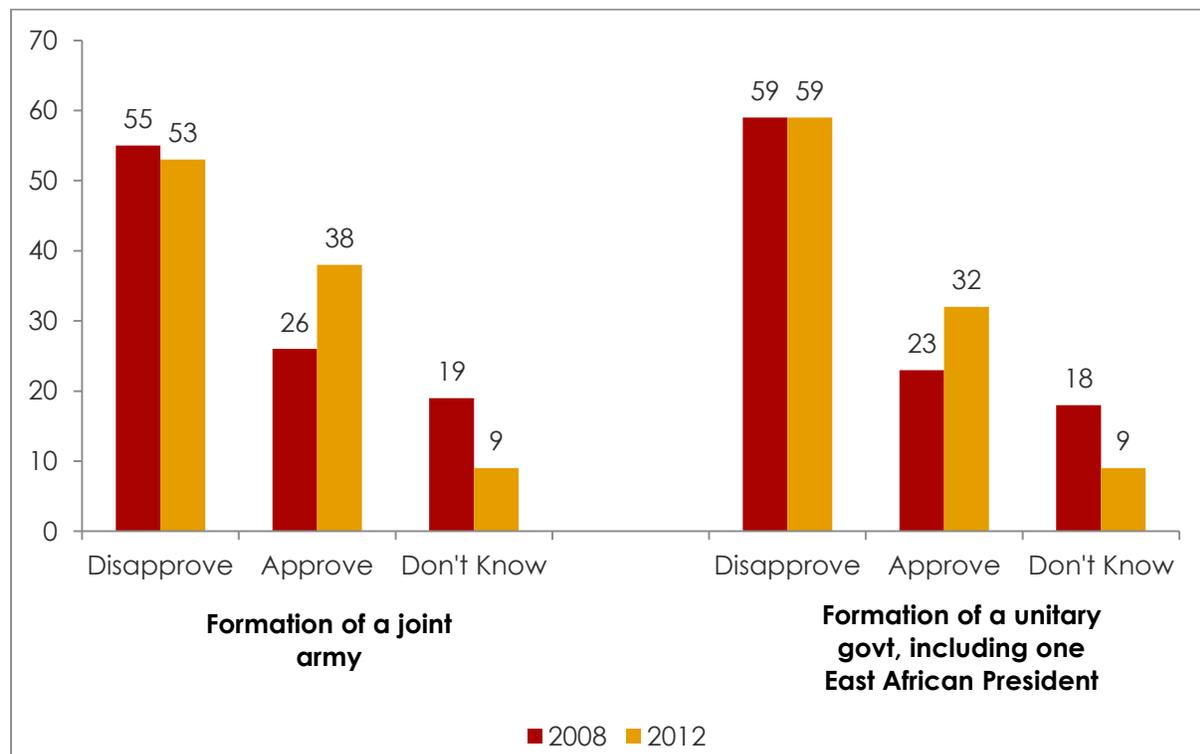
*Question: Please tell me if you approve of the following aspects of proposed integration, or haven't you heard enough to say?*

Underpinning a high level of support for the free movement of people, goods and services, a majority of respondents approve of an East African Passport (65 percent). This proportion has risen from 59 percent in 2008, while levels of disapproval remain the same (20 percent). These results suggest that Tanzanians largely remain in favour of the primary stages of economic integration, which will foster greater levels of communication and inter-state trade, but are wary of supporting further integration levels which are characterised by protectionist challenges and where few results are evidenced to benefit the ordinary citizen.

### ***Disapproval of Military and Political Aspects of Integration***

Growing levels of disapproval for economic integration do not appear to influence additional levels of disapproval for military and political aspects of integration. As demonstrated in 2008, a majority of Tanzanians disapprove of such aspects of integration, and this proportion of respondents remains the same in 2012. However, there are larger proportions of respondents who approve of military and political integration in 2012 relative to 2008: 38 percent versus 26 percent of Tanzanians approve of a joint army and 32 percent versus 23 percent approve of a unitary government.

**Figure 4: Approval of Military and Political Aspects of Integration, 2008-2012**



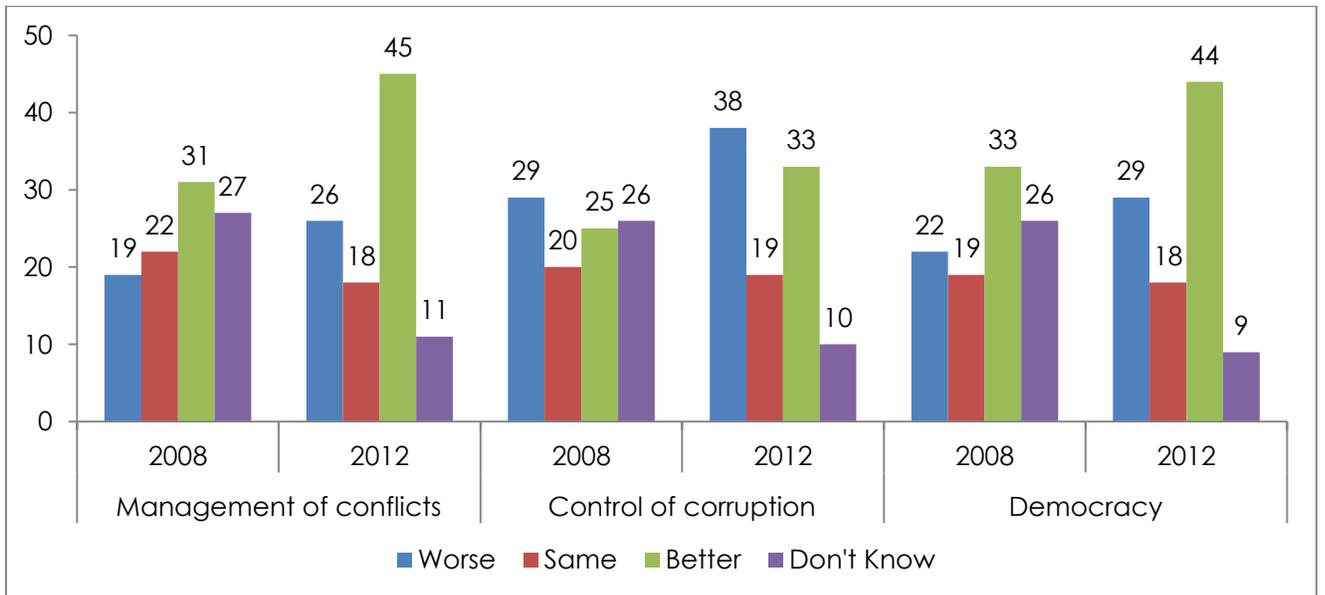
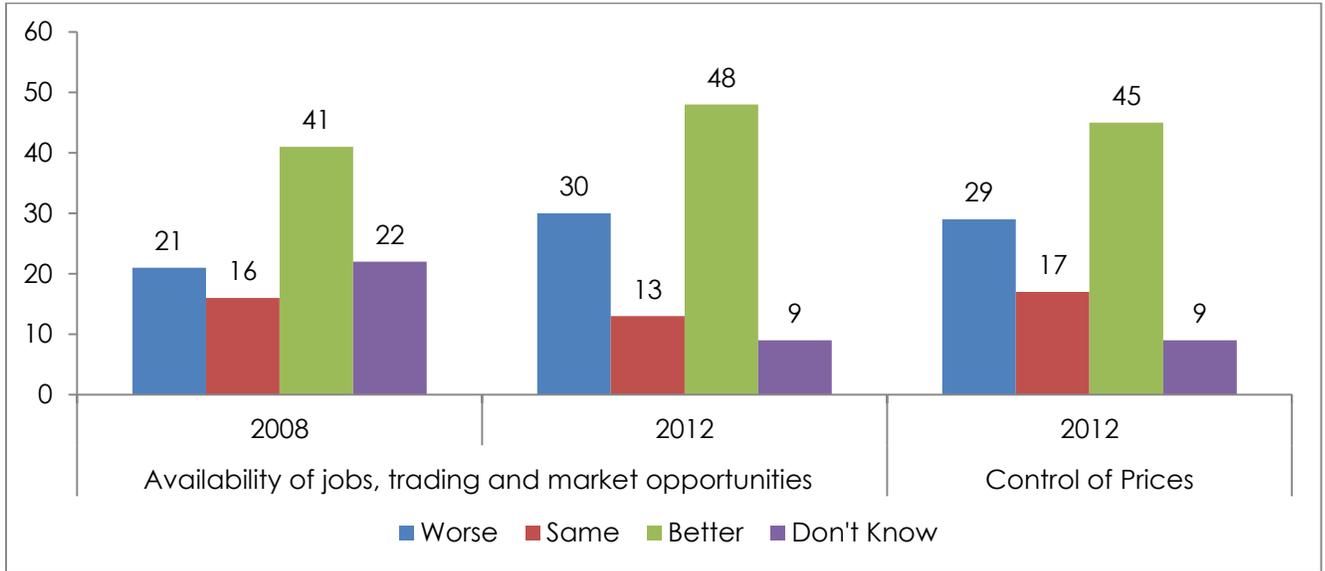
*Question: Please tell me if you approve or disapprove of the following aspects of integration, or haven't you heard enough to say?*

### ***Future Prospects: Do Tanzanians think that integration will bring about economic and political benefits?***

Overall Tanzanians believe that the EAF will improve various societal matters. The belief that the EAF will improve the availability of jobs, trading and market opportunities, management of conflicts, control of corruption, and democracy is more pronounced in 2012 relative to 2008 (see figure 5 and 6). The belief that economic integration will have a positive impact is most striking (48 percent and 45 percent respectively believe that the availability of jobs, trading and market opportunities and the control of prices will improve as a result of integration). The optimism which Tanzanians portray in this dimension suggests why a majority of Tanzanians are in favour of economic integration. These results diverge from elite claims that Tanzania is a reluctant

member of the EAC. Rather, they fit with the perception that Tanzania will commit to economic integration, albeit at a slower pace relative to their East African counterparts, otherwise known as ‘the coalition of the willing’.<sup>11</sup>

**Figure 5: Would economic and political integration make things better or worse? 2008-2012**



*Question: In your opinion, do you think the full federation of these East African States would make the following things better or worse?*

<sup>11</sup> Golooba-Mutebi (2013) ‘Why Tanzania drags its feet in the EAC’ *The East African*, August 31, 2013.

Between 2008 and 2012 there has also been an increase in the proportion of respondents who believe that the EAC will improve political matters: the management of conflicts (from 31 percent to 45 percent), control of corruption (from 25 percent to 33 percent) and the strengthening of democracy (from 33 percent to 44 percent). This perhaps reflects the history and current events of the region. Tanzania is a relatively stable political environment compared to its East African neighbours, and efforts towards a higher level of government and harmonisation of domestic economic and social policies have the potential to improve conditions in other member states.

Reflecting growing levels of EAF awareness mentioned earlier, there are less respondents' in 2012 - relative to 2008 - who 'don't know' about the potential consequences of integration. However, there are also substantial increases in the proportion of respondents' who think that the EAF will make economic and political matters 'worse'. The divide of opinion between those who think that the EAF will make conditions 'better' and 'worse' suggests that the positive results of integration, if seen yet, are not evident to all citizens. If not yet apparent, Tanzanians are likely to revert to existing understandings of national unity, which were built up in the Nyerere leadership era, and view political tension and fragmentation in neighbouring member states as something they do not want to be involved with.

## **5. Conclusion**

Knowledge of the Federation of East African member states among Tanzanian citizens' remains limited. There has been a slight improvement in awareness since 2008; however, levels are still low, particularly in rural areas and mainly surrounding knowledge of specific aspects of EAF (a joint army and single president). These figures reveal that to an extent, the EAC has improved communication with ordinary citizens' in Tanzania; however, to reach the current EAC objective of increased civil society participation, substantial efforts are required. Public participation campaigns should be specifically directed to rural areas to meet this end.

Tanzanians remain generally supportive of the economic integration of the EAC, i.e. the free movement of people, goods and services, a customs union and a monetary union. Nonetheless, there are a growing proportion of citizens since 2008 who disapprove of economic integration. To ensure that approval of economic integration continues without question, it is essential to achieve comprehensive harmonisation and implementation of economic policy in member states. If citizens' predominantly perceive the challenges of economic policy co-ordination rather than the benefits, it is likely that support of economic integration will diminish and disillusionment with the idea of economic integration will continue to grow.

The 2012 survey results illustrate that a majority of Tanzanians' disapprove of the military and political aspects of integration. Encouragingly, however, there are a larger proportion of respondents in 2012 relative to 2008 that approve of such integration aspects. These results suggest that disapproval of the federation of East African states is not permanent among Tanzanian citizens, but rather a fluid construct. With conscious efforts being made in neighbouring member states to resolve internal disputes, it is possible that Tanzanians do not view political integration with such states in fear. Rather, with increased awareness of the proposed EAF and stability in neighbouring partner states, there is a possibility that support for this dimension of integration will grow further.

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This Briefing Paper was prepared by **Josie Knowles**, PhD Candidate at Queen's University, Belfast. Email: [jknowles03@qub.ac.uk](mailto:jknowles03@qub.ac.uk)

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