



# YEARBOOK

## ON MEDIA QUALITY IN TANZANIA

**Monitoring the Watchdog: How the media covered the 2020 elections**

 Television

 Newspaper

 Radio



# 2020

## REPORT



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## Summary of Findings

The Yearbook on Media Quality in Tanzania assessed the media coverage of the 2020 General Elections using a sample of more than 2,400 media units (stories, articles and programmes) drawn from 14 newspapers, 14 radio stations, and 5 TV stations based on Tanzania Mainland and in the Zanzibar archipelago. The most striking result is the disproportionate coverage of candidates from the ruling party compared to opposition candidates.

The government-owned media outlets (*Daily News*, *Habari Leo*, *Zanzibar Leo*, *TBC Taifa*, *TBC1*, *ZBC Radio*, and *ZBC TV*) covered the CCM presidential candidate, John P. Magufuli, at 81 percent of all the stories analysed compared to the leading opposition presidential candidate Tundu Lissu from Chadema who got 26 percent of the coverage<sup>1</sup>. The coverage of other presidential candidates was dismal.

A similar pattern was evident in Zanzibar's presidential elections. Government media covered CCM's presidential candidate, Hussein A. Mwinyi, at 69 percent of its political stories analysed compared to ACT-Wazalendo presidential flag bearer, Maalim Seif Shariff Hamad, who got 31 percent coverage. The other media registered a fair coverage of 60 percent (CCM) against 59 percent (ACT-Wazalendo). In other words, the opposition presidential candidate in Zanzibar was comparatively better covered than his counterparts in the Tanzania Mainland.

The ruling party newspapers, *Uhuru* and *Mzalendo*, were even more imbalanced in their coverage, with 94 percent accounting for CCM's presidential candidate (Magufuli) and 19 percent for Chadema's presidential candidate (Lissu). This trend of skewed reporting towards the ruling party was also common among the "independent" media outlets. For example, they covered the CCM's presidential candidate (Magufuli) at 64 percent compared to Chadema's presidential candidate (Lissu), who got a share of 42 percent. In Zanzibar's presidential elections, party newspapers covered CCM's presidential candidate at 87 percent against 34 percent for the ACT-Wazalendo candidate.

A similar lopsided pattern also emerged in other levels of the polls, namely Bunge (Parliament), Zanzibar House of Representatives, and councillors' elections.

This disproportionate coverage was also apparent in other criteria. Government media covered the CCM events more than events for the opposition parties. A few exemptions include *Mwananchi*, *The Citizen*, *Mwanahalisi Online*, *Nipashe*, *Arusha 1 FM*, and *ITV*, which reported opposition events more than they did for CCM's events. In this regard, they fulfilled the media's normative role of providing diverse information to the audience—the electorate.

The content of candidates' future policies as provided for in the manifestos was primarily not covered, despite voters needing comprehensive information at their disposal to enable them to make informed voting decisions. However, the CCM policy content for Magufuli was covered much more by government media than the Chadema policy content for Lissu at 33 percent and 10 percent, respectively, whereas all the other media almost balanced their coverage at 29 percent and 25 percent, respectively.

Another striking finding had to do with the coverage of the feasibility of candidates' promises. The feasibility aspect was rarely covered during the elections under review. In essence, it was almost non-existent, as only 1 percent (17 media pieces) of all the

<sup>1</sup> The percentages in these comparisons do not add up to 100%, because journalistic units often cover various candidates, not only one. As the study counted every appearance of the candidates in the news pieces, some units counted for two or even three different candidates as they were not mutually exclusive.

election-related stories covered this aspect for the Union presidential candidates. Considering the crucial media role during the 2020 elections, this shortcoming is substantial; the media should scrutinise critically the promises the candidates made to enable voters to make informed electoral decisions.

Also, on the downside, the citizens' voices during the elections were confined to the back seat. They were muted. The media excessively amplified the candidates' voices with disproportionate representation of the voters' voice, who, as the electorate, are critical players in elections. Only 10 percent of media units had ordinary people as sources. Similarly, female sources were less visible at 20 percent of the election-related stories.

The overall reportage was largely event-based, with only 19 percent of the coverage initiated by the media and journalists. Additionally, multiple sourcing, which makes reportage more authoritative, was minimal per story. Radio's performance was worrisome, with 52 percent of their stories having single sources, followed by print at 43 percent and TV at 38 percent.

According to the editors, three significant challenges constrained the media's initiative and ability to report the 2020 General Elections. The political environment in pre-election and during the campaign period appeared to constrict media freedom in the country. In fact, the suspension, banning and revocation of media licence created an atmosphere of self-censorship for media practitioners and their sources. As such, the media coverage of the 2020 elections was not conducted as well as the editors could have wished.

The second challenge to election coverage was related to the economic environment. The general tightening of the economy before the elections hit the media hard following the drop in advertising revenue. As a result, they had minimal financial resources to cover the elections as many of them struggled to stay afloat, including paying salaries.

As painful as it sounds, only a few media had budgetary allocations for covering elections. With many media outlets struggling to run, it was an uphill task to cover the elections independently without the ambivalent support of political parties or candidates.

The third challenge relates to professionalism. Lack of competent journalists to report on the elections emerged as a limiting factor in professional coverage of elections. Only a few reporters in newsrooms covered elections competently, by displaying critical analysis skills and ability to bring out relevant subjects of the public remit to the audience's attention. The triad of challenges—political, economic, and professional competency—have a significant bearing on determining the media coverage of the 2020 General Elections in the country, as this report documents.

To address the reporting shortcomings uncovered by this study and the attendant challenges, the study recommends that government authorities overseeing the media industry have regular meetings with industry stakeholders to address the restrictive media environment in the country, and, thereby, allowing the mass media and journalists to report freely, but responsibly.

To improve the performance of public broadcasters, broadcast regulators on Tanzania Mainland and in Zanzibar should monitor government-owned broadcasters, just as they do to other outlets, to ensure they fulfil their legal obligations and professional responsibilities during elections by providing equitable coverage to contesting candidates and political parties. Regarding improving the quality of election reporting, journalists should move upstream to, among others, cover critical areas such as the substance of policies, questioning the feasibility of the candidates' promises.



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

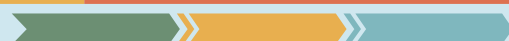
The United Republic of Tanzania (URT) held its sixth multiparty general elections in October 2020. After political liberalisation and the re-introduction of multiparty democracy in 1992, the first competitive general elections were held in 1995 and subsequently in 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2015. In each of these multiparty elections, the mass media have been playing a critical coverage role.

This report examines media performance during the 2020 General Elections and the extent to which it served the public interest. In other words, it sought to establish the extent to which the media promoted journalistic culture and supported democratic and responsible coverage of elections. It assessed the coverage of 14 newspapers, 14 radio stations, and four (4) television stations and focused on three elective positions—the President, Members of Parliament and House of Representatives, and Councillors.

The reports apply quantitative content analysis to assess the media coverage of the 2020 general elections using quality indicators such as placement of election-related news; topics, both election-related and general; the context of reporting; sources; reference to the party manifesto; questions related to the feasibility of candidates' policies; policy vs personality in coverage; and viewpoint. The analysis was supplemented by key informants' interviews involving media editors and managers to help understand and interrogate the gatekeeping process and roles in the period under study.

This report has five sections: Introduction, Background, Methodology, Findings (quantitative and qualitative), and Conclusion and Recommendations. The report provides the overall media results before narrowing the presentation to specific media genres such as print and broadcast media. This report can be accessed via

UDSM-SJMC's website (<https://www.udsm.ac.tz/web/index.php/schools/sjmc>), under the *Yearbook on Media Quality in Tanzania* menu.



## 2.0 BACKGROUND

Assessing media coverage of elections helps understand how the media behaved during the electioneering period—a vital component of the democratic process. This assessment offers an upstream view of what the media in the country did or did not do in fulfilling its democratic responsibility as the Fourth Estate. This section provides an overview of the political system and media landscape during the 2020 General Elections period.

### 2.1 Political system and the 2020 General Elections

The United Republic of Tanzania (URT) is a Union of Tanganyika (formerly the Republic of Tanganyika) and Zanzibar (formerly the People's Republic of Zanzibar) that came into being on 26 April 1964. Political pluralism existed in Tanganyika and Zanzibar before 1964.

Tanganyika had pluralism existed until 1965, when it was officially abolished, with the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) becoming the sole party. In Zanzibar, all the political parties, except the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP), were abolished immediately after the 1964 revolution. In 1977, TANU and ASP merged to form the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), marking the beginning of decades of monolithic political systems in Tanzania.

Political pluralism was re-established in 1992 through the amendment of the 1977 Constitution, hence opening democratic space and subsequently allowing for the re-introduction of multiparty politics in the URT. Following the reversion to political pluralism, the Government passed the Political Parties Act, Cap 258, that established the office of the Registrar of Political Parties. The Registrar's office is mandated to register and

regulate political parties in the country.

In Tanzania, there are two election management bodies. Whereas the National Electoral Commission (NEC) manages the Union presidential, parliamentary and councillorship<sup>2</sup> elections, the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) manages the Zanzibar presidential, Zanzibar House of Representatives (ZHoR), and councillorship<sup>3</sup> elections in the Isles.

In the 2020 General Elections, 19 registered political parties participated. There were 15 nominated Union presidential, 1,257 parliamentary and 9,231 councillorship candidates. Table one segment nominated candidates by gender, elections, and political parties:

<sup>2</sup> For mainland only

<sup>3</sup> For Zanzibar only



## Nominated candidates for the 2020 General Elections<sup>4</sup>

SN	POLITICAL PARTIES	PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES		PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES		COUNCILLORSHIP CANDIDATES	
		M	F	M	F	M	F
1	Alliance for African Farmers Party (AAFP)	1		17	11	12	7
2	Alliance for Change and Transparency-Wazalendo (ACT-Wazalendo)	1		135	21	856	39
3	African Democratic Alliance -Tanzania Democratic Alliance (ADA-TADEA)	1		24	13	15	6
4	Alliance for Democratic Change (ADC)		1	33	15	24	5
5	Chama Cha Kijamii (CCK)	1		11	7	17	16
6	Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM)	1		239	25	3,689	264
7	Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA)	1		153	58	2,648	143
8	Chama cha Ukombozi wa Umma (CHAUMMA)	1		22	6	13	2
9	Civic United Front (CUF)	1		116	38	822	92
10	Demokrasia Makini (MAKINI)		1	33	11	23	10
11	Democratic Party (DP)	1		16	7	22	7
12	National Convention for Construction & Reform-Mageuzi (NCCR-Mageuzi)	1		65	20	20	4
13	National League for Democracy (NLD)			7	2	268	28
14	National Reconstruction Alliance (NRA)	1		25	9	2	1
15	Sauti ya Umma (SAU)	1		13	6	20	15
16	Tanzania Labour Party (TLP)			18	9	48	11
17	United Democratic Party (UDP)			24	9	36	3
18	Union for Multiparty Democracy (UMD)	1		4	13	10	7
19	United Peoples Democratic Party (UPDP)	1		9	13	18	8
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>8,563</b>	<b>668</b>

Source: National Electoral Commission (2021).

<sup>4</sup> NEC (2020). Report on the 2020 presidential, parliamentary, and councillors' elections

After the tallying of votes, CCM won the presidential seat by 84.40%, followed by Chadema (13.4%) and ACT-Wazalendo (0.55%), with the rest of the candidates securing less than 0.55%. For parliamentary seats, CCM won by 96.97%, followed by ACT-Wazalendo (1.51%), CUF (1.14%), and Chadema (0.38%). The overall electoral results for councillors indicate that CCM won by 96.63%, followed by Chadema (2.15%), ACT-Wazalendo (0.56%), CUF (0.51%), NCCR-Mageuzi (0.13%), and DP (0.02%)<sup>5</sup>.

In Zanzibar, 250 candidates were nominated for the Zanzibar House of Representatives (ZHoR) election, 350 for councillorship, and 17 for the Union presidential election. Table 2 shows the nominated candidates for Zanzibar's presidential polls.

Nominated candidates for the Zanzibar's election

			
Ali Omar Juma (CHAUMMA)	Ameir Hassan Ameir (MAKINI)	Hamad Mohammed Ibrahim (UPDP)	Hamad Rashid Mohamed (ADC)
			
Hussein Ali Mwinyi (CCM)	Hussein Juma Salum (TLP)	Issa Mohamed Zonga (SAU)	Juma Ali Khatib (ADA-TADEA)
			
Khamis Faki Mgau (NRA)	Mfaume Khamis Hassan (NLD)	Mohamed Omar Shaame (UMD)	Mussa Haji Kombo (CUF)
			
Othman Rashid Khamis (CCK)	Said Issa Mohammed (CHADEMA)	Said Soud Said (AAFP)	Seif Sharif Hamad (ACT-Wazalendo)
			
	Shafi Hassan Suleiman (DP)		

Source: Zanzibar Electoral Commission (2021).

After the tallying of votes, CCM's presidential candidate won by 76.27%, followed by the ACT-Wazalendo candidate (19.87%), and the rest of the candidates each got less than 1% of the votes cast.

## 2.2 Media landscape and the 2020 elections

After the end of the 1980s, the unfolding media liberalisation subsequently led to a proliferation of media outlets in Tanzania. By June 2021, there were 193 radio stations (up from 106 in 2015), 50 broadcasting services made up of free-to-air (44), satellite TV (2), DTT and DTH (4) (up from 31 in 2015), and 257 newspapers and magazines (up from 216 in 2018) on Tanzania Mainland (TCRA, 2021 and Tanzania Information Services-TIS). In Zanzibar, there were two newspapers, 25 radio stations, and 12 TV stations.

Apart from the unparalleled growth of legacy media—newspaper, radio, and TV, the country also witnessed a rapid increase in internet users. Indeed, during the last ten years, internet penetration has almost tripled from 17% in 2012<sup>6</sup> to 46% in 2021<sup>7</sup>. By June 2021,

<sup>5</sup> NEC (2020). Report on the 2020 presidential, parliamentary, and councillors' elections

<sup>6</sup> TCRA (2015). Quarterly communications statistics report, October-December 2015, [https://www.tcra.go.tz/uploads/text-editor/files/december%20\(5\)\\_1619158941.pdf](https://www.tcra.go.tz/uploads/text-editor/files/december%20(5)_1619158941.pdf), retrieved on 11/9/2021

<sup>7</sup> TCRA (2015). Quarterly communications statistics, April-June 2021, [https://www.tcra.go.tz/uploads/text-editor/files/TelCo m%20Statistics%20June%202021\\_1630483653.pdf](https://www.tcra.go.tz/uploads/text-editor/files/TelCo m%20Statistics%20June%202021_1630483653.pdf), retrieved on 11/9/2021

over 25 million Tanzanians had access to the internet, with the majority accessing the internet via their mobile wireless<sup>8</sup> devices. Though essentially an urban phenomenon, this development has enabled citizens to access online news and to engage in online public discussions, including general elections.

## 2.3 Media role in elections

There are two sets of roles for the media during elections. The first set emanates from a professional standpoint and anchored on social responsibility, and the second is a legal obligation for the media. In general, media play their role in informing, educating and, ultimately empowering citizens by providing accurate, timely, contextualised, relevant and well-researched information about the entire election process. This includes rallying citizens together to take action and participate in elections. Thus, media is an important cog and an indispensable condition for free and fair elections. More specifically, media has the following social responsibility and professional role.

From a professional stance, the media plays three significant roles.<sup>9</sup>

- *Media as a public educator:* The media educates the citizenry on the electoral process, provides information to enable and empower voters to make informed decisions (vote wisely).
- *Media as a campaign platform and forum for debate:* The media provides a platform for dialogues and debate on divergent opinions and ideas between candidates and citizens.
- *Media as transparency/watchdog:* The media acts as a watchdog particularly of those likely to bungle over the electoral process

thus to ensuring fair and free elections.

The management of elections in the country is guided by specific legal regimes covering all the actors, including the media. The legislative regimes demand that the media ensures proper, fair, and equitable coverage of political parties and candidates. Thus, these legal obligations constitute the second set of media roles during elections in the country.

## 2.4 Media freedom and the 2020 general elections

Media freedom is an essential pillar of democracy and elections. If freedom is threatened, both democracy and elections suffer. Before the 2020 general elections, the media environment was characterised by media bans, suspensions, cancellation of licences, and a sharp decline in the press freedom index. Mseto newspaper was banned for three years in 2016, *Tanzania Daima* for 90 days in 2017, *Raia Mwema* for three months in 2017, *Mawio* for two years in 2017, *Mwanahalisi* for two years in 2017, and *The Citizen* for seven (7) days in 2019.<sup>10</sup>

In the 2020 election year, three media outlets were penalised. On 23 June 2020, nearly two months before the electoral campaign started in earnest, the Government revoked the publication

<sup>8</sup> TCRA (2015). Quarterly communications statistics, April-June 2021, [https://www.tcra.go.tz/uploads/text-editor/files/TelCom%20Statistics%20June%202021\\_1630483653.pdf](https://www.tcra.go.tz/uploads/text-editor/files/TelCom%20Statistics%20June%202021_1630483653.pdf), retrieved on 11/9/2021.8

<sup>9</sup> The Electoral Knowledge Network (2012), *Media and Elections*, 3rd edition, <https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/me/introduction/me10/default>; Marie-Soleil Frère (2010). *The Media and Elections in Post-Conflict Central African Countries*. Brussels: the University of Brussels

<sup>10</sup> Katunzi, A and Spurk, C (2020). *Yearbook On Media Quality in Tanzania 2019*, Dar es Salaam: University of Dar es Salaam' School of Journalism and Mass Communication (UDSM-SJMC)

licence of *Tanzania Daima*. The Government cited perpetual violation of national laws and journalism ethics as reasons for the licence revocation<sup>11</sup>. Reacting to this revocation, the US Embassy in Tanzania issued a statement<sup>12</sup> on 25 June 2020 on freedom of expression and inclusive political participation, declaring its concern on “the revocation of the media licence of an opposition party newspaper”. It noted that the action was preceded by a “disconcerting pattern of intimidation toward media outlets.” Although *Tanzania Daima* was not necessarily an opposition party-owned newspaper by registration, its content appeared sympathetic to the opposition.

A joint statement by the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) and the Tanzania Editors’ Forum (TEF) described the Government’s action as a sad one as, in their view, it infringed upon media freedom and, particularly, freedom of expression. It further adds that the newspaper’s licence had been revoked at a critical time when the public needed more pluralistic platforms to give them a diversity of content to enable them to make informed political choices.

On 27 August 2020, a day after the election campaigns had begun, the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), the country’s broadcasting regulator, suspended the broadcasting of *Clouds Television* and *Clouds Entertainment FM Radio* for a week from 28 August to 3 September 2020. In its statement, TCRA noted that the two sister electronic media outlets had violated Article 16 (1) and (2) of the Broadcasting Services (Content) (The Political Party Elections Broadcasts) Code, 2015 that partly calls for content service providers to disseminate/broadcast election results as released by the National Electoral Commission (NEC). Thus, the media was barred from proactively broadcasting election results not officially announced by the NEC.

The two outlets broadcast a story on parliamentary candidates from the ruling party (CCM) who had sailed through unopposed for their seats without the official confirmation of NEC. Though other media outlets had also broadcast the same information, only the two outlets faced the TCRA’s wrath. Nevertheless, the newspaper regulator, the Tanzania Information Services (TIS), did not issue any warning or penalty against any newspaper. Subsequently, on 29 September 2020, the Director of the Electoral Commission, Wilson Mahera Charles, issued a statement indicating that 28 parliamentary candidates from the ruling party had, indeed, won their parliamentary seats unopposed<sup>13</sup>.

Generally, the press freedom environment in the country before the 2020 general elections attracted criticism. The Reporters without Borders’ Press Freedom Index, for example, shows a declining trend in press freedom between 2016 and 2020. In 2016, the country ranked at 71st (out of 180 countries), 83rd (2017), 93rd (2018), 118th (2019), and 124th (2020), a drop of 53 positions in five years.

Specifically, the political environment before the general elections created an atmosphere of self-censorship. The 2019 Yearbook findings indicate that the public, journalists, and their sources (experts) were reluctant to air views openly, particularly those considered critical of

<sup>11</sup> Habari Leo, Serikali yasitisha leseni *Tanzania Daima*, <https://www.habarileo.co.tz/habari/2020-06-245ef2dcb32e88c.a.spx>, retrieved on 17 September 2020

<sup>12</sup> Ubalozi wa Marekani nchini Tanzania, Tamko Kuelezea Masikitiko Yetu Kuhusu Uhuru wa Kujiieleza na Ushiriki Jumuishi wa Kiasia, <https://tz.usembassy.gov/sw/tamko-kuelezea-masikitiko-yetu-kuh-usu-uhuru-wa-kujiieleza-na-ushiriki-jumuishi-wa-kiasia/>, retrieved on 20th September 2021

<sup>13</sup> NEC (2020). Tangazo la kuchaguliwa kwa wagombea pekee wa Ubunge katika uchaguzi mkuu wa mwaka 2020, <https://www.nec.go.tz/publications/65>, retrieved on 27th September 2021

the Government. A year earlier, the 2018 Yearbook report had noted that there was “hardly any reports from legacy media [that] contain[ed] viewpoints that [were] critical of the government”<sup>14</sup>. Subsequently, the 2019 report revealed a similar picture, with the print media leading in publishing articles with critical viewpoints of the Government by only 4%.

## 2.5 Media business environment before elections

A sharp slump in advertising revenue characterised the media business environment in the country. The fall in advertising revenue was attributable to the Government’s decision to slash its advertising budget as a cost-cutting measure coupled with the private sector’s shrinking advertising and publicity budget because of economic downturn and, more recently, difficulties associated with COVID-19. Moreover, there has been competition for audiences and advertising revenue between legacy and online media<sup>15</sup>.

Although there is no readily available empirical data on how much the Government and private sector had slashed their advertising budget, editors estimated the revenue loss their media houses suffered to range between 50% and 70%<sup>16</sup>. Furthermore, the C19 pandemic had its share in the disruption despite having occurred a few months before the campaign began.

The decline in advertising revenue had also adversely affected media businesses long before the run-up to the general elections. A challenging operational environment had forced some media houses to restructure by downsizing staffing, cutting salaries, and shutting down their regional offices. In some financially unbearable circumstances, media houses completely ceased their operations.

In 2019, a local radio station based in Mwanza, *Lake*

*FM*, was suspended by TCRA for failing to pay accumulated frequency and regulatory fees. In 2020, just one month after the elections, the New Habari 2006 Ltd—the publisher of *Mtanzania*, *Rai*, *Bingwa*, and *Dimba*, suspended its operations, citing a poor business environment<sup>17</sup>. The company’s flagship newspaper, *Mtanzania*, has since been struggling to operate under a digital platform—Mtanzania Digital.

The good news is that there have been some initiatives by media houses to diversify their revenue bases, such as the development of ‘popular’ content that appeals to larger audiences. Others have diversified their income sources to include introducing businesses such as courier (MCL) and printing services (MCL, TSN). Moreover, some have embraced regional business fora (TSN) aimed to promote exclusive regional investment opportunities. Some have resorted to establishing digital platforms and rebranding their programmes (*TBC1*) to attract more audiences. Whether these new initiatives have helped expand their audience market share or generate the much-needed additional revenue remains an unfolding picture.

14 Katunzi, A and Spurk, C (2019). Yearbook On Media Quality in Tanzania 2018, synthesized report on overall results, Dar es Salaam: Media Council of Tanzania and Spurk Media Consulting Ltd

15 Yearbook 2019 report

16 Yearbook 2019 report

17 Kampuni ya New Habari yasitisha uzalishaji, retrieved on 24/9/2021, <https://www.mwananchi.co.tz/mw/habari/kitaifa/kampuni-ya-new-habari-yasitisha-uzalishaji--3218412>



## 2.6 Journalists vying for political seats

Like in previous elections, the 2020 General Elections saw an unprecedented number of journalists seeking nominations from political parties for parliamentary and councillorship positions, with the majority bidding for parliamentary nominations from the ruling party, CCM. None of those who sought nominations on Mainland Tanzania succeeded, with only one getting nominated in Zanzibar for parliamentary candidature, but did not win the seat. Overall, there were no clear rules that media set for themselves for those that wanted to vie for elections.

## 2.7 Reminders, pledges, and guidelines

On 18 August 2020, NEC held a meeting with editors as part of the stakeholders' engagement strategy. The NEC Chairperson, Judge Semistocles Kaijage, urged the media and, mainly, the public media to be fair to all political parties: "I pledge with you editors, particularly those from the public media, to provide an equitable airtime and space to all political parties and ensure that you provide candidates with opportunities to sell their election manifestos [to

the electorate]."

The National Electoral Commission (NEC) prepared *Guidelines for the use of public media by political parties during election campaigns, 2020*. These guidelines aimed to ensure that the public media gave political parties and candidates equitable time to publicise their electoral manifestos and engage citizens in campaign rallies.

The guidelines expected public media to perform ethically, act impartially and abide by the professional code of conduct when covering political parties or candidates.<sup>18</sup> In April 2020, the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) published guidelines on broadcasting services during 2020 elections. Article 5 (i) calls for content providers to broadcast and report political news without bias and provide equal opportunity for all parties.<sup>19</sup>

This requirement is also covered under Article 17 (3) of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance that calls on partner states to "ensure fair and equitable access by contesting parties and candidates to state-controlled media during elections."

On 15 August 2020, the Director of the state-controlled media, the Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC), Dr. Ayub Rioba, promised fair reporting by providing equitable opportunities to all parties and candidates. Nevertheless, he quickly noted that they would be unable<sup>20</sup> to cover all the candidates countrywide.

## 2.8 Standoff: TBC vs. Chadema, and TEF mediation)

The opposition party, Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (Chadema), launched its official campaign in Dar es Salaam at Mbagala Zakhem

<sup>18</sup> Tume ya Taifa ya Uchaguzi (2020). Mwongozo kwa vyombo vya habari vya umma na vyama vya siasa katika kutangaza kampeni za uchaguzi mkuu mwaka 2020.

<sup>19</sup> Muongozo wa huduma za utangazaji wakati wa uchaguzi Zanzibar, 2020, [tuz.go.tz/mydashboard/images/6814.pdf](https://tuz.go.tz/mydashboard/images/6814.pdf), retrieved 9/9/2021

<sup>20</sup> TBC1 news bulletin, 15 August 2020





**RECONCILIATION:** The Chairperson of Chadema, Freeman Mbowe (right), shakes hands with TBC Director-General, Dr Ayub Rioba, as a gesture of reconciliation in the presence of NEC Director-General, Dr Wilson Mahera Charles (centre). Looking on standing in a suit is TEF Chairperson, Deodatus Balile (Photo by TEF).

area on 28 August 2020. The event was broadcast live by TBC stations—TBC Taifa and TBC1. However, TBC intermittently interrupted the live broadcast accusing Chadema leaders of uttering statements contrary to the broadcasting regulations. The regular interruption of live streaming of its rally was not positively received by Chadema leaders, who gave TBC staff 15 minutes to vacate the campaign ground.

While addressing a campaign rally, Chadema Chairperson Freeman Mbowe noted: “When we started addressing the rally, TBC was broadcasting live our campaign rally, then they suspended the broadcast because they think the

television belongs to CCM...TBC, we are giving you 15 minutes to vacate this venue.” Later, in the evening news bulletin, TBC issued a statement noting that, as a public broadcaster, it was fulfilling its legal obligation by broadcasting live the Chadema opening campaign as mandated by NEC regulations. Moreover, TBC defended its position by insisting that they were obliged to ensure that the broadcast content adhered to attendant broadcast regulations.

Furthermore, the station further noted that it was suspending the broadcasting of Chadema rallies until its staff were assured of their security, adding that it was willing to fulfil its legal obligation and

was ready at all times to work with all political parties without bias.<sup>21</sup> In a bid to reconcile the two parties, the Tanzania Editors' Forum (TEF) engaged TBC Director-General Ayub Rioba and Chadema Chairperson Freeman Mbowe in a discussion on the matter before the Director-General of the National Electoral Commission (NEC). Finally, the two parties reconciled to continue working together.

systematic and objective method of analysing media reports based on specific predetermined criteria, and further triangulated with information gathered from in-depth interviews held with media editors and managers.

## 2.9 What we already know: Findings from previous studies and reports<sup>22</sup>

Previous studies and monitoring reports on media coverage of Tanzania's General Elections have identified gaps, including the following:

- General bias and favouritism (number of articles and positive viewpoint) in reportage of the ruling party (CCM) and its candidates.
- Disregard of professional media standards such as the use of multiple sources, provision of various perspectives and angles.
- Poor coverage of female candidates.
- Paying disproportionate attention to the incumbents on state broadcasters in both Tanzania Mainland and in Zanzibar.
- Paying unequal attention to political parties and candidates at the expense of the citizens—the electorate.
- Failure to interrogate candidates' usually unfeasible or unfulfilled election promises and allegations or utterances.
- The dominance of episodic reporting (event-based reporting) and horse racing election strategy as opposed to issues.

To assess the quality of media coverage of the 2020 elections, we used content analysis, a

<sup>21</sup> TBC1 news bulletin, 28 August 2020

<sup>22</sup> Include REDET (2015). Uchaguzi Mkuu wa Tanzania mwaka 2015; MCT (2016). Watching the watchdog: 2015 Election Media Monitoring Report, Dar es Salaam: MCT; Commonwealth Secretariat (2010). The Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group, Tanzania General Elections, 31 October 2010, retrieved on 26/9/2021, <https://www.eisa.org/pdf/tan2010commonwealthreport.pdf>; LHRC & TACCEO (2016). Report on the 2015 General Elections on United Republic of Tanzania, retrieved 25/10/2021 <https://www.humanrights.or.tz/assets/attachments/1504100983.pdf>

## 3.0 METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Quality criteria

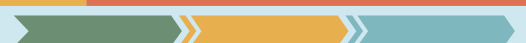
#### Concept of quality assessment

The Yearbook report uses “quality” as a summary notion comprising of various quality criteria, primarily because the quality as “single” measure is almost impossible to attain. Instead, it is possible to assess quality as a composite measure of degree of media performance using various concrete quality criteria. The quality criteria used in the Yearbook 2020 are derived from journalism theory, journalistic practice, and researches on media coverage of elections. Some of the quality criteria, particularly on professionalism, were adopted from previous Yearbooks, which were agreed upon by the media fraternity in the country. They are also relevant for election reporting. They are:

- **Context of reporting:** This criterion looks at events or statements that have triggered the election reporting. It further looks at whether journalists’ go beyond reporting events and gather their own election stories. This criterion helps to uncover two things: first, the share of reportage among political parties, and second the share of event-based stories vs. media own initiated stories.
- **Sourcing:** having at least two or more sources in each journalistic unit (in a story) is especially important in election reporting. This allows journalists to provide different viewpoints or more comprehensive information for voters to help them make an informed voting decision. Additionally, it helps to identify voices (=sources) from different actors, including the ordinary

citizens, who are in most cases neglected.

- **Diversity of candidates’ coverage:** in the presidential elections (Union and Zanzibar), we pre-selected five and three main candidates, respectively, and analysed their proportionate coverage by the media. This is the first step to discover balance or imbalance (bias) in reportage in Bunge, ZHoR and councillor elections. We did not look at specific candidates because there are many and instead we analysed the coverage of their nominating political parties. This is also to reveal potential bias.
- **Diversity of topics/subject:** This criterion looks at the election-related topics and the issue topics in media units (different stories). This delivers a profile of the media houses in terms of topical coverage orientation such as inclination towards politics, development, economics, or other issues.



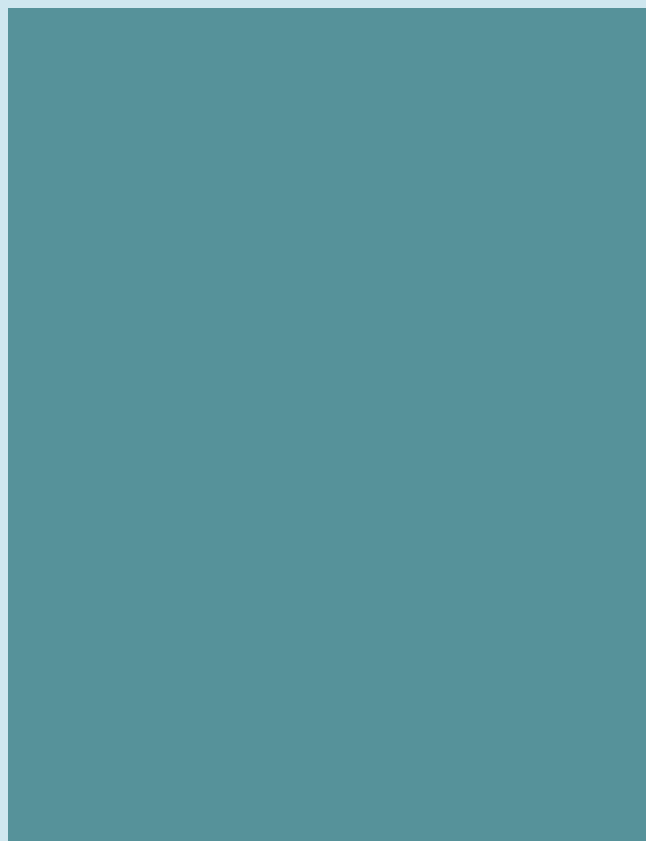
## Assessment of candidates:

On the other hand, the assessment of quality of reportage of the presidential candidates used the following criteria for good quality.

- **Coverage of content of (new) policy:** media need to inform voters about the candidates' policies for the future. Good quality means the content of policy plays a significant role in reporting.
- **Reference to party manifesto:** referring to candidates' party manifesto is essential in election reporting as it informs voters which programme is behind those candidates. Journalists ought to capture this.
- **Feasibility of future policies:** During elections, candidates offer promises to voters. It is, therefore, the media's role to question and ask whether those policies are feasible in terms of practical implementation and financing. It is a reality check for promises. This criterion analyses whether media cover this aspect as candidates do not question themselves.
- **Existence of viewpoints:** media ought to provide fairly balanced viewpoints, both in favour and against candidates, as they look for sources that provide those viewpoints. This provision is essential as it empowers voters to know candidates and parties and thereby vote wisely.
- **Personality vs. policy:** candidates' personality and policy play a role in the election, albeit with different

weights. The analysis investigated how these dichotomous views of a candidate—policy and personality—played themselves out in reporting.

Reporting on elections using the quality criteria mentioned earlier is essential, particularly when citizen journalism is blossoming. Media and journalists need to add value to their reportage as it creates an informed citizenry and, most importantly, empowers voters to vote while well-informed. Such quality reportage ought to distinguish citizen journalism from serious journalism, which is the pursuit of unknown truths about events and issues that shape society in the election process, in this case, whether expository or explanatory.



## 3.2 Sampling of media outlets

In all, the study assessed 33 media outlets. Most of these outlets were included in the previous Yearbook assessments for the 2018 and 2019 reports. The print media sample consists of *The Citizen*, *Daily News*, *The Guardian*, *Jamhuri*, *Mwananchi*, *Zanzibar Leo*, *Habari Leo*, *Raia Mwema*, *Nipashe*, *Uhuru*, *Mwanahalisi Online*, *Mtanzania*, *Times Observer*, and *Mzalendo*. The broadcast media sample captures *TBC Taifa*, *Radio Free Africa*, *Radio One*, *Clouds FM*, *ZBC Radio*, *Lake FM*, *Dodoma FM*, *Highlands FM*, *Arusha 1 FM*, *Micheweni FM*, *Safari FM*, *Zenji FM*, *CG FM*, *Chuchu FM*, *TBC1*, *ITV*, *Azam TV (UTV)*, *Star TV* and *ZBC TV*. The sample represents different outlets with a diverse range: Government-owned media, privately-owned, local media (regional and districts), and political party-owned media.

## 3.3 Sampling of media pieces

The Yearbook Project procured all the newspapers sampled, recorded daily evening news bulletins, and, at least, three programmes (per week) from the broadcast media sampled. The coverage spanned from mid-August 2020 to mid-November 2020. From this population of newspapers, radio, and TV, sampling was conducted. Eight (8) units/stories for each day sampled were selected for newspapers, with three (3) units/stories of analysis drawn from the front pages, lead stories on the inside pages, features, editorials, or commentaries.

For TV and radio, the first four (4) news items of the main evening news bulletin were selected, plus two or three programmes on the day sampled or in that week in case all three programmes were hard to get. Some outlets had fewer election pieces than others. Weekly newspapers such as *Jamhuri* and *Raia Mwema* had fewer pieces than daily newspapers. Similarly, radio stations such as *Clouds FM* and *Safari FM*. In this case, instead of applying random sampling, all election pieces were selected

for assessment. Overall, 2,421 media pieces were assessed, with print media accounting for a sample of 1,566 pieces and broadcast media for 855 pieces, which served as units of analysis.

## 3.4 Selection and training of transcribers, coders, and data analysts

The recorded programmes were transcribed for coders to code transcribed media pieces rather than listening to the programmes before coding. Coding transcribed programmes allowed coders to engage optimally with transcribed pieces than actual radio and TV programmes. Eleven (11) transcribers and 14 coders participated in the study. Another group of three (3) assistants participated in data analysis after a refresher training.

## 3.5 Quality assurance of recorded pieces and coding

Quality assurance is an integral part of the Yearbook project. It entailed a rigorous process of ensuring that all the media programmes recorded were complete for transcription. Moreover, the newspaper articles and transcriptions for radio and TV were kept for further reference should a need arise mainly to clarify anything regarding coding during data analysis.

## 3.6 Assessment and data analysis

The data from coding were meticulously checked for correctness and consistency before being compiled in a joint SPSS file. The analysis used standard statistical tools, frequency counts and cross-tabulation, of original and re-coded data on the quality criteria.



## 4.0 FINDINGS

### 4.1 Coverage of different elections

The 2020 General Elections consisted of various polls (presidential, parliamentary, Zanzibar's House of Representatives [ZHoR], and councillorship) for the Union and Zanzibar. The Union presidential election attracted the highest proportion of coverage at 43 percent<sup>23</sup> of all the election-related stories reviewed), followed by Bunge (Parliamentary) elections at 28 percent, Zanzibar presidential elections at 20 percent, councillor elections (Mainland, 10 percent, Zanzibar's House of Representatives polls at 5 percent, and councillorship polls in Zanzibar, at 1 percent. Only 32 percent of the stories on general elections constituted of issues outside these four elections. The ZHoR election constituted 5 percent of all the stories analysed, less than the councillorship polls on the Mainland at 10 percent. This tilt can be attributable to a more significant sample of media outlets drawn from the Mainland, 28 out of the 34 media sampled.

On Tanzania Mainland, media covered the Union polls at 83 percent compared to Zanzibar elections at 17 percent. The Zanzibar media covered Zanzibar elections in 70 percent of the stories compared to the Union at 30 percent. This shows that media is inward-looking in the amount of time and attention given to the two enclaves.

Different media outlets covered the Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar presidential elections differently. *Raia Mwema* and *Uhuru* covered the Union presidential elections more than others at 56 percent, followed by *The Citizen* with 54 percent, *TBC Taifa* at 53 percent, *Mwananchi* 51 percent, and *Azam TV* 44 percent. On the other hand, the Zanzibar's presidential election was covered mainly by *ZBC Radio* at 41 percent, *Zanzibar Leo* 38 percent, *Chuchu FM* 34 percent, *ZBC TV* 32 percent, *Zenji FM* 31, and *Azam TV* 24 percent. The differences notwithstanding, some media outlets strived to report the two elections fairly. *Azam TV*, for example, covered at 44 percent the Union presidential election against 24 percent for the Zanzibar presidential polls. While the *Daily News* covered at 42 percent against 17 percent, *Mwananchi* 51 percent against 18

percent, and *Uhuru* 56 percent against 18 percent.

### 4.2 Context of reporting

Events or statements associated with the ruling party (CCM) emerged as the most crucial reporting trigger at 33 percent. On the other hand, opposition party-linked events triggered 23 percent of the media electoral coverage, followed by the media's initiative at 19 percent and statements or press conferences by NEC and ZEC at 11 percent. The rest of the triggers were security agencies, foreign embassies, religious leaders, social media, and others. A disproportionate electoral coverage emerged between government, party-owned media, and other media outlets. Government media covered CCM and opposition party events disproportionately at 41 percent and 17 percent, respectively<sup>24</sup>, whereas all other media covered the two camps more equally at 27% vs 27%.

Looking at government-owned media, the electoral coverage of Zanzibar *Leo* of CCM and opposition events was unbalanced at 44 percent and 15 percent, respectively, and *Habari Leo* at 41 percent compared to 22 percent, almost like *TBC Taifa* at 44 percent compared to 19 percent for the opposition. *ZBC Radio* was even weaker in balancing poll coverage of the competing parties at 69 for CCM compared to 5 percent for the opposition.

<sup>23</sup> A journalistic unit (article, broadcast news, or program) can cover more than one election.

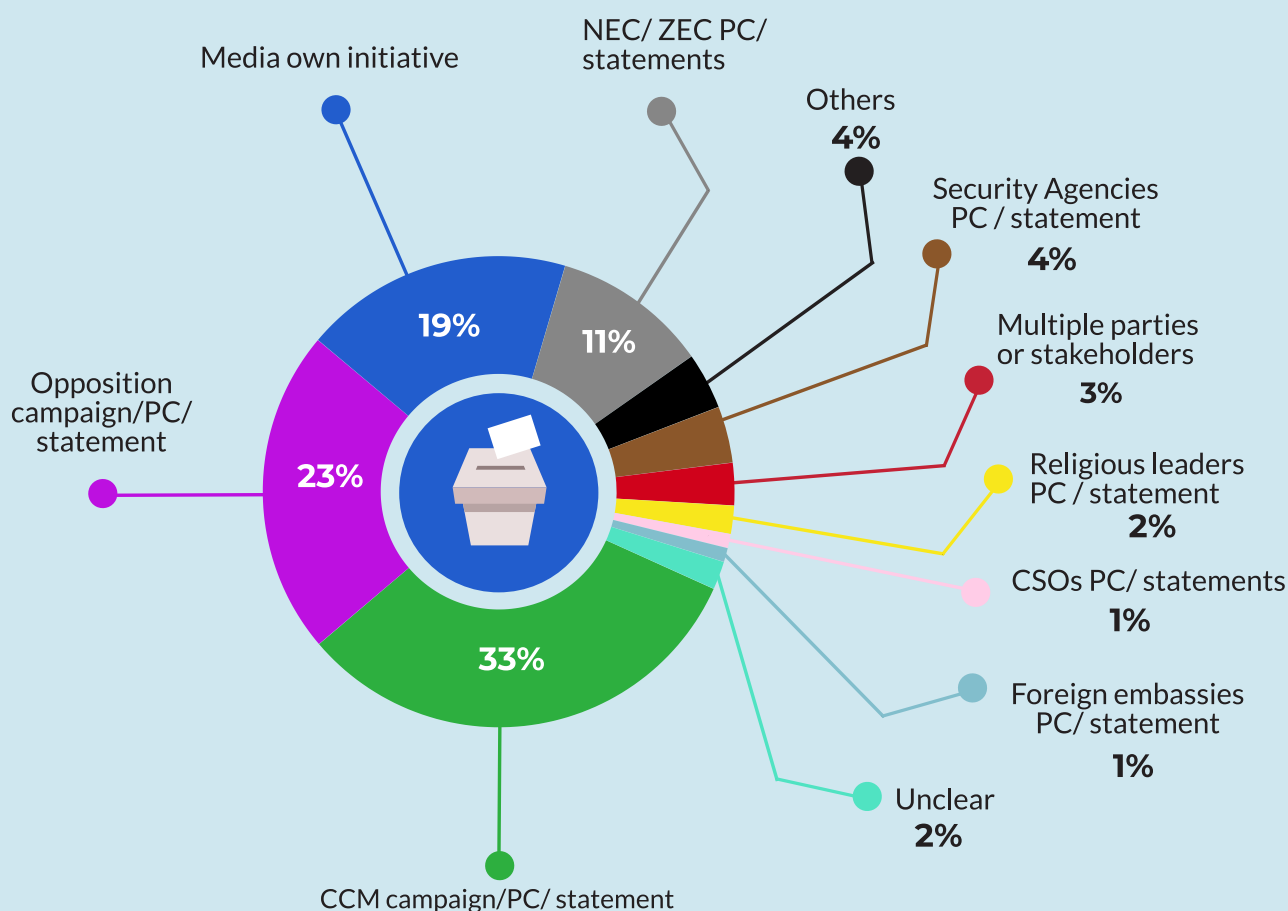
<sup>24</sup> These two percentages do not add up to 100% because there are other events by other stakeholders and media's own initiative that triggered reporting and are embedded in these computations.



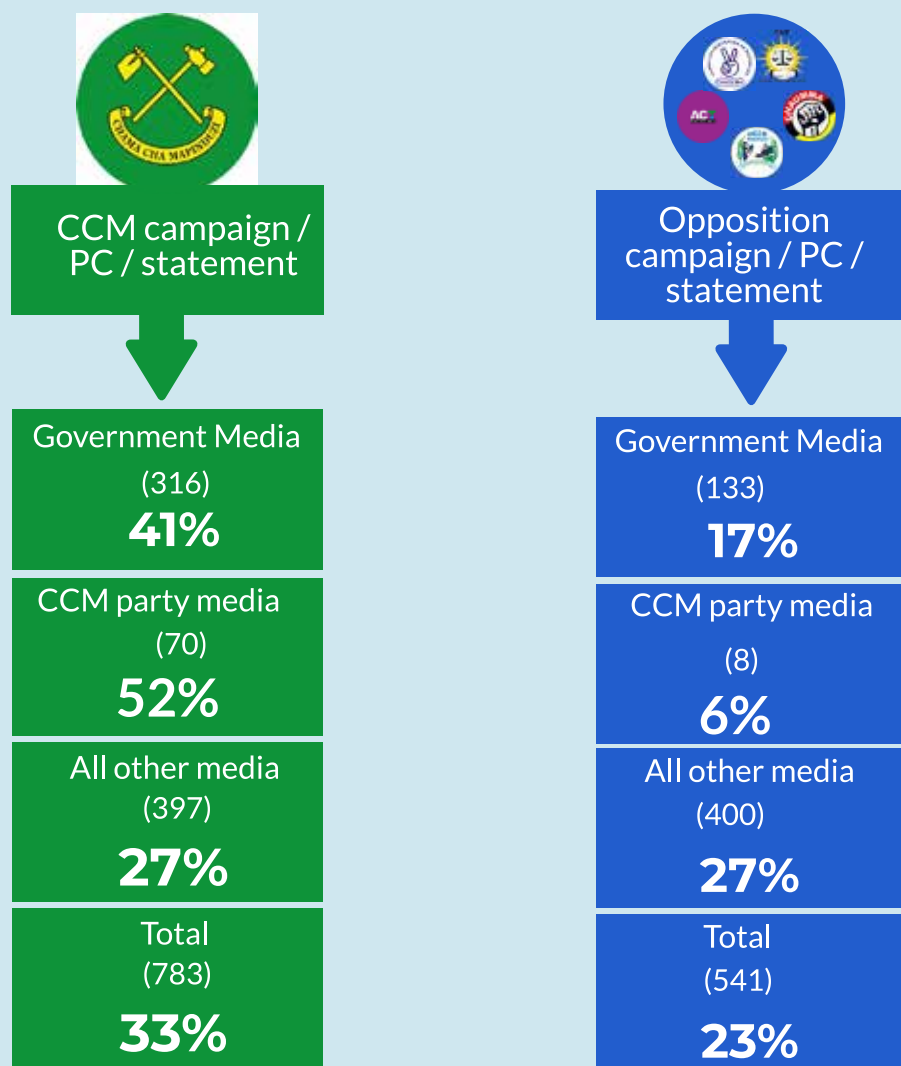
The trend was similar to TBC1 at 14 percent for CCM and 7 percent for the opposition. For ZBC TV, it was at 33 percent for CCM compared to 21 percent for the opposition.

However, some media houses covered opposition events or statements more than those for CCM. These are *The Citizen* at 40 percent for the opposition compared to 17 for CCM; *Mwananchi* at 42 percent as compared to 20 percent; *Mwanahalisi Online* at 46 percent compared with 24 percent; Nipashe at 34 percent compared to 27 percent; and ITV at 31 percent as compared to 18 percent for the opposition and CCM, respectively. A close look at this performance reveals that these media outlets covered various events from different opposition parties (Chadema, ACT-Wazalendo, CUF, NCCR-Mageuzi) on electoral issues, and not just one party. Infographic 1 and 2 (below) indicate what event triggered the reporting for all the stories analysed and their distribution between media ownership type or affiliation (government, party, and other media).

## Triggers of reporting on elections

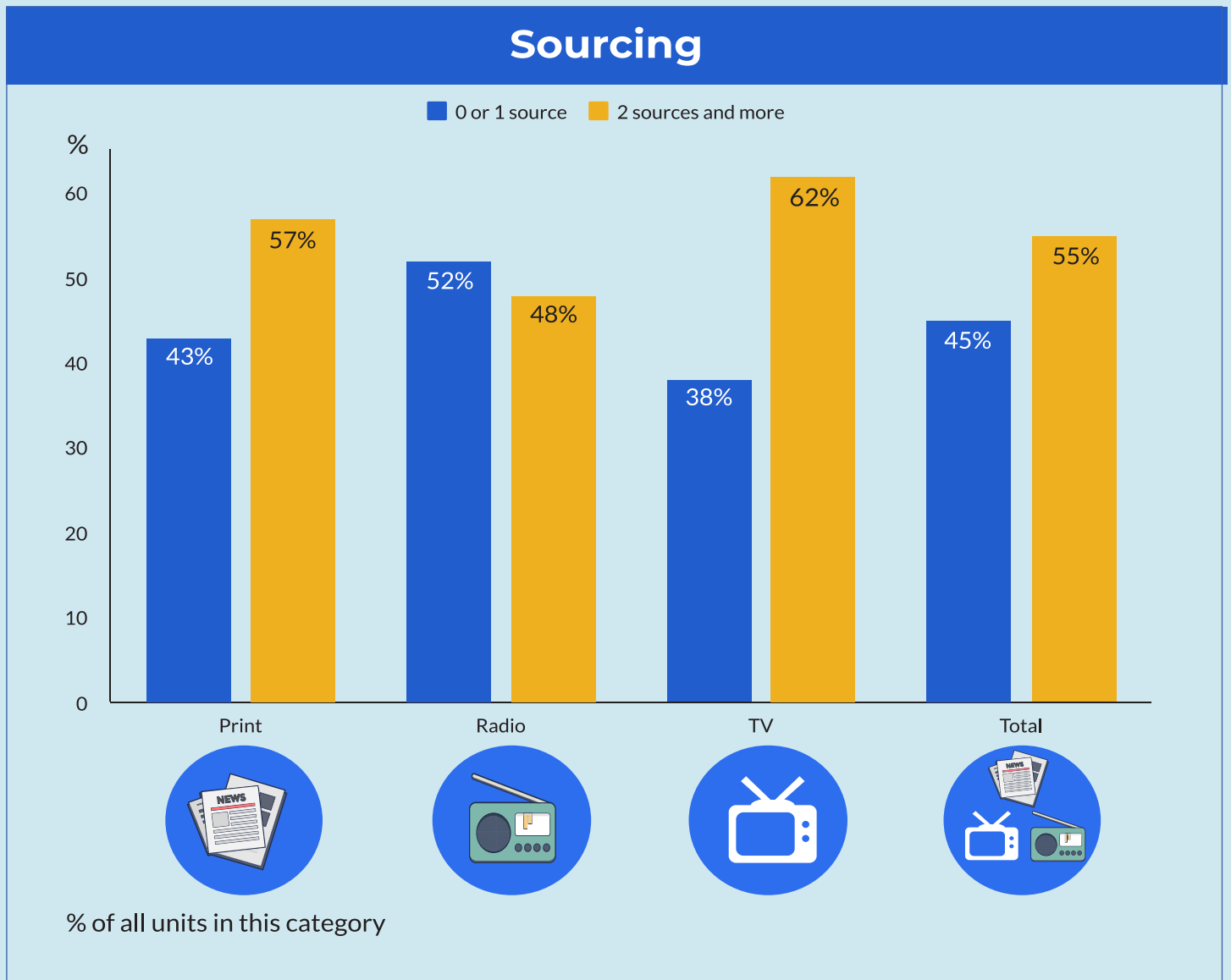


### Trigger by media categories



## 4.3 Sourcing

Multiple sourcing is one of the professional requirements in journalism reporting. Generally, a story with a single source is incomplete. Overall, 55 percent of the stories analysed had two or more sources, 41 percent had one source, and 3 percent had no source at all. Previous studies have shown that single source reportage is one of the professional gaps in the country's journalism practice, hence earning the tag 'single-source syndrome'. This syndrome is now overbearing and needs urgent attention. Of more grave concern that sounded a professional alarm in the finding is the presence of stories with zero sources. This reporting was more apparent in weekly newspapers, particularly in op-eds and opinion columns at 55 percent and editorials pieces at 33 percent. Though it is all right for opinion writers to front their opinions, they must discuss their opinions relative to those of others. Infographic 3 shows the composition of sources per media genre:



The high number of stories with 0-1 source/s accounting for 45 percent (1081 stories ) of the stories analysed compared to those with 2 or more sources accounting for 55 percent (1,340 stories) raises a fundamental question regarding the quality of many of the electoral stories. Apparently, election reporters essentially covered only events and did not go beyond to, for example, verify utterances or allegations and cross check facts. In fact, the slightly more than 50 percent of news stories with 2 or more sourc-

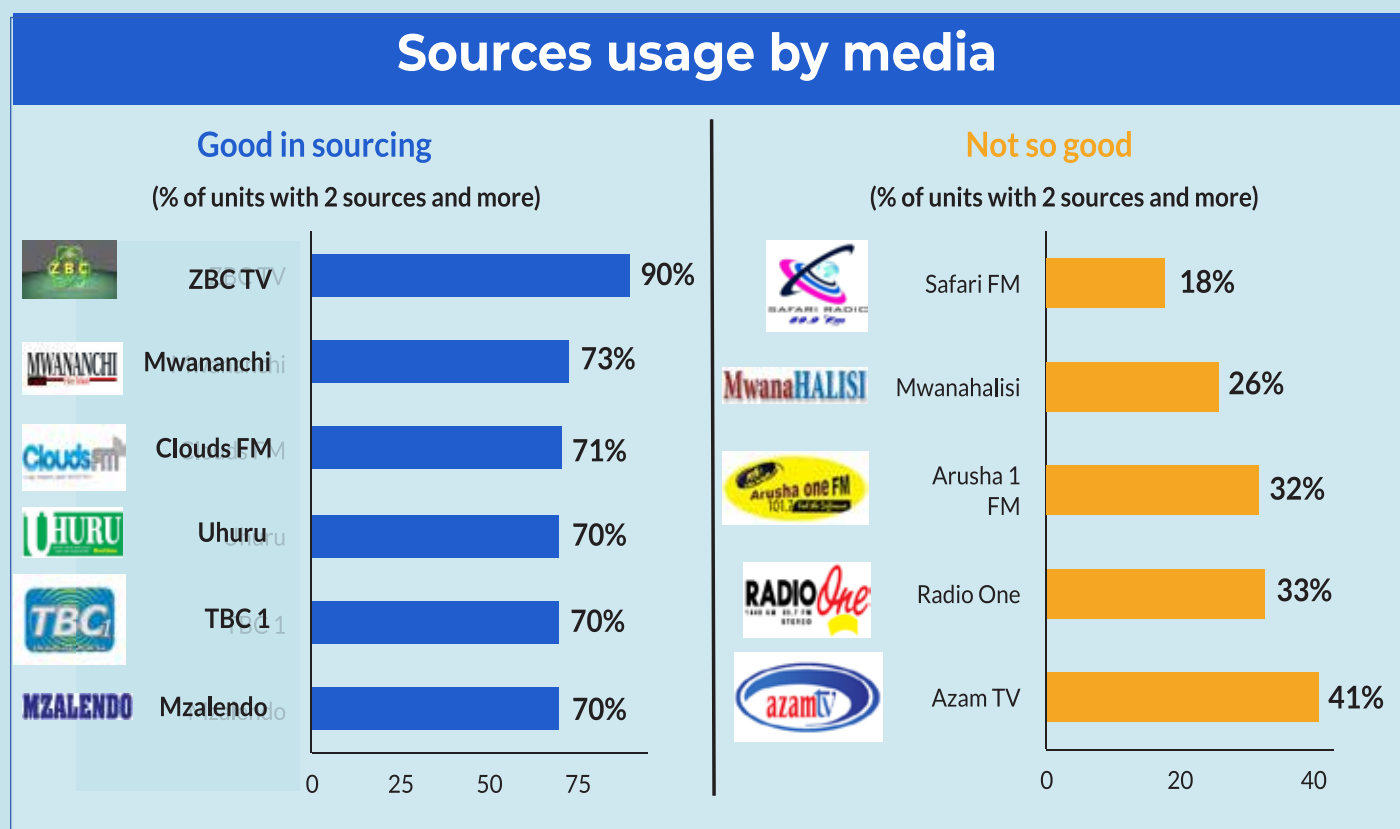
es cannot negate the fact that a considerable number of the stories were either "single-sources" or lacked even a "single source".

Notably, government and party-owned media performed better in this regard. They had more sources than the other media. For government-owned media, 60 percent of their stories had 2 or more sources, which were slightly lower than party-owned media that had 70 percent.

This is in comparison with all other media that had 51 percent for the same number of sources. However, this relatively positive performance for government and party media was moderated by using government sources much more than the other media when covering two and more sources.

In other words, they often use the same type of sources in terms of orientation, perspective and point-of-view. This means that the use of two or more sources in a story by government and party-owned media did not necessarily

translate into authoritativeness in reportage. However, some media houses used government sources much less when reporting with two and more sources. The following media had 33 percent of the stories with government sources or less in those cases: *Jamhuri*, *Mwananchi*, *Nipashe*, *Mwanahalisi Online*, *Times Observer*, *Radio One*, *Clouds FM*, *Lake FM*, *Dodoma FM*, *Highlands FM*, *Arusha 1 FM*, *Azam TV*, and *Star TV*. The analysis on sourcing also reveals substantial differences among the media houses. Infographic 4 shows the good and the not-so-good ones:.



## Putting ordinary citizens in a back seat

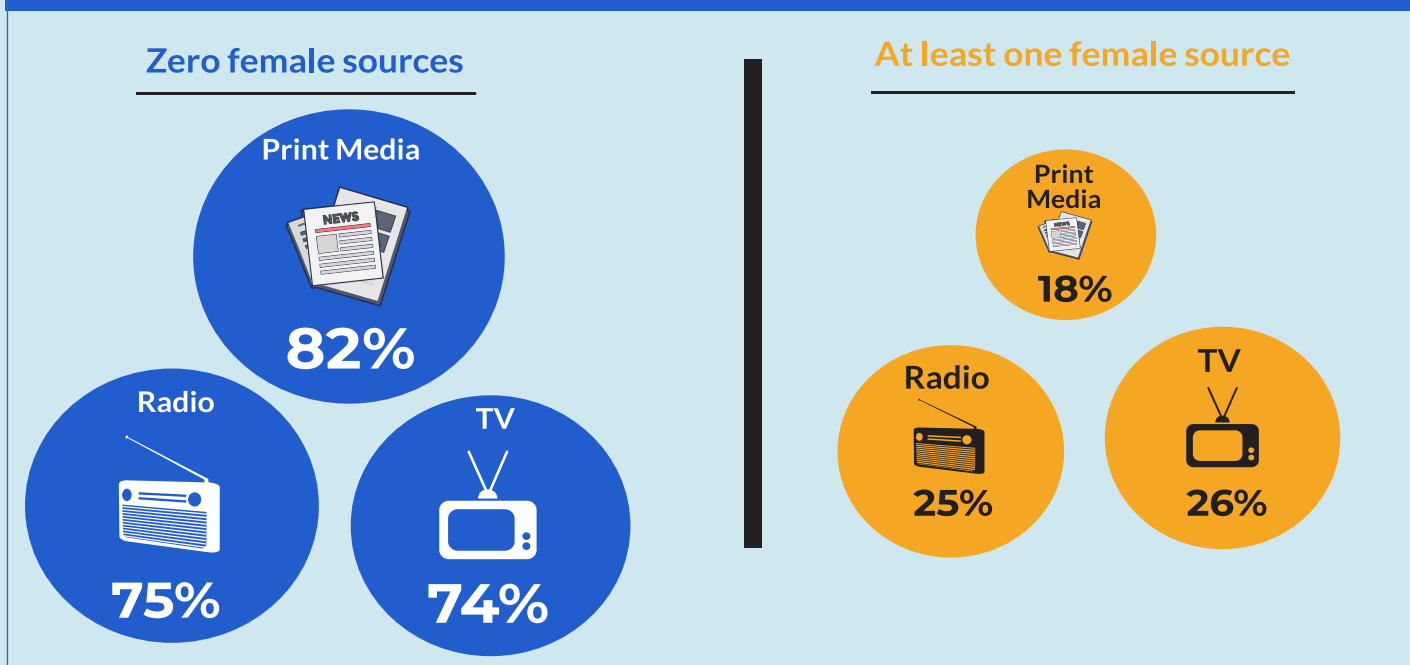
Sourcing from voices of ordinary citizens during elections is as critical as sourcing from candidates and political parties. Indeed, providing citizens with space and airtime empowers them to air their views and grievances pertaining to the elections and create a forum for engagement, which is essential in a democratic election. In essence, candidates must hear what the electorates want as much as voters need to hear what the candidates say.

Generally, ordinary citizens are neglected as sources. In this study, only 10 percent of the stories used ordinary citizens as sources. However, there are exceptional cases. Print media such as the *Mwananchi* and *Zanzibar Leo* incorporated ordinary citizens' voices in their stories at 12 percent each, *Times Observer* 13 percent, and *Uhuru* 16 percent. The differences amongst radio stations are substantial. Whereas *TBC Taifa* recorded 2 percent, and *ZBC Radio* 8 percent inclusion of ordinary citizens as sources, *Clouds FM* at 26 percent, *Dodoma FM* at 31 percent, *Lake FM* at 25 percent, and *Highlands FM* at 22 percent presented a more positive picture. For TV stations, the range was between 16 and 19 percent inclusion.

## Female sourcing

The overall performance in female sources is relatively low, with only 20 percent of the media stories analysed incorporating female sources. This level of co-opting of female sources is below the already low performance measured in the Yearbook 2019 report, whose result was 34 percent of female sources. Radio and TV perform a bit better with 8 percent more female sources than print. Infographic 5 shows the distribution of female sources by media types:

### Number of female sources per media category



Media houses that stand out with positive use of female sourcing against an average of 20 percent of at least one female source are *Clouds FM* at 45 percent of stories with at least one female source, *Highlands FM* at 44 percent, *Uhuru* at 38 percent, and *Dodoma FM* at 37 percent.

## 4.4 Findings in the assessment of candidates

### 4.4.1 Assessment of the Union presidential candidates—balance and imbalance

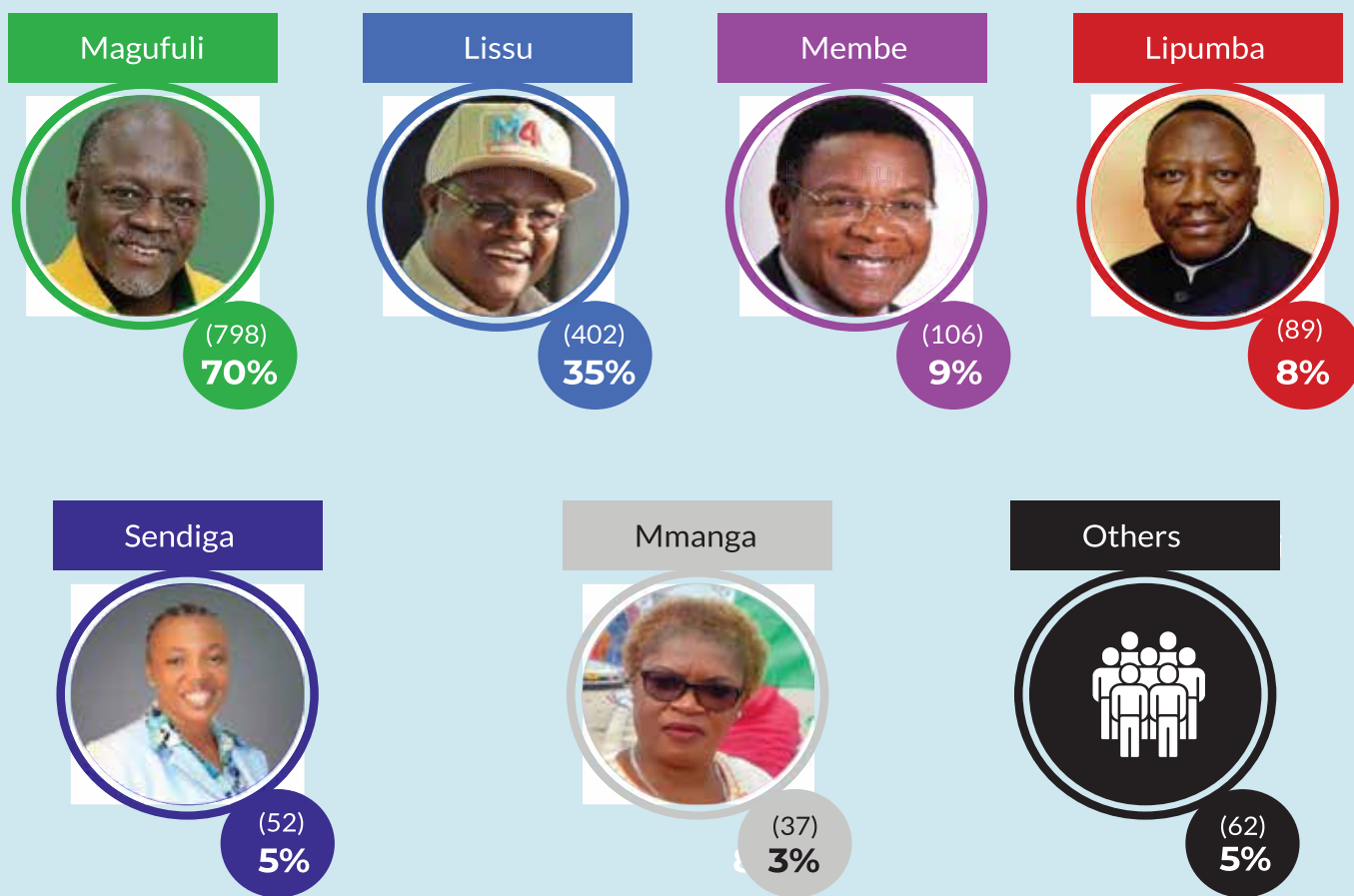
#### Coverage of candidates

The media covered the incumbent president and CCM flagship bearer John Pombe Magufuli with 70 percent of all the stories covering Union presidential elections, compared to Chadema's candidate Tundu Antipas Lissu with 35 percent coverage. These two

were followed by presidential candidates from ACT-Wazalendo Bernard Kamillius Membe at 9 percent and Prof. Ibrahim Haruna Lipumba from CUF at 8 percent. To understand the coverage of female candidates, the study investigated how the two female presidential candidates, Queen Cuthbert Sendiga (ADC) and Cecilia Augustino Mmanga (Demokrasia Makini), were covered.

The two candidates received a marginal share of the electoral reportage, with both getting negligible coverage, which is 5 percent for Sendiga and 3 percent for Mmanga. Infographic 6 shows the coverage of the Union presidential candidates by media category:

#### Coverage of Union Presidential candidates in all media





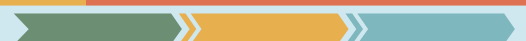
Looking at the same coverage under the three media categories—government media, CCM media, and other outlets—the performance paints a gloomy picture. There is a stark contrast in their coverage of the two major candidates. Government-owned media covered Magufuli at 81 percent compared to Lissu, who received 26 percent. The difference was even more resounding in the CCM media, covering Magufuli at 94 percent and Lissu at 19 percent.

This performance pattern was no different in the other media outlets allocating Magufuli 64 percent and, Lissu 42 percent of their stories on the presidential election and party matters. Though Lissu received much lower coverage in government and party media, he received a considerable share in the other media. Thus, comparing Magufuli and Lissu in the “all other media” category, there is much less imbalance with a performance of 64 percent and 42 percent than the considerable imbalance in the government at 81 percent and 26 percent and party-owned media at 94 percent and 19 percent for Magufuli and Lissu, respectively.

Furthermore, the government media from the Mainland, *Daily News* stands out with coverage of 88 percent for Magufuli compared to 33 percent for Lissu, and *Habari Leo* at 78 percent and 29 percent, respectively, for the two candidates. TBC Taifa, on the other hand, was not as biased, recording 65 percent coverage for Magufuli and 31 percent for Lissu. However, TBC1 is more significantly skewed towards Magufuli at 82 percent coverage than Lissu at 26 percent.

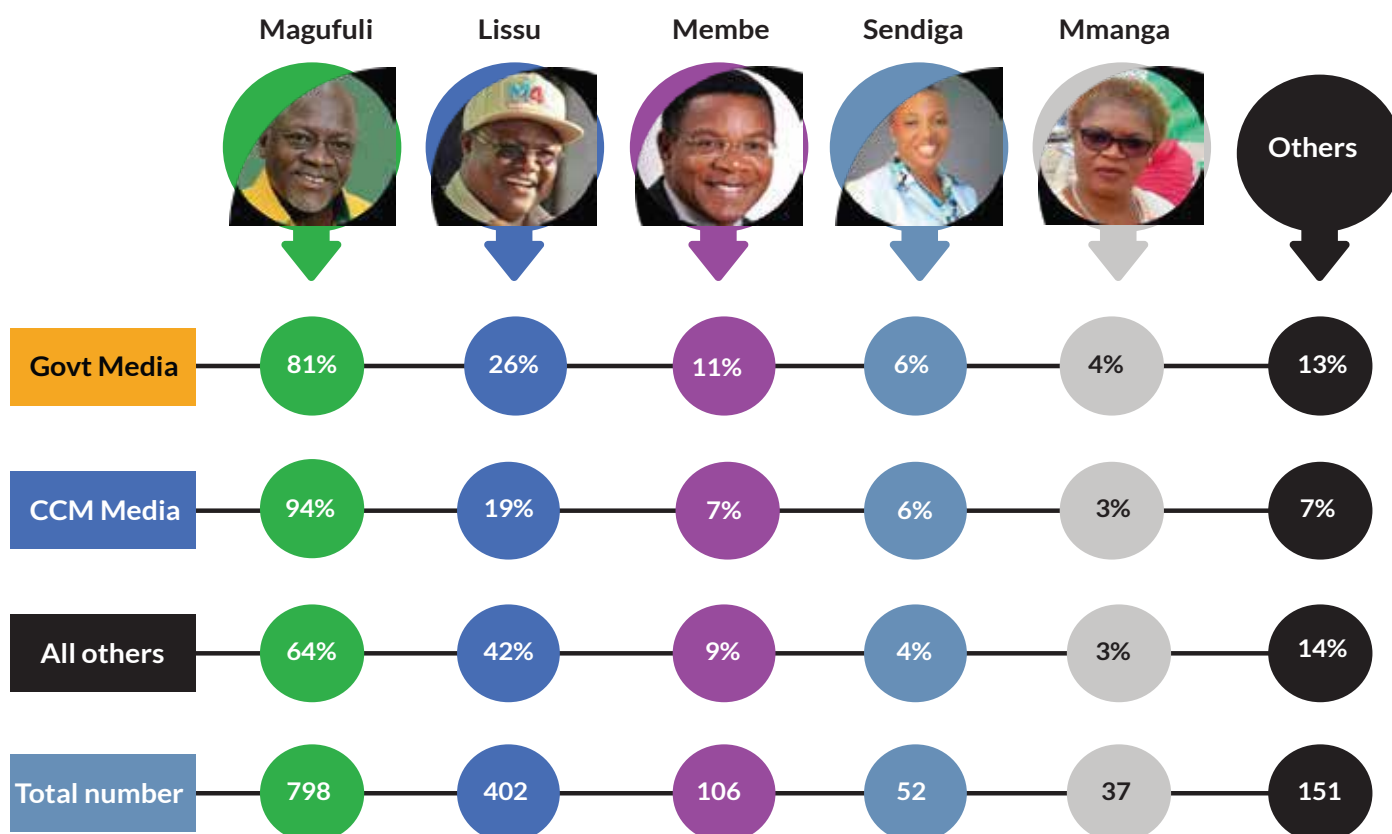
From the observation, all media categories covered Magufuli much more than his main competitor, Lissu. Comparing the coverage of Magufuli and Lissu under the “others” media category, we noted the following performance. *Mtanzania* covered Magufuli at 57 percent compared to Lissu at 25 percent. The pattern was similar in the *Times Observer* at 74 percent against 26 percent, *Radio Free Africa* at 72 percent against 17 percent, Radio

One at 56 percent against 28 percent, *Clouds FM* 56 percent against 13 percent. It was the same case with *Highlands FM* at 65 percent against 15 percent, *Arusha 1 FM* at 56 percent against 20 percent, and *Safari FM* at 73 percent against 13 percent for Magufuli and Lissu respectfully. Media outlets that accorded almost equal coverage for Magufuli and Lissu were *The Citizen* at 40 percent against 37 percent, *Jamhuri* at 37 percent against 37 percent, *Mwananchi* at 32 percent against 40 percent, *Raia Mwema* at 40 percent against 40 percent, and *Mwanahalisi Online* at 38 percent against 40 percent. Infographic 7 summarises the results:



## Coverage of candidates according to media category

(% of units covering candidate)



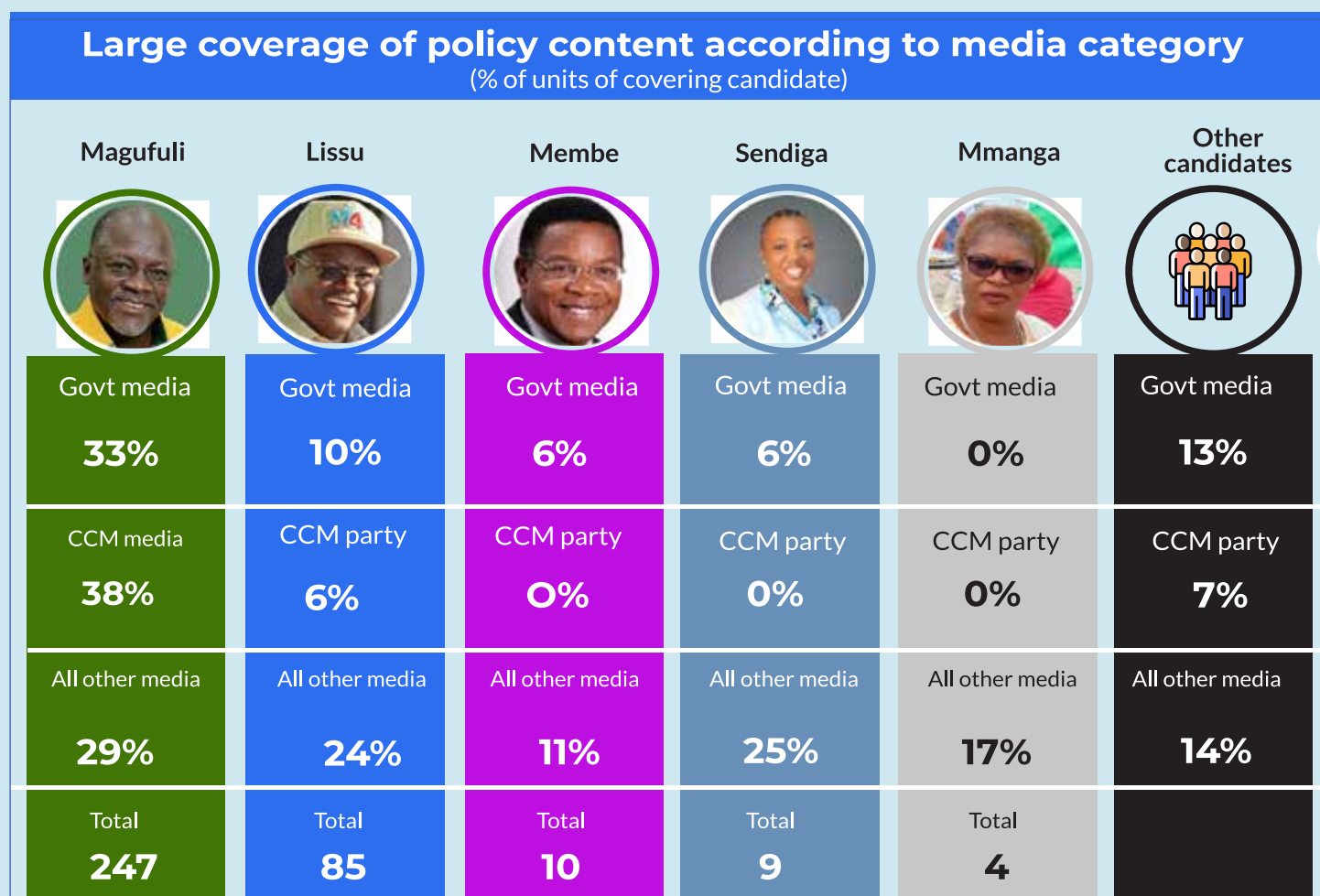
Additionally, Magufuli was covered significantly more on the front pages at 77 percent in the print media than in the inside pages at 65 percent. For Lissu, there was no significant difference in coverage between the front and inside pages at 40 percent and 34 percent. For Radio and TV, the coverage of Magufuli in the first two news items of a day is as also higher than in the following news, but the difference (72% vs 60%) is statistically insignificant. For Lissu, there is no difference at all. However, *TBC Taifa* and *TBC 1* show a strong preference for Magufuli. Magufuli is covered in 75% of *TBC Taifa*'s first two pieces in the newscast, and 88% of *TBC1*'s newscast whereas Lissu is presented in only 18% of *TBC Taifa*'s first two pieces and 12% of *TBC1* first pieces. .

## Coverage of policy content

Reporting on the proposed policies of presidential candidates is at the core of electoral reporting to inform citizens and guide their choices. The analysis assesses whether the content of policy and candidates' promises were covered largely (in at least two paragraphs of the news content). The incumbent president's policy content was mainly covered in many more stories than Lissu's policy at 31 percent and 21 percent, respectively. The other candidates and their policy content were covered minimally in 9 percent of the stories for Membe, 13 percent for Sendiga, and 4 percent for Mmanga. This coverage raises a question of fairness for the candidates. Infographic 8 captures the coverage of policy content:

## Policy content coverage by different media categories

The disproportionate coverage is also evident for the content of policies. Government and party media show a strong imbalance between Magufuli and Lissu at 33 and 10 percent, respectively, in the way they treated their policy issues. However, the other media are almost balanced at 29 and 24 percent. Within the print media, and comparing Magufuli and Lissu, *The Citizen*, *Mwananchi*, and *Nipashe* report on the policy content with a similar percentage whereas the *Daily News*, *The Guardian*, *Zanzibar Leo*, *Habari Leo*, and *Times Observer* are highly biased towards covering the incumbent. For Radio and TV, on the other hand, the number of stories covering policy content is relatively small and may not be statistically significant. In fact, traditionally, print media has policy analysis as one of its traditional fortes. This was equally the case in this study. See the summary of the results in Infographic 9:

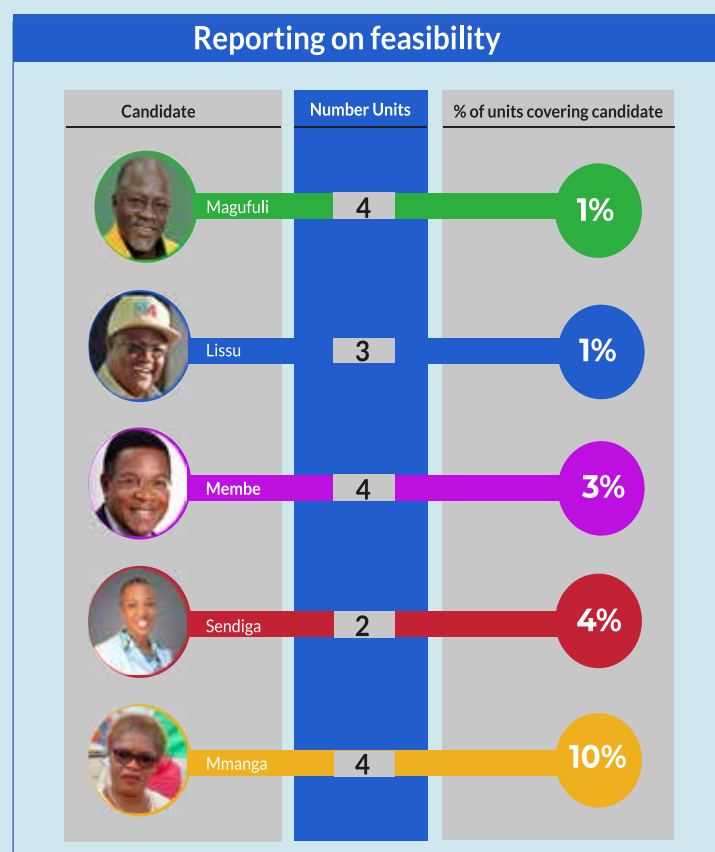


## Questioning the feasibility of programmes and promises

During the elections, the media ought to perform a watchdog role to ensure fairness in the electoral process. One way of accomplishing this role is to interrogate independently the feasibility of candidates' programmes and promises or by questioning the feasibility of the candidates' programmes, for example, in terms of funds available to bring those promises to fruition and execute programmes. Otherwise, empty and unrealistic promises can go unquestioned and end up luring voters.

The upstream view on feasibility was essentially non-existent. We have only 17 stories covering this aspect, which represents a paltry 1 percent of all the stories covering the Union presidential candidates. Nevertheless, a little surprise emerged on the female candidates, Sendiga and Mmanga, who had received very little coverage generally but had a much higher coverage in areas that questioned the feasibility of their programmes. However, it is evident from the findings that reporting on the feasibility of electoral promise is not unknown to any media.

However, government media covered Sendiga and Mmanga much more critically on the feasibility of their electoral promises than they did for their male counterparts. The party media, on the other hand, interrogated Lissu's electoral promises. The other media covered all the candidates, but as already mentioned, to an insignificant level. The feasibility of Magufuli's programmes is only reported by *The Citizen*, *Mwanahalisi Online*, *Mtanzania*, and *CG FM*, whereas Lissu is reported only by *Mwananchi* and *Uhuru*. Infographic 10 presents the results:



## Reference to party manifestos

References to party manifestos were made in a considerable number of stories that covered the candidates. Overall, 25 percent of the stories made a substantive reference to the party manifesto in relation to one or more candidates, and 14 percent at least a little reference. However, the coverage differs between candidates and media, as captured in Infographic 11:

### Reference to party manifesto according to media types

MEDIA CATEGORY	MAGUFULI	LISSU	MEMBE	SENDIGA	MMANGA
Government Media	110	14	1	4	10
	45% <sup>2</sup>	18%	3%	24%	48%
CCM Party Media	45	1	0	0	1
	54%	6%	0%	0%	25%
All Other Media	220	104	9	12	3
	47%	33%	12%	35%	14%
Total	375	119	10	16	14
	47%	29%	9%	29%	30%

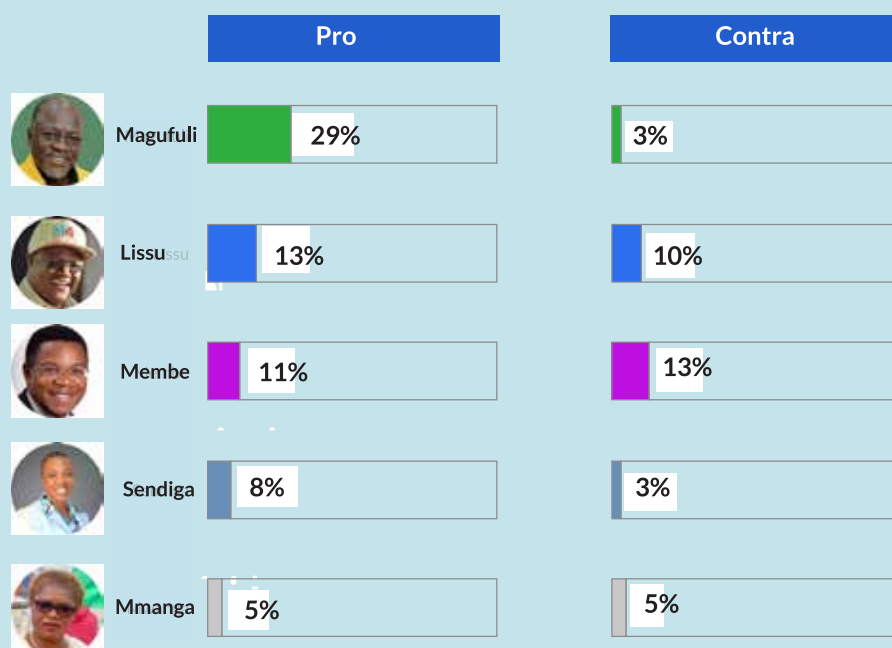
Generally, all other media are pretty balanced in referring to party manifestos of the two main competitors at 47 for Magufuli and 33 for Lissu. However, government media is skewed towards the incumbent at 45 percent and 18 percent for Lissu. The CCM party media is largely imbalanced in covering the party manifestos according to the incumbent 54 percent and Lissu 6 percent. Individual media houses are pretty balanced in covering party manifestos for both Magufuli and Lissu. These are *The Citizen*, *Jamhuri*, *Mwananchi*, *Nipashe*, *Mtanzania*, *Radio Free Africa*, *Radio One*, *Clouds FM*, and *Azam TV*.

## Viewpoints in stories

Viewpoints are essential in media coverage as they accentuate explicit opinions in favour of or against a candidate. Media coverage is balanced or not depending on the treatment of positive and negative viewpoints. The analysis shows a substantial imbalance in favour of the ruling party's presidential candidate. Overall, Magufuli had the most articles with positive viewpoints at 29 percent (168 stories) compared to Lissu at 17 percent (63 stories). By the same token, Magufuli had the lowest share of negative viewpoints at 3 percent compared to Lissu with 18 percent and Membe with 13 percent.

Government and CCM party media only provided positive viewpoints for Magufuli as a candidate. Equally, other media outlets did not publish viewpoints against Magufuli. On Lissu, government media were almost balanced whereas party affiliated media were not. The other media show a tendency towards pro-viewpoints regarding Lissu. When it comes to Membe, they are balanced. With Sendiga and Mmanga, there were very few articles on them. Infographic 12 breaks the figures down for every candidate:

### Viewpoints on candidates



### Personality vs policy of candidates (substance)

This study also investigated what the media reported on the candidates' programmes (policies) and personalities. Globally, there is a debate on the candidates' personality playing an overarching role in election reporting, thus vastly overshadowing debates on policy and content of substance.

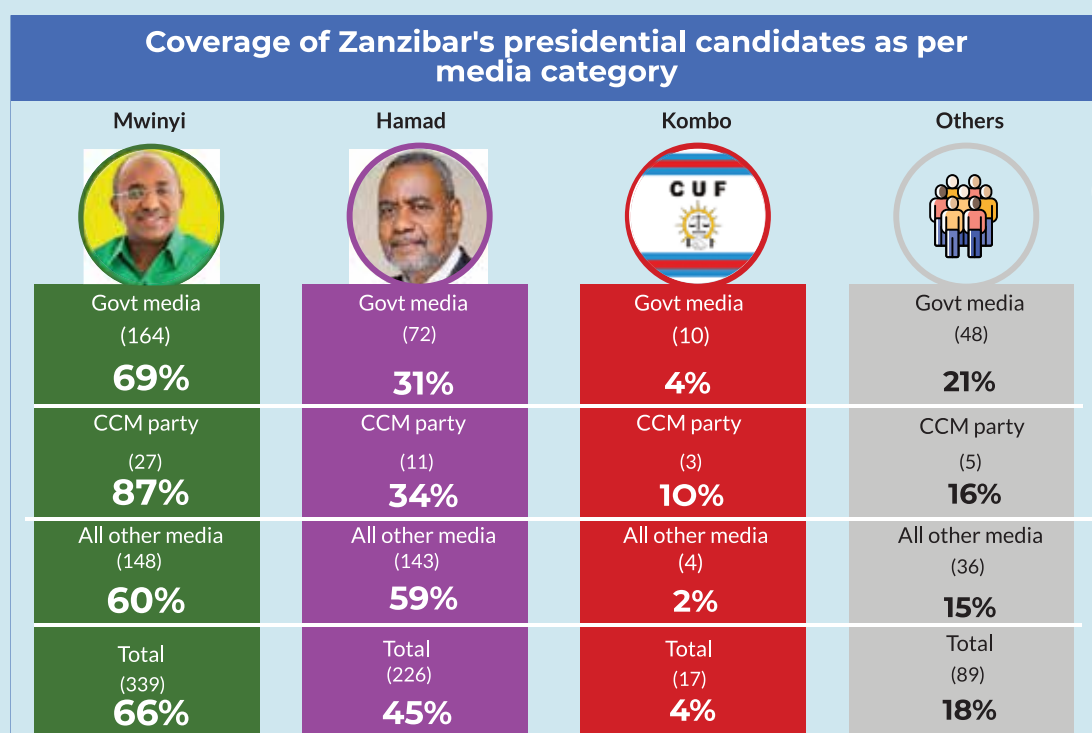
The results show that the candidates' personalities played a minor role in the reportage of the 2020 General Elections. In all the stories that covered the Union presidential candidates, the candidates' personality was visible only in 5 percent of the cases. Apparently, the personality factor was much more evident in the 2015 presidential election than in the 2020 polls. The possible explanation for this difference is that in the run-up to the electoral campaign in August 2020, calls from the various quarters urged candidates to stick to their policies. The calls came from the Tanzania Police Force (TPF), religious leaders, and national election management bodies. Whether the marginal prevalence of personality in the election reporting was directly associated with these calls needs further exploration.

#### 4.4.2 Zanzibar presidential elections: Coverage of two candidates

Zanzibar's presidential elections were covered in 490 stories (20 percent of all the stories reviewed). The media from the Mainland covered Zanzibar's presidential elections much less than the media from the archipelago, for example, *Zanzibar Leo*, *ZBC Radio*, *ZBC TV*, and the local radio stations *Micheweni*, *Zenji FM*, and *Chuchu FM*.

The report assessed the coverage of three presidential candidates—Hussein Ali Mwinyi (CCM), Maalim Seif Sharif Hamad from (ACT-Wazalendo), and Mussa Haji Kombo (CUF). Only Mwinyi and Hamad were covered much more significantly—that is appearing in 66 and 45 percent of all the articles with candidates, respectively—than others. Other candidates such as Kombo received negligible coverage. Specifically, Kombo appears in only 4 percent of the articles. Juma Ali Khatib from ADA TADEA similarly accounted for 4 percent, Hamad Rashid Mohamed from ADC also at 4 percent, Said Soud Said 3 percent, and Ameir Hassan Ameir with just 2 percent. The coverage for remaining candidates from Makini, CHAUMA, Chadema, or UPDP was almost non-existent.

Government and party media preferred the CCM candidate (Mwinyi) whereas all other media presented the primary opposition candidate in a balanced coverage at 60 and 59 percent, respectively. Infographic 13 presents the results:





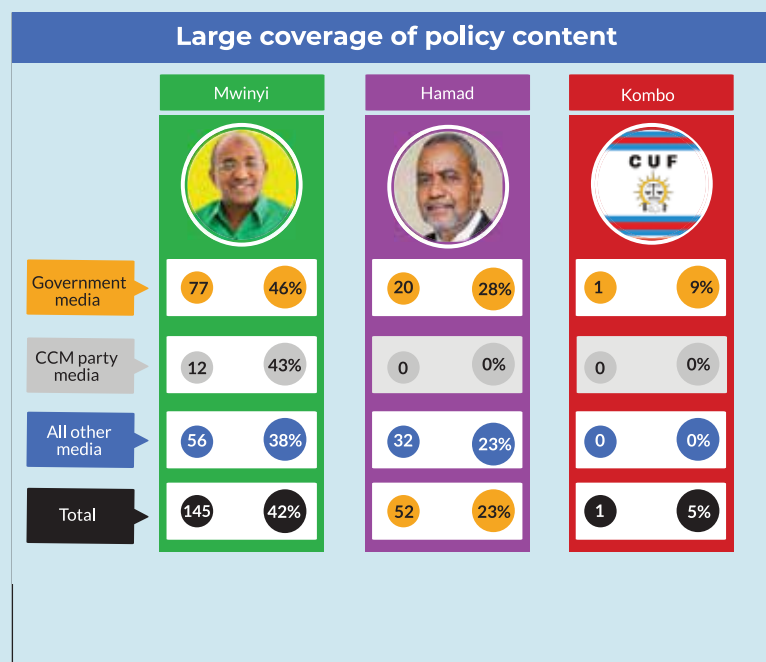
Looking at individual media outlets, the Zanzibar government media shows an extreme imbalance. ZBC Radio gave Mwinyi 94 percent coverage, with *Zanzibar Leo* covering Mwinyi with 68 percent of its articles compared to Hamad, who got 22 percent coverage. The same trend was evident for ZBC TV, which gave the candidates 70 vs 25 percent coverage, respectively. On the other hand, the Mainland government newspapers exhibited a slightly different pattern with, for example, *Habari Leo* covering Mwinyi at 63 percent and Hamad 51 percent, respectively. The pattern was similar in the *Daily News* (62 percent and 43 percent), TBC Taifa (58 percent and 25 percent). TBC1 had only seven (7) stories units on those two candidates. Apparently, even government print media (*Daily News*, *Habari Leo*) covered the candidates from the opposition for the Isles presidential race in an almost balanced way, in sharp contrast with their coverage of the Union presidential candidates (see chapter on Union Presidential coverage).

Regarding story placement, Mwinyi more significantly featured on the front pages than in the inside pages at 74 against 54 percent, respectively. For Hamad, there was no difference between the front and inside page coverage at 47 percent for both sections. In broadcast media, no significant differences emerged for Mwinyi between the first two news items and following (69% vs 52%) or for Hamad (32% vs 29%).

## Coverage of content policy

The coverage of the policy content for Zanzibar's presidential candidates reveals a bias towards the CCM presidential candidate (Mwinyi). The policy content of the CCM candidate (Mwinyi) was covered more at 46 percent of all the stories than ACT-Wazalendo (Hamad) at 28 percent. These two emerged to be the major rivals in the Isles polls. The coverage of policy content for the CUF presidential candidate (Kombo) was conspicuously absent. Of interest and what is likely

to have a bearing on this pattern of coverage is that CUF, which had hitherto been the main CCM rival in the archipelago, had lost much of its lustre following the decamping of many of its party stalwarts, including Hamad, to ACT-Wazalendo following a seeming irreconcilable rift in CUF. The government media and the other media similarly covered more Mwinyi's policy content than they did for the rivals. Party media, on the other hand, neglected the policy of ACT-Wazalendo altogether. Infographic 14 presents the results:



In general, the broadcast media covered the candidates' policies in a few stories. Equally, print media, more than electronic, largely covered the subject of party policy. Mwananchi, for example, covered both candidates' policies equally at 42 percent for Mwinyi and 42 percent for Hamad. The government media, on the other hand, were lopsided towards the ruling party: *Zanzibar Leo* (45% vs 33%), *Daily News* (52% vs 33%), *Habari Leo* (50% vs 10%), ZBC Radio (50% vs 0%), and ZBC TV (36% vs 60%), but with a minimal number of stories.

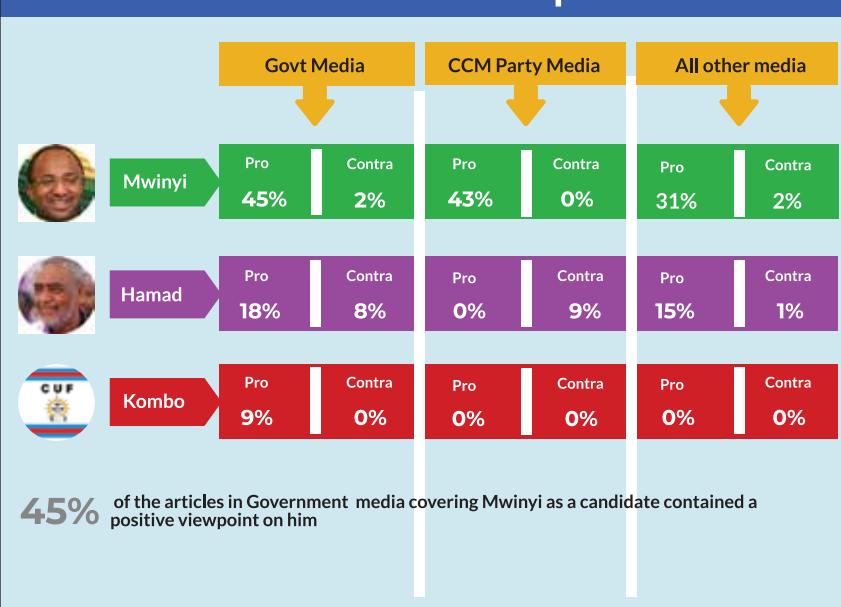
## Personality versus policy

As the Union presidential elections illustrate, the candidates' personalities hardly featured in Zanzibar's presidential polls. There are just 12 stories (5%) in which the personality of Mwinyi is part of the news story and only 5 articles (3%) on Hamad. Kombo was once again ignored for this aspect.

## Viewpoints on candidates

Mwinyi's coverage attracted many positive viewpoints at 38 percent of all the stories covering him as a candidate, far more than Hamad's, who received 15 percent of supportive viewpoints. Negative viewpoints are hardly uttered for candidates, each recording partly 3 percent and 4 percent mentions, respectively. As already evident in the aforementioned categories, government media favoured Mwinyi in the Zanzibar presidential elections and all other media. Infographic 15 paints a composite picture of the electoral scenario in this respect:

### Pro and contra viewpoints



## 4.4.3 Assessment of Bunge (Parliamentary) candidates and parties

Overall, 612 units in election reporting covered the Bunge (Parliamentary) election, including reporting on Bunge candidates. Candidates mostly mentioned were Zitto Kabwe (ACT-Wazalendo, with 32 mentions), followed by Freeman Mbowe (Chadema 28), Halima Mdee (Chadema with 26), Tulia Ackson (CCM with 25), and Mrisho Gambo (CCM, 14).

## Diversity of candidates

Out of the 612 stories that covered the Bunge polls, 391 of them (64%) had only one candidate, and 77 (13%) stories carried candidates from only one political party whereas 144 (24%) stories covered candidates from different political parties, which ordinarily would better inform citizens on candidates and, therefore, make a more informed choice than when a single candidate is presented in a story. It is only when contradictory and opposing viewpoints from competing candidates are presented that citizens are better informed.

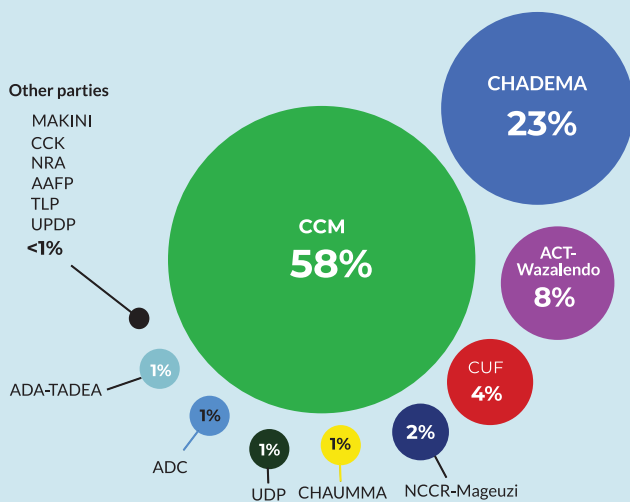
For Radio, 73 percent of the stories covered one candidate compared to 62 percent of print media. Only 24 percent of the print stories and 21 percent of Radio covered candidates from different parties (in a single story). Overall, it was generally difficult for citizens to compare the candidates instantly.

Government media rarely covered candidates from different parties (12% of the stories). The other media performed better on this aspect, with 28 percent of the stories covering candidates across political parties. Looking at individual media houses and considering those with at least 10 stories covering the

Bunge, the following outlets had many units covering Bunge candidates from different political parties. The Citizen had 47 percent, Nipashe 39 percent and Mwanahalisi 35 percent.

Overall, 976 parliamentary candidates were mentioned in the media pieces analysed. Out of these candidates, 58 percent were from CCM and 23 percent from Chadema, followed by ACT-Wazalendo (8%), CUF (4%), and NCCR-Mageuzi (2%). The coverage of the rest of the candidates was negligible, as they accounted for 1% or less. Infographic 16 summarises the distribution of parliamentary candidates by political parties:

Party affiliation of candidates for Bunge



Generally, government media covered CCM candidates<sup>25</sup> at 67 percent, Chadema candidates at 16 percent, and ACT-Wazalendo at 6 percent. Coverage by the other media in this context was more balanced at 51 percent for CCM, 27 percent for Chadema and 9 percent for the ACT.

Looking at individual media houses, most outlets covered CCM candidates much more than they did those from the opposition Chade-

ma party. The exceptions, in this case, were Mwananchi and Mwanahalisi Online, who treated both party candidates almost equally. Mwananchi covered candidates from all the parties in a balanced way, including smaller parties.

## Personality

As in the coverage of presidential elections, the personality of Bunge candidates did not play a significant role. It occurred in just 1 percent of the stories on Bunge candidates. In fact, the coverage of candidates' personalities hardly featured in the entire sample of election reportage for Bunge. The coverage was mainly about policy.

### 4.4.4 Zanzibar House of Representatives (ZHoR) election

The election for ZHoR played a marginal role in election reporting, with only 75 of all stories reporting on the ZHoR candidates. Candidates mostly mentioned were Ismail Juma Ladu with 8 mentions, Haji Omar Kheir 5, and Mtumwa Peya, Rukia Omary Ramadhan Mapuri, and Nassor Ahman Mazurii with 4 mentions each.

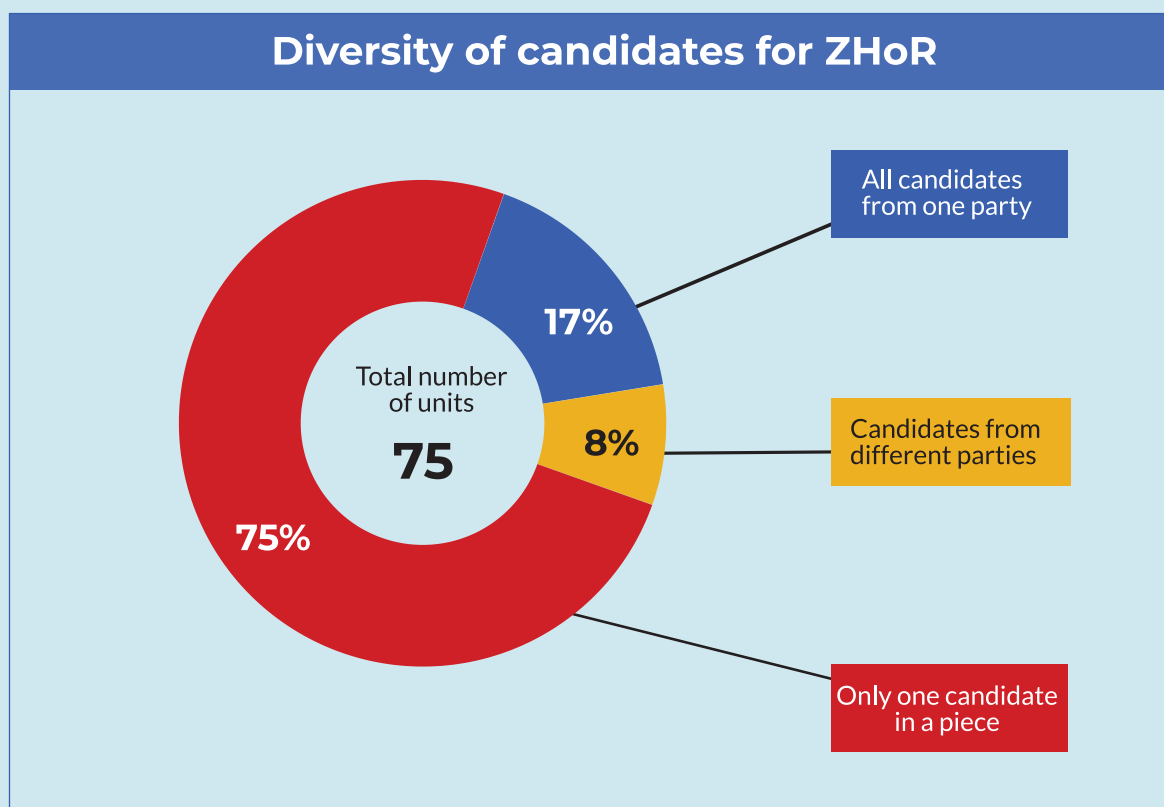
Zanzibar Leo is the only media that covered ZHoR elections in 51 stories. On the other hand, ZBC Radio had only five (5) pieces on ZHoR (and only 2=40% report on at least one candidate). ZBC TV had eight (8) units (with 88% at least one candidate), *Micheweni FM* also had five (5) pieces (4 = 80% with candidates), *Chuchu FM* has three (3),

<sup>25</sup> The analysis covered up to three Bunge candidates and their parties. The percentages in the tables reflect the extent of all the candidates, independent from whether they were mentioned as a first, second, or third candidate.

and *Zenji FM* has two (2). The Tanzania Mainland media carried minimal numbers of units covering ZHoR. As such, the percentages were not very insightful.

## Diversity of candidates

The coverage of candidates took a ping-pong style where one candidate would be presented in a story without bringing in the perspective of the opponent or competitor. Only in a few incidents, does a story cover candidates of different political parties. However, it was common for many candidates from the same political party to be covered in a single story and under the same theme. For example, only in six (6) cases were the ZHoR candidates from different political parties presented in a single story. In over 75 percent of the cases, the story would carry one single candidate. The ping-pong style of reporting made it difficult for the electorate to compare candidates in a single reportage. In fact, presenting different candidates occurred only in print. Infographic 17 details the further distribution:

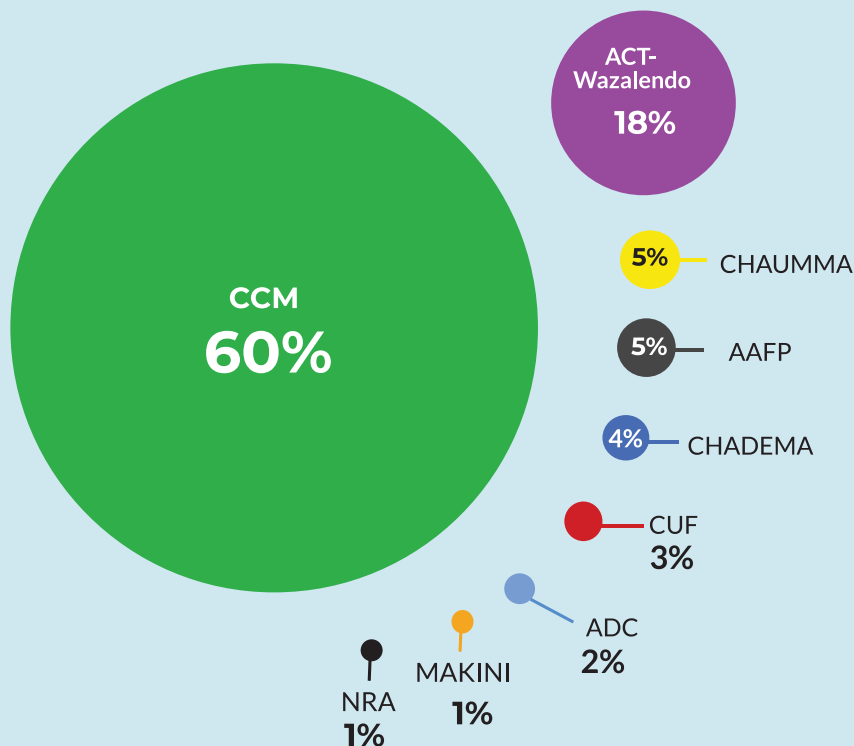


N = 75, 2346 units excluded, as not covering ZHoR or not presenting candidates.

## Party affiliation of candidates and coverage

Of the 111 candidates mentioned, 60 percent were from CCM, 18 percent from ACT-Wazalendo, 5 percent from CHAUMMA and AAFP, Chadema accounting for 4 percent, and CUF with only 3 percent. This electoral representation is like for Bunge election coverage, with only Chadema—the main opposition party on the Mainland—playing a minor role in Zanzibar. Infographic 18 indicates candidates' party affiliation in the ZHoR election

### Party affiliation of ZHoR candidates



Government media covered ZHoR candidates from the ruling party more than other media at 68 compared and 41 percent, respectively. However, ACT-Wazalendo was slightly more covered by government media compared to the rest of the opposition parties.

### Gender of candidates

In the coverage of the ZHoR election, 78 percent of the units mentioned male candidates, and 22 percent female candidates.

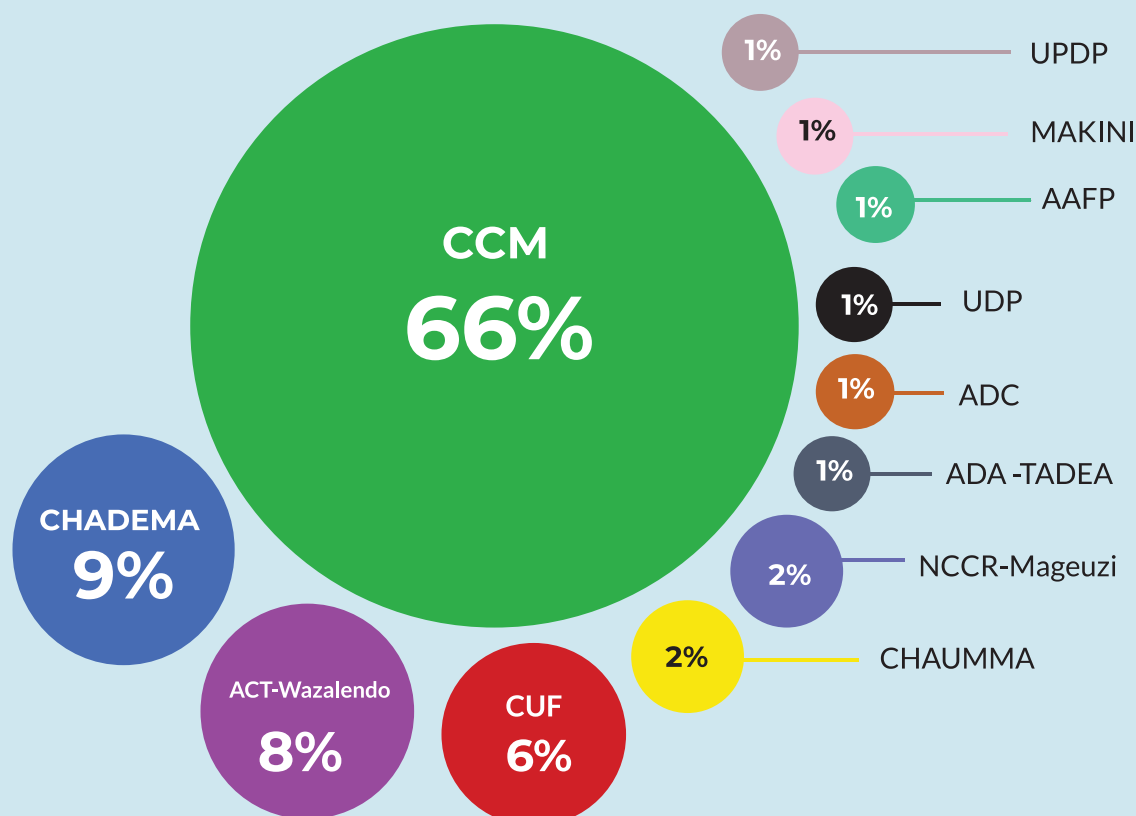
### Personality vs policy

The personality of candidates was not covered at all in the ZHoR elections. This means that both the candidates and journalists concentrated on policy issues than the candidates' personalities.

### 4.4.5 Assessment of councillorship candidates

Councillorship elections issues, including candidates, were covered in just 191 stories. CCM was mentioned in 126 stories (66 percent), Chadema in 18 stories (9 percent), and ACT-Wazalendo in 16 stories (8 percent). Like in the presidential and parliamentary elections discussed above, there was a disproportionate amount of coverage of the ruling party CCM compared to the opposition. Infographic 19 shows the coverage of councillorship elections:

## Coverage of councillorship election



### 4.5 Topical coverage

The study assessed two broad topics: Election-related issues and the main subjects around which campaigns revolved. The election topics surrounded coverage of the three election cycles (pre-election, election, and post-election). On the other hand, the main subjects were topical issues that candidates mentioned during the campaigns because they were perceived as essential to the voters. These issues included water and sanitation, health, environment, climate change, education, a new constitution, science, technology, innovation, labour, unemployment, infrastructure, telecommunication, among others.

#### 4.5.1 Election topics

The election campaign and vote canvassing are clearly the most prominent election topic, attracting 52 percent of the mentions in the electoral coverage. Announcing election results, laws and regulations governing the electoral processes, the voting process itself, coverage of objections and complaints, and voter education play an essential role (with 5 percent and 4 percent of mentions for each of the above topics) illustrating the relevance of these complaints during elections. Relatively low are election observation and election financing.



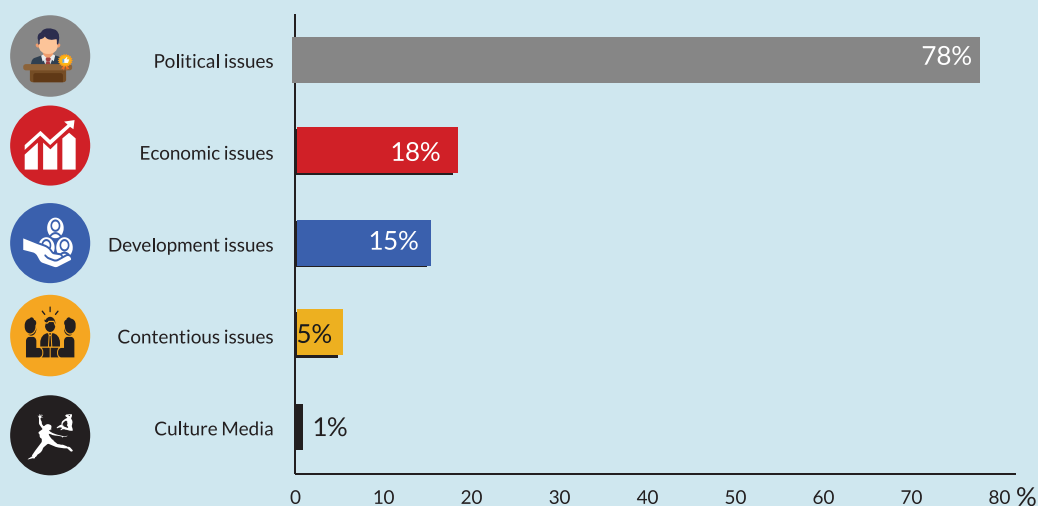
### 4.5.2 Issue topics

Within election reporting, the topic that attracted the highest coverage is the election itself. However, many articles within election reporting treated additional issues/topics, most probably because candidates spoke about them as relevant to most voters. These topics have been classified into five groups (see Annex for Scheme). In 78 percent of the articles (units), political issues were covered, economic issues 18 percent and development issues 15 percent. In other words, these issues emerged as the three most essential topics during the 2020 electoral coverage. Infographic 20 summarises the coverage of the main topics:

### 4.6 Media coverage of the election cycle

Elections are organised in three phases—pre-election, election, and post-election. The study looked at the amount of coverage of each election topic in relation to a corresponding phase. A total of 79% of all the media pieces assessed were on the election phase, followed by the pre-election phase (17%), and post-election phase (4%). Table 23 summarises the coverage of election phases (Also see Annex 1):

#### Coverage of topics



There are hardly any differences between government media and all other media. Nevertheless, party media reported more on economic issues than other types of media outlets. Some media houses focus on political issues, others steer away from politics and report more on development issues and economics, and another group happens to be more balanced and covers all the topics (including the contentious ones).

## 5.0 WHY ARE THE RESULTS THE WAY THEY ARE: EDITORS' VIEWPOINTS

Apart from the quantitative analysis, the Yearbook provides qualitative insights into the quantitative assessment. The insights are derived from an engagement with editors whose viewpoints further shed light on the meaning behind the quantitative data. This section, therefore, answers this pertinent question: "What explains the quality of media coverage of the 2020 general elections from editors' point-of-view?" Overall, we interviewed 12 editors from media outlets with a national presence. The questions they answered fall into two groups: i) The media environment during the campaign and (ii) the quality of media election coverage.

One of the questions the respondents answered was: "Looking back at the 2020 General Elections, what would you have changed in terms of coverage?" Editors unanimously stated, on different occasions, that they could have changed the way they reported on the elections as the coverage had professional gaps and restraints mainly through self-censorship. Elaborating, one senior editor said: "The environment [political] was [rather] unfriendly, which forced us to write public relations stories, not quality reporting. There were big stories we could have done during the campaign period and on voting day, but we were afraid to take this bold step."

Another respondent elaborated: "Freedom of expression was locked into a wardrobe. Media houses and editors published cosmetic stories as they wanted to save their media from being penalised. Information was heavily controlled, and editors foresaw this trend before the elections. Editors took a careful position not to broadcast or write every truth. Self-censorship was at its peak during the elections."

This approach of 'not talking and writing every truth,' of 'cosmetic reporting' of 'public relations

exercise' and 'self-censorship' was a conscious survival decision for the media fraternity amidst uncertainties regarding the outcomes for their truthful, objective, impartial reporting if they dared. All the editors interviewed acknowledged that the election reporting had professional flaws, with some acknowledging that the coverage of the polls could have had a different outcome had the environment been more media-friendly.

This revelation notwithstanding, such a deliberate media controlled or 'muted' environment limited the media quality reportage of the elections. In consequence, the citizens were unable to receive a diversity of views during the electoral process as part of their democratic right. Furthermore, it compromised the critical roles of the media—that of media being a campaign platform, a forum for debate and dialogue, and a watchdog estate.

In essence, the political environment affected media houses and journalists and their dependable sources of election-related information. Some sources, some editors claimed, were unwilling to provide their professional insights into elections issues:

"One of the challenges we faced [as journalists] during the elections was accessing people who would have provided us with analyses, an understanding of critical issues, and opposing viewpoints. You cannot imagine [mentioned a source name] being quiet throughout the election, despite our continually calling and texting [the person]. It was abnormal. The political environment put media in a compromising position."

This statement from one of the editors partly explains the lack of analytical interrogation and critical reportage of the performance of candidates, particularly those from the ruling party.

This challenge was not peculiar to the 2020 elections coverage. It had also emerged in the previous Yearbook reports. Media houses, for example, ended up dropping big stories because they could not get the right people to offer expert opinions, mainly when the story was critical of the government. This lack of expert views weakened the stories and made them too risky to publish under the prevailing political climate. Eventually, self-censorship had extended to the journalists' sources, which further eroded the quality and authoritativeness of their electoral reportage.

Media regulators were also mentioned as key players in controlling the election narratives. Many editors reported that they would occasionally be called and 'reminded of the laws' even when they thought they had reported within the law: "In one of the incidents, we were called and told that we were taking sides. However, the coverage of the candidate they were trying to defend was slightly higher than other candidates in our coverage. They [regulators] were very strict with us."

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Offering their explanation on the dominance of CCM and its candidates in media coverage, three editors reported that CCM, unlike other political parties and their presidential candidates, had a media budget and could afford a pool of journalists moving around with their candidates, especially the presidential candidate.

This, in their view, partly boosted CCM's share of media coverage. However, it is significant to note that the dominance of CCM's parliamentary candidates in media coverage was also contributed by the party presidential candidate who was not only campaigning for them but would also give them a chance to canvass for votes in his presidential campaign rallies.

All the editors interviewed, except one, admitted that their journalists were being embedded in the campaigns of the CCM presidential candidates. CCM was covering the allowances of these journalists and their transport costs. Another editor added:

"This culture of 'embedded journalism' during election campaigns is not uncommon; it has been a practice since the 1995 General Elections. This culture is mainly being 'cultivated' by media houses' inability to fund their journalists to report on the elections independently."

During interviews, it was evident that several media houses did not have a specific budget for covering the elections. They largely depended on political parties and candidates to meet the expenses which otherwise should have been covered by a media house. Consequently, many journalists—the political environment notwithstanding—became vulnerable as media houses lacked the financial resources to hedge their journalists from such compromise and protect their editorial independence.

Overall, the election reporting was largely event-driven as a significant part of the reportage was drawn from the campaign. Explicitly, the media-driven or proactive media reportage was marginal. Relying on campaign events for stories is not entirely a bad thing; however, failure to transcend such reportage beyond calendar events denies the media and journalists an opportunity to set the agenda and assess political parties and their candidates to inform voters well enough to vote wisely. In other words, the reportage of the 2020 General Elections was a lost opportunity for the media to play its role—which has made it earn its name as the Fourth Estate—effectively.

From a critical perspective, the lack of media-owned and initiated stories and analytical reporting cannot entirely be attributable to the political climate. Some of the shortfalls were internal—hence requiring introspection among media houses. The editors interviewed mentioned two reasons that contributed to these shortfalls: Laziness and lack of competent journalists. One editor reported that event-based reporting had

become a regular practice in today's newsrooms, a practice they associate with laziness. The 'laziness' narrative also emerged among editors in the 2019 Yearbook report as a contributory factor to poor reporting quality in the country.

Lack of competent journalists also featured as a reason behind lack of analytical reporting and questioning of the feasibility of candidates' promises etc. "There are few journalists who have the competency to report analytically and raise critical questions about the feasibility of election promises that candidates make. We are largely dependent on external analysts, some of whom have multiple interests," a senior editor claimed. Although lack of capacity for analytical reporting might pose a challenge, it cannot essentially be the sole factor behind a severe lack of analytical reporting and questioning of the feasibility of candidates' election promises evidenced in this study.

## Women candidates: Why less coverage?

The coverage of female candidates was poor. Although this seems to be linked to their overall limited involvement in the elections relative to their male counterparts—two (2), (13%) of presidential candidates, 293 (23%) of parliamentary candidates, and 668 (7.24%) of councillorship candidates—there were other explanations given to this quantity and pattern of coverage. Interviews with editors elicited the following explanations:

- Some editors consider female candidates as being less significant sources of news compared to their male counterparts.
- Most female candidates do not know how to deal with the media (the politics of media during elections). They are not well versed in media relations techniques.
- Their campaign timetables were not predictable, making it difficult for journalists to schedule interviews and cover their events/campaigns, and

- Lack of resources to engage the media, particularly so for female candidates from the opposition parties.

Additionally, the 2015 National elections gender assessment report<sup>26</sup> cites the following as contributory factors to poor coverage of women: Male-dominated newsrooms; financial incentives for media houses to feature powerful candidates who are principally male; shortage of media-savvy women who can effectively engage the media and journalists to cover their candidacy; and few female journalists covering elections.

These explanations notwithstanding, one senior male editor hinted that media houses harboured no deliberate intention of side-lining female candidates, with a female senior editor confessing her regrets that she could have done better to cover women candidates.

## The discipline of the microphone

Although this study did not assess the utterances (good and bad) of the candidates in live programmes in broadcast media, editors from broadcast media raised this matter. These editors said it was hard to predict what some opposition candidates would say during live broadcasts as some candidates uttered words that were either perceived by the authority as too negative or generally unacceptable in the public domain.

As a result, one editor from a private media outlet explained that some of the broadcast media refused to air live campaigns of some opposition parties even when these parties were ready to pay for such coverage. In fact, TBC claimed the 'discipline of the microphone' was a justification for its sporadic interference with the live broadcast of the Chadema inaugural campaign.

<sup>26</sup> International Republican Institute (2016). The Tanzania national elections gender assessment of 2015, [https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/tanzania\\_gender\\_report.pdf](https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/tanzania_gender_report.pdf), retrieved 12/10/2021.



## 6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study assessed the quality of media coverage of the 2020 General Elections in Tanzania. Using content analysis and specific quality indicators on elections reporting from journalism theory, practice, and research, the study found a disproportionate coverage between CCM and opposition parties in government-owned media outlets. CCM and its candidates were given more amount of coverage compared to opposition parties and their candidates.

The results indicate that media coverage of the feasibility of candidates' promises during elections was almost non-existent, with only 1 percent of the media content covering this component. Given the crucial media's role during the elections, this substantial professional shortcoming rings alarming bells, as the media have an obligation to question premises and promises made by the candidates and, thereby, enable voters to make informed voting decisions. This media obligation is what fosters democracy.

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The research further shows that the quality of journalism practice has generally dropped, with a substantive percentage of coverage being event or personality-driven. Only 19 percent of the coverage comprised stories initiated by media houses and journalists themselves. On the other hand, the use of multiple sources proved daunting, with print media and radio stations performing worse in this respect. The citizens' voices were largely muted and accounted for as low as 10 percent of the voices in the stories analysed. The same applies to female voices, which accounting for 20 percent of total coverage.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following:

■ **Media environment:** The years before the 2020 general elections were characterised by a sharp decline in the press freedom index for the country, as established by the Reporters Without Borders and as confirmed by excessive self-censorship within newsrooms. As such, government authorities overseeing the media industry should normalise the situation and continue working with the industry's stakeholders to improve the media environment and press freedom as a whole. Regular meetings between the government and media industry stakeholders could help address these gaps, which could motivate the media and journalists to carry their professional responsibility with honour to serve the country.

■ **Government-owned media:** These outlets, especially the public broadcasters, ought to live up to the legal stipulation and public expectations by providing equitable opportunities to parties and candidates while avoiding partisanship and factionalism in their coverage. Their failure to provide equitable coverage to parties and candidates could, among others, invite lawsuits from aggrieved parties, candidates and individual citizens. Media regulators, such as TCRA and Zanzibar Broadcasting Commission (ZBC), should therefore review the performance of public broadcasters even in non-election periods to address the lacuna.

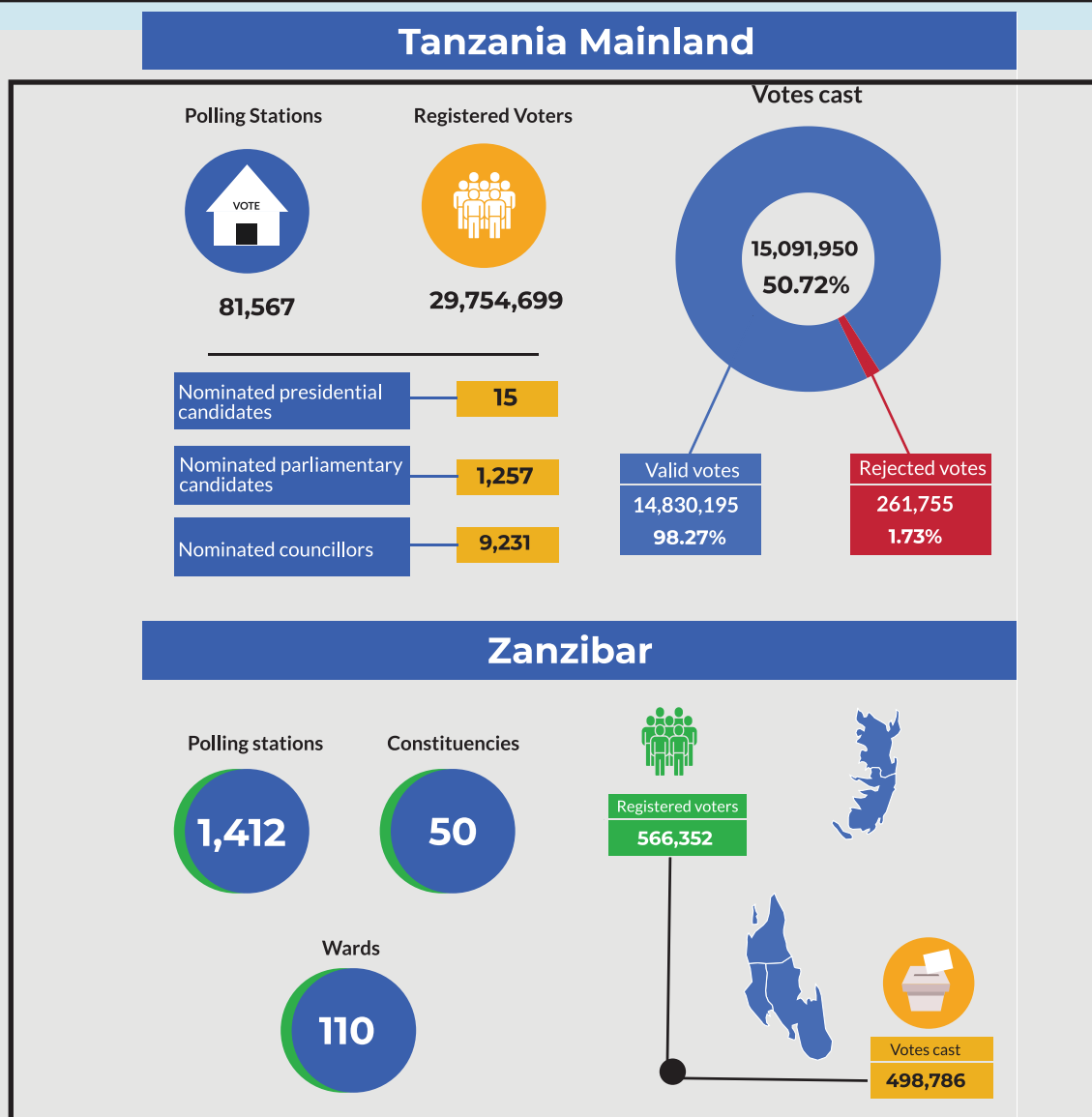
■ **Moving upstream in reportage:** The media should pay more attention to critical issues in election campaigns than reporting superficially. The media should also improve the quality of reporting by moving upstream to cover the substance of policies while making explicit references to party manifestos, asking difficult questions (or finding sources to do that), particularly on the feasibility of the candidates' promises, be it in the practical implementation or financing of those promises.

■ **Budget in election reporting:** For future General Elections, media houses should consider setting aside some funds each year for covering the elections. There should be a special account or fund for this purpose to stave off and protect journalists from the trappings of parties and candidates during a crucial period of polls. This includes diversification of revenue streams to address over-reliance on traditional sources of advertising revenue, mainly from government and corporates.

■ **In-house training:** Media should regularly organise in-house training to bridge gaps in skills

and knowledge. Such training should include journalists and editors. The training should also include a module on how to plan for the election coverage to ensure that coverage of the political parties and candidates are more balanced than it was in the 2020 elections.

■ **Develop and embrace the true meaning of the axiom "fourth estate":** Media should develop and embrace the culture of playing the "watchdog" role in society. They should develop values and cultural norms ideal for enhancing democracy, the rule of law and governance in society.



Source: NEC (2021), ZEC 2021



## Annex 1

## Issue Topics

ISSUE TOPIC	NUMBER OF MENTIONS	PERCENT OF UNITS
Election	1,544	67%
Infrastructure and Telecommunication	144	6%
Agriculture, livestock, forestry, and fishery	116	5%
Business, economics, and finance	91	4%
Health Issues	85	3%
Justice, law, and order	78	3%
Education	72	3%
Water and Sanitation	58	3%
Peace	57	2%
Labour and unemployment	42	2%
Muungano (Union)	37	2%
Social Problems (social security, poverty, drug abuse)	35	2%
Good governance and accountability	35	1%
Mining, Oil, and Gas	33	1%
Energy	29	1%
Gender and family matters	31	1%
Defence and National Security	31	1%
Politics and power play	28	1%
Corruption	25	1%
New Constitution	18	1%
Small businesses	18	1%
Manufacturing industry	18	1%
Tourism	19	1%
land ownership	13	1%
Religion	14	1%
Conflicts	10	1%
Foreign affairs and international cooperation	6	<1%
Media and Journalism	6	<1%
Human rights issues	5	<1%
Environment and climate change	2	<1%
Culture, arts, and sports	2	<1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,702</b>	<b>117%</b>

## Annex 2

## Summary of issue topics

SUMMARY TOPICS	SINGULAR ISSUE TOPICS
<b>POLITICAL ISSUES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Justice, law, and order</li> <li>New constitution</li> <li>Politics and power play</li> <li>Election</li> <li>Good governance and accountability</li> <li>Muungano (the Union)</li> <li>Defence and National Security</li> </ul>
<b>DEVELOPMENT ISSUES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health issues</li> <li>Water &amp; sanitation</li> <li>Agriculture, livestock, forestry, and fishery</li> <li>Education</li> <li>Environment and climate change</li> <li>Science, technology, and innovation</li> </ul>
<b>ECONOMIC ISSUES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infrastructure (roads, railways, electricity grid, telecommunication)</li> <li>Energy (all forms, electricity, nuclear, and alternatives)</li> <li>Mining, Oil, and Gas</li> <li>Business, economics, and finance</li> <li>Small businesses (Wamachinga)</li> <li>Manufacturing industry</li> <li>Labour and Unemployment</li> <li>Tourism</li> <li>Foreign affairs and international cooperation</li> </ul>
<b>CULTURE/ MEDIA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Media and journalism</li> <li>Culture, arts, and sports</li> <li>Religion</li> </ul>
<b>CONTENTIOUS ISSUES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human rights issues</li> <li>Gender and family matters (Women issues, Gender-based violence, and Gender inequalities)</li> <li>Conflicts</li> <li>Social problems (social security, poverty, drug abuse, problems of children)</li> <li>Land ownership</li> <li>Corruption</li> </ul>

## Annex 3

## Candidates coverage as per parties and media category

	UNION PRESIDENTIAL			ZANZIBAR PRESIDENTIAL			BUNGE ELECTIONS			ZHoR ELECTIONS			COUNCILLOR ELECTIONS		
	Govt Media	Party Media	All Other Media	Govt Media	Party Media	All Other Media	Govt Media	Party Media	All Other Media	Govt Media	Party Media	All Other Media	Govt Media	Party Media	All Other Media
CCM	81%*	94%	64%	69%	87%	60%	67%**	81%	51%	68%	62%	41%	73%	78%	61%
CHADEMA	26%*	19%	42%				16%**	14%	27%				7%	0%	12%
ACT WAZALENDO	11%	7%	9%	31%	34%	59%	6%	3%	9%	20%	23%	11%	3%		11%
CUF				4%	16%	15%	3%	2%	5%				4%	0%	8%
CHAUMMA										0%	8%	19%	0%	0%	8%

**Percentages in these tables do not add up to 100% because one article or broadcast unit can cover more than one candidate.**

\* Reading example: Out of all articles in Government Media covering the Union Presidential elections with candidates, 81% covered the CCM candidate (= Magufuli), but only 26% covered Lissu as a CHADEMA candidate.

\*\* Out of all articles, Government media covered up to three Bunge candidates; 67% belonged to CCM, and only 16% to CHADEMA.



# YEARBOOK ON MEDIA QUALITY IN TANZANIA



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