

SOCIAL MEDIA PENETRATION, PARTY POLITICS AND ELECTIONS IN TANZANIA

Emerging Practices and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Tanzania has witnessed an increased use of social media in political party campaigning over the last decade. Use of social media was nonetheless curtailed by a changing techno-political framework regulated by acts relating to cybersecurity and statistics. This study was guided by two hypotheses: firstly, that despite restrictive cybersecurity laws, social media in recent years has been effectively institutionalised as a new civic cyberspace for political party campaigns during elections. Secondly, increasing use of social media in elections has had a transformative effect on the way party structure was organised to conduct political mobilisation, promote party ideology and both inter- and intra-party interaction, and for fundraising. The study interviewed party members and leaders from five political parties which participated in the 2015 and 2020 general elections and concluded that social media had a transformative effect on core political party campaign activities.

Keywords: social media, political parties, election campaigns, cybersecurity laws

INTRODUCTION

Mobile phone technology use such as Mobile Money Services (MMS) transactions now account for nearly US\$ 1.6 billion in Tanzania, representing 2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), according to Global Systems Mobile Association (GMSA 2014), Tanzania Communication Regulation Authority (TCRA 2017) and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU 2016). According to the ITU (2016) and Cross (2016), 87% of urban residents in Tanzania report using a mobile phone every day. In addition, 34% now have access to the internet. TCRA (2017) reports that there were 40 044 186 subscribers to mobile phone networks in 2016.

An increase in the number of subscribers was driven by prepaid bundles offered by service providers which made data more affordable, and sometimes included free access to social media platforms for subscribers (Guermazzi 2016).

Political parties and party activities contributed to Tanzania's leapfrogging into the digital age. Both the ruling party and the opposition made widespread use of social media (especially WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) as well as websites for political mobilisation, promoting party ideology, promoting both inter-party and intra-party interaction, and fundraising during election campaigns (Cross 2016).

Political Party Participation in Elections

Tanzania re-introduced political pluralism in 1992 after it had been banned in 1965 for 27 years (Shaba 2007). The first multiparty election was held in 1995, three years after the ban on political parties was lifted. Ever since, the ruling CCM has retained both the presidency and majority in Parliament, although until September 2020 it witnessed a gradual decline in both presidential votes and its proportion of MPs.

All political parties in Tanzania are driven by pragmatic developmental ideals that aim at articulating the best approaches to promote human development (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuam 2012; Grimmer, Hersh, Feinstein & Carpenter 2011; Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung 2011). A careful study of party election manifestos reveals that they contained few ideological differences (Shaba 2007; Ewald 2011).

The ruling CCM professes to be an African socialist party and follows a Fabian approach as opposed to one based on Marxist-Leninist principles. This position has been challenged even within the rank and file of CCM due to the liberal market approach of its economic policy. CHADEMA members on the other hand identify themselves as conservative social democrats. They embrace market liberalisation with a strict ethical code and consideration for issues such as social justice and human rights, and the same is true of the other main opposition parties. None oppose market liberalisation but the emphasis is on enforcing ethics, social justice and market reforms.

Tanzania's 2015 elections experienced the most competitive presidential election since the founding of multiparty elections. The opposition formed the UKAWA Coalition and fronted a single presidential candidate (Collord 2015).¹

1 UKAWA stands for Umoja wa Katiba ya Wananchi (roughly meaning Coalition for the People's Constitution - which comprises CHADEMA, CUF, NCCR and TADEA). CHADEMA is an acronym for Swahili words Chama cha Demokrasia and Maendeleo, meaning Party for Democracy and Development. CCM is an acronym of Swahili words Chama cha Mapinduzi meaning Revolutionary Party. ACT Wazalendo means Patriots. SAU is a Swahili acronym for Sauti ya Umma which means Peoples Voice.

The CCM presidential candidate won the elections with 58.46% followed by CHADEMA (UKAWA) which garnered 38.97%. None of the other candidates from smaller political parties attracted significant votes with the highest fetching 0.6% and lowest 0.05% (<http://www.nec.go.tz/>). After the 2015 election, 252 MPs were from CCM (68.8%) and the balance of 31.1% from opposition parties. Within the opposition, CHADEMA had 61.4%, CUF 36.8%, NCCR and ACT 0.87% each (NEC 2016; Collord 2020).

Social Media Restrictions in Political Party Activities

The foregoing political developments did not take root without challenges. The legal environment surrounding social media use soured following the enactment of the Cybersecurity Act in February 2015, a few months before the 2015 general elections (Walker & Robinson 2020).² In practice, according to Cross (2016), Macha (2016), LHRC and ZLSC (2017), implementation of the Act had unintended consequences.³ As a result, political party campaign activities were curtailed, including open discussion on alternative development policy options during elections (Macha 2016). According to CRS (2020) and Walker and Robinson (2020), dissemination of research activity through social media also became increasingly regulated under the Statistics Act (amended in 2015) which introduced the concept of and criminalised the publication of 'false official statistics', and 'distortion of facts', as well as questioning official government statistics as shown by Table 1 below.

2 The Act was initially intended to curtail cybercrimes as defined in international law such as publishing child pornography, false information, racist and xenophobic material, excessive harassment through unsolicited messages, disclosure of details of an investigation, obstruction of investigation, and cyber bullying.

3 LHRC and TACCEO (2016) note that the positive side of the Cybersecurity Act helped to control defamatory statements, hate statements, immoral pictures, and fabricated news, which to a large extent controlled public unrest driven by social media use.

Table 1: Key Offences and Restrictions under Cybersecurity, Statistics and Electronic and Postal Communications Acts

Cybersecurity Act No. 14 of 2015	
Section 16: Publication of false information	Any person who publishes information or data presented in a picture, text, symbol or any other form in a computer system knowing that such information or data is false, deceptive, misleading or inaccurate, and with intent to defame, threaten, abuse, insult, or otherwise deceive or mislead the public or counselling commission of an offence, commits an offence, and shall on conviction be liable to a fine of not less than five million shillings or to imprisonment for a term of not less than three years or to both
Section 20: Unsolicited messages	(1) A person shall not, with intent to commit an offence under this Act - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) initiate the transmission of unsolicited messages; (b) relay or retransmit unsolicited messages, or (c) falsify header information in unsolicited messages; <p>(2) A person who contravenes subsection (1) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of not less than three million shillings or three times the value of undue advantage received, whichever is greater or to imprisonment for a term of not less than one year or to both</p>
Statistical Act No. 9 of 2015	
Section 5 and 6	(5) An agency or person who publishes or communicates official statistical information which may result in the distortion of facts, commits an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine of not less than ten million shillings or to imprisonment for a term of not less than three years or to both. (6) Any person who is authorized by the Bureau to process any official statistical information, shall before publishing or communicating such information to the public ensure that such person procures an authorisation from the Bureau. (7) For the purposes of this section, "communication media" includes radio station, television station, newspaper or magazine, website or any other
Electronic and Postal Communications Act No. 3 of 201	
Section 118 Penalty for transmission of obscene communication	Any person who- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) by means of any network facilities, network services, applications services or content services, knowingly makes, creates, or solicits or initiates the transmission of any comment, request, suggestion or other communication which is obscene, indecent, false, menacing or offensive in character with intent to annoy, abuse, threaten or harass another person;

Electronic and Postal Communications Act No. 3 of 2010	
Section 118 Penalty for transmission of obscene communication	<p>(b) initiates a communication using any applications services, whether continuously, repeatedly or otherwise, during which communication may or may not ensue, with or without disclosing his identity and with intent to annoy, abuse, threatens or harass any person at any number or electronic address; (c) by means of any network services or applications service provides any obscene communication to any person; or</p> <p>permits any network services or application services under the person's control to be used for an activity described in section 117 (3), commits an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not less than five million Tanzanian shillings or to imprisonment for a term not less than twelve months, or to both and shall also be liable to fine of seven hundred and fifty thousand Tanzanian shillings for every day during which the offence is continued after conviction</p>

There were numerous instances where the new laws contravened free speech online. In October 2015, Benedict Angelo Ngonyani, a 24-year-old student at the Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology, was charged with publishing information which was 'false or not verified by relevant authorities'.⁴

In November 2015, Leila Sinare and three others were charged under Section 16 of Tanzania's Cybersecurity Act for disseminating false, election-related information via WhatsApp. Public prosecutors alleged that the accused had published audio information on a WhatsApp group called the Soka Group, intended to mislead the public during the October 2015 general elections. Isaac Abakuki Emily and Bob Chacha Wangwe also were found guilty of similar charges. Emily was convicted in June 2016 by the Arusha Resident Magistrate's Court for insulting the president on his Facebook page, and sentenced to three years in jail or a TSh. 7 million (\$3 190) fine payable in two instalments (Kazeem 2016). On 17 November 2017 Bob Chacha Wangwe, a law graduate from the University of Dar es Salaam, was sentenced by the Kisutu Resident Magistrate's Court to a jail term of one year and six months or a fine of TSh 5 million (\$2 278) for publishing his views on political affairs in Zanzibar and the state of the Union through his Facebook account. In March 2019 the High Court quashed the judgement and Wangwe has not yet (at the time of writing) had his fine refunded. In January 2021 Mbusuyo Aninanine Mwakihaba, a resident of Kigamboni, was also fined TSh 5 million, or three-months imprisonment, for writing in his

4 It was alleged that he posted a Facebook post claiming that Tanzania's Chief of Defence Forces, General Davis Mwamunyanje, had been hospitalised after eating poisoned food.

WhatsApp account that security operatives were reportedly seen in Nairobi where the chief opposition whip was hospitalised after a shooting incidence while attending parliamentary sessions in Dodoma (<https://pratiloma53.rssing.com/chan-23711956/article25438.html>).

Cross (2016) reports that the effects of Tanzania's Cybersecurity Act on general elections became evident during election day in 2015. Opposition CHADEMA coalition's exit-polling centre had been raided by police late on election night, and 38 people were detained (LHRC & ZLSC 2017). According to Cross (2016), during the arrests police confiscated the opposition coalition's laptops and intimidated members of the media. As a result, CHADEMA staff were charged under Section 16 of the Cybersecurity Act. Prosecutors accused them of publishing 'inaccurate and unverified data' on Facebook, Twitter, and the party's election management system (EU 2015; Lynch 2015; LHRC & ZLSC 2017). Walker and Robinson (2020) reported that internet restrictions – including the blocking of many social media and messaging platforms – were introduced in the days leading to the November 2020 elections when election-related content was restricted.

In September 2016, Dennis Mteywa and four others were arrested for sharing offensive content targeting the president on social media under Section 118 (a) of the Electronic and Postal Communications Act No. 3 of 2010. This section imposed a criminal penalty on 'any person who knowingly makes, creates, solicits or initiates the transmission of any comment, request, suggestion or other communication which is obscene, indecent, false, menacing or offensive in character with intent to annoy, abuse, threaten or harass another person'. Prosecutors alleged that Mr. Mteywa posted an abusive and offensive comment on a WhatsApp group called DSM 114U Movement (Cross 2016; LHRC & ZLSC 2017).⁵

In yet another case, Dr. Oscar Magava, a lecturer at Mkwawa University College of Education in Iringa Region, was arrested for allegedly insulting the president on social media. LHRC and ZLSC (2017) report that 14 people had already been arrested between September 2015 and September 2017 for insulting the president on social media. Leonard Mulokozi was charged on 22 June 2015 under Tanzania's Electronic and Postal Communications Act over a WhatsApp message that authorities said was 'abusive' to the president.

The eagerness of members of various social media groups to protect their free speech online had already been expressed in their reaction to social media users who were found guilty of cybercrime charges because they had posted their

5 Its Regulation was revoked on 17 July 2020 and replaced by the Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations of 2020. This enables the same kind of internet censorship such the blockage of all major social networks that took place across the country on the eve of the election, leaving users to rely on virtual private networks (VPNs) to send messages and access information.

political views on social media. Their fines were paid through crowd-funding on social media (Cross 2016). This demonstrated that social media users will oppose a restrictive approach to political discussion in cyberspace, including satirical ridiculing of political leaders.

The study was guided by two hypotheses. Firstly, despite restrictive cybersecurity laws, social media has been effectively institutionalised as a new civic cyberspace in which to organise political party campaigns during elections. Secondly, increasing use of social media in election campaigns had a transformative effect on the way party structure was organised to conduct political mobilisation, promote party ideology, promote both inter-party and intra-party interaction, and for fundraising.

Guided by CEPPS and IRI (2017) for a conceptual framework, the study investigated specific functions of political parties in election campaigns for which technology can be used in political mobilisation, promotion, interaction, and fundraising.

Table 2: Typology of Party Use of Technology (Dimension & Description)

Dimension	Description
Mobilisation	Mobilise citizens to take action such as rallies, protests, vote
Promotion	Promote policy platform to the public
Interaction	Voters shape party platform through direct consultations, web or phone-based surveys; party is receptive to voters' wants and needs
Fundraising	Raise money to support party, campaigns, and candidates

Source: CEPPS & IRI (2017)

The two study hypotheses are significant in that they will provide information on the extent to which social media is being used in political party campaign activities in Tanzania. A determination of the first hypothesis will provide information on the extent of social media penetration in political party activities, elections in particular. The second hypothesis is equally significant since it will show which areas social media has the most penetration in elections. This is in line with CEPPS and IRI (2017) main party use of new technologies areas. The main areas were mobilisation of general citizens and voters, promotion of party ideology including key messages and election manifesto, interaction with voters on key alternative policy issues, and fundraising. The second hypothesis will

determine the extent to which social media penetration is transforming traditional approaches to elections, including organisation, structure, decision-making, and logistics. Both hypotheses inform us of the effects of social media penetration in elections in the wake of a restrictive techno-political environment driven by changing cybersecurity laws.

METHODOLOGY

The study interviewed political party leaders and party members at ward and branch levels.⁶ The interviews focused on the transformative effect experienced by political parties as institutions, their leaders, and members, in the use of various social media during political party campaigns.

The study used a multi-staged stratified sampling procedure. The first sample stratum was selected through purposive judgmental sampling criteria. The two districts selected from the main metropolitan city of Dar es Salaam were Ilala and Kigamboni. The main criteria used were their political pluralism, mixed population and peri-urban nature. Hai district in Kilimanjaro was purposively chosen because it was an opposition stronghold.

Participating wards in the second stratum were chosen through simple random sampling. Gongo la Mboto ward was identified in Ilala, Magogoni in Kigamboni and Kikavu Chini in Hai. Party branches which participated in the interviews were recommended by party leaders at ward level, or in some instances key informants knowledgeable about party politics in case-study communities.

The study administered two types of interviews of 100 party leaders and members at ward and branch levels. The first was a semi-structured quantitative questionnaire survey, and the second consisted of 20 open-ended qualitative key informant interviews (KIIs) with party leaders at ward, zonal and national-level.⁷

A main limitation faced by the study was the reluctance of study respondents to discuss party politics and political campaign issues. Their main concern was the possibility that information they provided could be used against their party interest. Secondly, the respondents were concerned about overexposing their party campaign strategies to the competition. As a result, 39% of study respondents who were approached declined to participate.

The study mitigated these limitations by informing study respondents that interviews would be anonymous, and all individual responses remain confidential. Study questionnaires and interview guide transcripts did not record individual names or identities.

6 A ward is the third administrative level and coordinates party branches which are typically situated at second administrative levels.

7 The distribution of 61 study respondents to the semi-structured quantitative questionnaire survey were: 30% CUF, 28% ACT, 20% CHADEMA, 18% CCM, and 2% SAU and NCCR respectively.

Ethical Considerations

The study was submitted to the Directorate of Research and Publications at the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) for ethical review. An ethical clearance was provided in accordance with OUT ethical review policy for research and publication. All standard ethical practices were observed, including reading the study objectives out loud to respondents before interviews were conducted. Informed consent was obtained from study respondents before interviews commenced. All published data and information used have been properly cited and acknowledged in accordance with OUT ethical review policy for research and publication.

Findings have been sourced from various studies conducted by the author, most notably an assessment of social media use in Tanzanian elections with the International Republican Institute (IRI), the contents of an international conference paper presented at an American Evaluation Association (AEA) International Conference at Cleveland, Ohio, USA in October 2018, and a review of secondary data sources.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

According to McNamee et al. (2017) social media provides ease, speed, convenience, and inclusivity in conducting political party campaign activities. Impending legal and regulatory issues had the net effect of limiting, by criminalising, some aspects related to the utilisation of social media in political party activities including political 'small-talk'. Nonetheless, the study established that social media continued to be widely used by all political parties for conducting political campaign activities. A ward-level youth secretary from the ruling CCM said: 'we used mobile phones to send instructions to implement party directives'. This was echoed by a ward chairman from the opposition CUF who said 'we used mobile phones to send invitations to party meetings'. In similar vein, a branch treasurer from CHADEMA said 'we used mobile phones to conduct quick online meetings and reach decisions on a matter'.

These responses attest to the fact that phone-based technologies were already used in election campaign activities. More complex and diverse social media platforms were also in circulation. A ward treasurer from CHADEMA said: 'all party members in our area had social media'. A young branch member of CHADEMA said: 'I preferred to use Telegram because I can share documents with youth members, and Instagram and snapchat for sharing pictures. This helped me to share various types of information with our social media group in a timely manner'.

Comments on the general benefits derived by political parties from social media included the following: cutting down the number and time spent in meetings, able to hold emergency meetings with limited agenda for discussion (party member CHADEMA); easy to share tasks and actions across different levels (ward chairman, CCM); get results from different polling stations in a timely and accurate manner including through photos of declaration forms, and reduce electoral fraud by competing political parties (party member CUF), and communicating the party position or that of their candidate in a way that could not be intercepted by another person so as to smear them (ward chairman, CCM).

Table 3 below presents how the main types of social media were used by different political parties during the election campaigns.

Table 3: Proportion of Main Social Media Used by Political Parties (%)

Type of Social Media	CCM	CHADEMA	CUF	NCCR	ACT	Total
Facebook	19.05	23.81	28.57	2.38	26.19	100
Twitter	22.22	16.67	27.78	5.56	27.78	100
WhatsApp	20.93	25.58	25.58	2.33	25.58	100
Instagram	21.43	25.00	17.86	3.57	32.14	100
E-mail	17.39	26.09	17.39	4.35	34.78	100

Based on a questionnaire survey of party members from five political parties

Table 3 shows that all main social media platforms were used by all political parties, both the ruling CCM and opposition, suggesting an increasing shift towards political cyberspace activity. Table 3 however reveals an uneven use of social media platforms across political parties. McNamee et al. (2017, p. 10) underscore this concern by arguing that inequalities in the skills to operate social media platforms in elections meant it could be applied only in pockets, leading to exclusion. This was confirmed by the chairperson of a CHADEMA women's wing ward who said: 'the problem of using social media was many people in rural areas did not have smartphones'. This indicates unequal access to social media in different parts of the country.

The effects of this digital divide imposed by the widening use of social media by political parties was clearly communicated by a ward chairman from CHADEMA who said: 'social media was very good as it increased the ability to communicate messages especially to the youth – but only those who are educated'. This suggests underlying levels of inequality according to access to technology index (ITU 2016).

According to McNamee et al. (2017) the social media effects of political exclusion have two auxiliary dimensions of access, namely location and age.⁸ Access to social media varies from rural to urban; and between more fervent users, youth and adult (Simplice, Asongu, Jacinta & Nwachukwu 2016). The youth increasingly present themselves as an important electoral demographic in Tanzania. According to LHRC and TACCEO (2016) 50% of voters in the 2020 general elections for president, members of parliament and ward councillors were youth. The youth are gradually becoming more influential voters as an increasing number have attained a certain level of education and are active users of social media.

Political party members who did not own phones that supported social media or did not own social media accounts said they used simpler platforms to conduct party campaign activities, such as making direct phone calls, using phone SMSes (short message service), posters, and public meetings. Some smartphone owners reported using more sophisticated platforms such as viber, linkedin, IMO, snapchat and the *jamii forums* blog.

Restrictions imposed by the Cybersecurity Act of 2015 were found to impinge on the core functions of political parties during the 2015 and 2020 general elections. According to CEPPS and IRI (2017) core functions of political party campaigning are political mobilisation, the promotion of party ideology, promoting both inter-party and intra-party interaction, and fundraising.

It was already evident that members of social media groups from both opposition and the ruling party had taken steps to overcome restrictions in the use of social media, as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Extent to which Restrictions on Social Media Users were Overcome (%)

Degree	CCM	CHADEMA	CUF	SAU	ACT	Total
Large Extent	16.67	16.67	66.67	0	0	100
	33.33	11.11	28.57	0	0	16.22
Average	5.88	17.65	41.18	0	35.29	100
	33.33	33.33	50	0	60	45.95
Small Extent	25	0	50	0	25	100
	33.33	0	14.29	0	10	10.81
Have not been able	0	50	10	10	30	100
	0	55.59	7.14	100	30	27.03
Total	8.11	24.32	37.84	2.7	27.03	100
	100	100	100	100	100	100

Based on a questionnaire of 61 party members from five political parties

⁸ Access in this case has a triple dimension - access to phone sets which support social media apps; access to disposal income with which to buy the phones and recurrent internet bundles costs; and access to information related to signing-up and the utilisation of particular social media apps.

It is evident that social media users were not passive, but active in transforming the technopolitical environment. The above data indicates that political party officials and activists had not been complacent about infringements of their free speech in cyberspace.

It is also evident that members of both the ruling CCM and opposition parties were constrained by restrictions on the use of social media in election campaigning. A branch youth secretary from the ruling CCM summed this up as ‘community members did not dare to participate in online discussions because they feared the new law regulating communicating over social media’. A ward chairperson from the opposition CUF added ‘there was some information that we had as a political party, and we felt it was within the confines of our constitutional mandate to criticise and hold the government accountable, but we could not just put it into social media’. The majority of political party officials from both sides said these experiences led to limiting the use of social media for interaction with both political party members and voters; thus, not making effective use of social media in promoting political dialogue during elections. This was summarised by a study respondent from an academic background who said: ‘negative effects of the law regulating social media affected all political parties, but mostly the opposition’.

A study respondent who served as a social media coordinator in the main opposition party CHADEMA said opposition parties had found ways to circumvent the grip of fear surrounding their party members and voter-base to use social media in political discourse during elections. One such CHADEMA coordinator said: ‘those who feared to expose evidence of information that was critical to government policy were told to post the information to the coordinator of social media at party headquarters and it would be posted by the party while they remained anonymous’.

A member of CHADEMA’s national secretariat interviewed for the study indicated that these control measures were meant to curtail political opposition far beyond the Cybersecurity Act. The government had suspended live coverage of parliamentary proceedings and opposition political rallies. However, these restrictions on mainstream media had a counterfactual effect leading to an increased reliance on social media as a tool for political communication – especially Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram. The same source from CHADEMA said: ‘there was no other way available than to use social media, given the position that had been taken by Government through the police force to suspend public rallies and internal meetings of political parties’. Table 5 below shows how those party members who completed the questionnaire were affected by the new laws.

Table 5: Extent to which Political Parties were Affected by

Cybersecurity Act

Core Party Functions	%	
	Large Extent	Average
Intra-party communication in previous election	54	20
Ability to conduct campaigns in previous election	52	27
Party strengthening	39	28
Online dialogue with voters	38	24
Fundraising	37	28
Promotion of political ideology and priorities	30	30
Political mobilisation	27	14

Based on questionnaire survey of 61 party members from five political parties

According to Collord (2021), CHADEMA and ACT reported using social media for news releases when official media channels remained largely silent.

Table 5 indicates that the areas most affected by restrictions were intra-party communication and the ability of political parties to conduct campaigns. Other areas affected were long-term party strengthening, dialogue with voters, and fundraising. According to CEPPS and IRI (2017), key areas where social media is most influential in political party election campaigns are political mobilisation, promotion of party ideology, promoting both inter-party and intra-party interaction, and fundraising.

Political Mobilisation

The study found that 62% of political party officials, activists and members from across the political divide used social media to conduct their political activities, including political mobilisation, as shown below in Table 6.

Table 6: Key Areas Transformed by Intensification of Social Media in Political Campaigning

Degree	Mobilise to attend party meetings	Political mobilisation and campaigns	Attend meetings/public rallies	Obtain feedback from public	Fund-raising	Implement Campaigns
Large Extent	62	54	48	37	30	44
Average	20	33	31	37	22	23
Small Extent	5	4	5	5	12	6
Very Small Extent	5	2	9	11	18	11
Never used	7	7	7	9	18	15
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Based on questionnaire survey of party members from five political parties

A party branch leader from the ruling CCM party said ‘we used social media during elections to mobilise our party members to get out and vote, to ask for votes from voters through our phones, to remind voters [of] the election date, and remind them to vote’. This was also mentioned by a voter who said: ‘you would find yourself receiving several messages saying we should go and vote’.

A branch youth leader from the opposition CHADEMA had a similar view: ‘we used social media to mobilise our members to attend political party campaign meetings/rallies, especially those addressed by national party leaders’, adding: ‘social media was very useful for us to communicate to each other when we had to convene a quick meeting at short notice. We also used social media to post events and party news in our party members WhatsApp group’. A branch chairperson from CHADEMA commented that ‘we used social media to canvass for votes by sending messages, video clips, and art clips... Social media enabled us to motivate different people to join our party campaign, and add those who had recently joined our party as members’. Other comments on the use of social media were to mobilise voters to get out and vote, appeal for votes by phone (CCM member), remind voters about the voting date (CCM branch youth secretary), broadcast news about impending meetings (CUF ward youth secretary), and rapidly share news about emergency meetings (CHADEMA ward treasurer).

Despite the foregoing, Table 6 indicates that a small number of political party officials and activists used social media to a limited extent in political mobilisation, indicating that there were some political party officials and members who had

reservations regarding social media use. This dilemma was confirmed by a CCM member who said 'our main media for election campaigns was and remains party rallies'. A ward secretary from CUF said 'when discussing some sensitive issues, we preferred to meet face-to-face'. A member of ACT said 'I do not know about those social media', while a ward treasurer from CHADEMA said 'we gave ourselves information mainly through statutory party meetings'.

Promotion of Party Ideology

According to Table 6 above, the study found that social media was instrumental as a platform for party members to disseminate, obtain feedback, discuss political party ideology and rapidly disseminate campaign catchphrases. Political parties increasingly adapted to social media in order to disseminate their agenda, including party ideologies, campaign manifestos, and party position on various issues during elections. A CUF ward secretary said 'we preferred to use social media to disseminate information on various ongoing party activities by sharing pictures of events, activities, and quotes from party leaders including video clips'. A CUF ward youth secretary noted: 'We also used social media to promote our party candidates'. A CCM member said 'we used social media to widely disseminate the main slogan of our presidential candidate'. More than half the political party organisers and activists expressed their support for social media: 'We preferred to use social media to promote party ideology' (CCM party member); 'We found WhatsApp and Facebook very useful to spread information about party meetings' (CHADEMA member); 'We found WhatsApp as very useful to share agreed actions after internal meetings' (ward secretary CUF); and passing information especially when party rallies/meetings were cancelled at short notice for one reason or another, including failure to obtain permission/permit from the police to hold rallies (CHADEMA party member).

This being said, there were some political party leaders who refrained from using social media to promote party ideology. A CCM ward-level party parents-wing chairperson said: 'I do not know whether there was a party directive to use social media in elections'. Another CCM member commented: 'We refrained [sic] to use social-media to share sensitive party information as social media are not safe/secure'. A member of CHADEMA national secretariat said 'some members of our party had been hijacked, disappeared, and several had cases opened against them because of posting messages in social media during elections', adding: 'the problem is many people in villages in the rural areas do not have a smartphone'. Overall, this study found that the use of social media platforms to promote political ideology and election manifestos was more widespread in the CUF and CHADEMA, followed by CCM.

Interaction with Voters

According to Table 6, political parties continued to use SMS and traditional platforms such as posters and public rallies despite the benefits presented by social media. The full potential of leveraging social media when interacting with voters was not optimised due to limitations imposed, and uncertainties regarding compliance with Cybersecurity Act. Social media was used to a large extent in political mobilisation, but less so for voter interaction. This indicates that social media was used less as a platform for impromptu (interactive) political discourse than for one-way dissemination (Windeck 2015; Chooma 2016).⁹

A ward chairperson from CHADEMA said the main reason why political parties shied away from using social media for active political interaction with voters was the uncertainty regarding the legal position in terms of the Cybersecurity Act of 2015. This was incorrectly interpreted to cover restrictions against ‘any form of political opinion critical to Government policy... You see it is no longer safe to communicate political messages through social media’. A party member from CHADEMA said: ‘our members were threatened for belonging to politically oriented social media groups, and to receive messages that were political in nature’. He added: ‘after voters received such threats they simply left party social media groups’. A ward secretary from CUF also said: ‘community members were not free to use social media for interactions in politics because of the law that has been passed to regulate social media’.

As further testimony that social media was disproportionately used for dissemination as opposed to interaction with voters, a ward-level treasurer from CHADEMA remarked:

we used social media to send instantaneous information to those who had not attended our political rally to give them instant updates especially pictures on events which had happened. We also used social media to inform those who could not attend campaign meetings such as the disabled. We also used social media to disseminate party announcements, and party priorities during the elections.

A branch secretary from CCM said ‘we used social media to promote dialogue with different sections of the society/communities; disseminate the priorities of our party and party candidates in the elections’. Despite restrictive conditions,

⁹ The picture emerging from this analysis is that political party officials preferred to use social media for disseminating prepared political information, and/or political party members were hesitant to use social media for interactive communication – probably due to uncertainties created by the Cybersecurity Act of 2015.

there was evidence of interaction between party leaders across various levels through social media. 'We had interactive discussions, and sometime even had "fights" [serious disagreements] through social media', remarked a member of the CUF opposition party.

This being said, the findings reveal that political parties used social media platforms as a medium to conduct research to assess political opinion on certain topics they wished to consider, or obtain feedback from party members, voters, or general citizens. This was aptly communicated by a CUF ward chairperson who said: 'we used social media as a crafty means to informally interact with our friends to know what voters' expectations were from our candidates'. A CCM branch youth secretary said 'we used social media to collect data'. This is an important interactive function involving the collection of feedback, including data and information from both inside and outside political parties. Interestingly, there appear to be no controls, within the context of the Cybersecurity Act, on research and opinion polling as a way of interaction between political parties, party members, and general public. Table 7 below presents those channels preferred by political parties to receive feedback from party members, citizens, and voters.

Table 7: Preferred Channels for Obtaining Feedback from Political Party Members, Voters, and Citizens

Degree	Public Rallies/ Meetings	Survey Questionnaires	Website	E-mail	Mobile Phone SMS
Large Extent	55.36	38.89	12.00	14.29	63.64
Average	21.43	22.22	30.00	32.65	21.82
Small Extent	10.71	22.22	12.00	16.33	7.27
Very Small Extent	5.36	11.11	14.00s	14.29	3.64
Never used	7.14	5.56	32.00	22.45	3.64
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Based on questionnaire survey of party members from five political parties

As indicated in Table 7 above, political parties were more likely to interact through mobile phone SMS services, followed by public rallies/meetings. The reason why these platforms were preferred was explained by a CUF branch secretary: 'many party members did not have social media. No party wants to exclude anyone'. As a result, party leaders, especially in rural settings, preferred to use tried and tested means of communication media such as SMSes. This was a less risky means

of communication requiring less expensive phone sets, and did not need the internet to operate. SMSes had over the years become affordable and could then be bought as bulk SMS bundles. SMSes were convenient as they did not require sophisticated technology, an internet bundle, and did not fall within the ambit of cybercrime laws. This can be summarised by a CCM chairperson as: 'we used SMS because many people now own a phone'.

The study's findings indicated that public rallies closely followed SMSes as the most preferred media for interaction with voters. A ward-level party official from the ruling CCM said: 'no matter what technology comes it cannot totally replace political rallies/public meetings'. To a lesser extent, political parties sometimes conducted opinion polls using hard copy questionnaires at public rallies. A CCM member commented 'we used questionnaires to obtain feedback from party members, general citizens, and voters. We asked them to give feedback if our candidate was accepted'. This was collaborated by a citizen who did not belong to any political party: 'there were public rallies in our area and there was freedom for those who attended to ask questions'. Another citizen said: 'political party officials welcomed questions during campaign meetings or sometimes gave phone numbers where voters can send their questions by SMS/WhatsApp message'.

A CCM ward-level secretary said 'e-mails were usually used to receive and send district-level party reports to higher levels at regional and national level, and to receive documents from national headquarters'. A CHADEMA party member said they used online news blogs such as *jamii forums*. *Jamii forums* is an independent, critical, and politically charged news blog operated by Tanzanians in the diaspora, particularly in the US. It is therefore free from the ambit of the Cybersecurity Act. The CHADEMA party member said: '*jamii forums* had been very useful to obtain information on political affairs, including news of political activities during campaigns. I got information directly and instantaneously from *jamii forums* through my mobile phone'. This was confirmed by LHRC and TACCEO (2016) who reported that CCM, CHADEMA and CUF employed various campaign methods such as public rallies, indoor campaigns, mobile campaigns, social media campaigns, open discussion forums, e-mails, website, posters, banners and performances to communicate campaign messages.

Fundraising

Table 6 above shows that social media channels were the least used for fundraising, mainly because donors preferred to make clandestine contributions to elections, and because of past misuse of campaign funds.

Fundraising has been a difficult and controversial area in Tanzania's political party financing (Babeiya 2011; Magolowondo et al. 2012) with a lack of enthusiasm for making contributions to political activities in general, and in particular through social media. A CCM branch youth secretary said 'there was no enthusiasm for the public to contribute to political activities', and a ward treasurer from CHADEMA said: 'for many people social media was not a preferred channel to make contributions to political parties'.

This was confirmed by a member of CUF who said: 'because of the 2010 Elections Act, some sponsors of opposition parties preferred to remain anonymous and give their contributions in cash as opposed to sending money through mobile phones'. The Elections Act of 2010 was designed to control financing to political parties during party nominations and elections (EISA 2010; Babeiya 2011). There have been domestic and international concerns over the connection between party fundraising, politically sponsored corruption, lobbying, and influencing (Bryan & Ber 2005). Political parties in Tanzania received subsidies or operational grants based on the proportion of presidential and parliamentary votes obtained in an election. Genuine concerns were raised by the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) regarding accountability measures concerning almost all major political parties receiving the subsidies. This was particularly over handling contributions such as issuing receipts, or whether funds provided to party officials – particularly at sub-national and party branch levels – were used for intended purposes. It was no wonder that social media was least used for fundraising activities.

Table 8 below presents the extent to which political parties used social media for fundraising, showing that a comparatively small number of respondents indicated they used social media for online fundraising.

Table 8: Proportion of Political Parties who Used Social Media in Conducting Fundraising

Degree	CCM	CHADEMA	CUF	Overall (All Respondents)
Large Extent	14	9	48	37
Average	19	19	25	28
Small Extent	71	14	0	12
Very Small Extent	0	40	40	9
Never used	0	50	25	14
Total	19	21	31	100

Based on questionnaire survey of party members from five political parties

Our data suggests that opposition parties led the category of political party organisers who had never used social media for conducting fundraising activities, or used it to a very small extent.

Among those who did fundraise online through mobile phones, MMS (Mobile Money Services) and social media were leading platforms. A CUF member said: 'we used M-Pesa (MMS) to receive contributions from our party supporters. Even those who could not come to the office they could now send their contribution through M-Pesa'. A CCM branch treasurer added 'we identified rich people and community members, and party sponsors and appealed for them to make contributions by M-Pesa'. A branch executive committee member from CHADEMA said: 'It (a special money transfer mechanism known as USSD (Unstructured Supplementary Service Data) was a safer way for the party headquarters to raise funds from its members. It goes straight into the party headquarters account instead of passing as cash through different hands. The party headquarters preferred this type of contribution'. Table 9 below indicates the extent to which different types of social media were used for fundraising during general elections.

Table 9: Type of Social Media Used for Fundraising

Degree	Social Media	Mobile Money Services	Website Portal	Other Platforms
Large Extent	26.00	27.08	8.51	15.79
Average	28.00	29.17	8.51	28.95
Small Extent	8.00	6.25	17.02	5.26
Very Small Extent	18.00	18.75	10.64	13.16
Never used	20.00	18.75	55.32	36.84
Total	100	100	100	100

Based on questionnaire survey of party members from five political parties

It is evident from Table 9 above that MMS was the preferred medium for fundraising by political parties, as 21.08% used this service to a large extent. MMS was used in different ways, as explained by a CUF ward secretary : 'we used mobile phone money services to receive operating funds/grants from our party district headquarters'. A ward secretary from CHADEMA said: 'we use our mobile phone to send our cost estimate to implement quarterly activities'. Social media such as WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook closely followed MMS as digital media platforms used for fundraising to a large extent.

Several political party officials from both the CCM and opposition said they found social media an important platform for fundraising. A CHADEMA ward-level party secretary summarised their views:

WhatsApp made it easy for us to create special groups of our sponsors, and contributors. We could then make appeals for funds through sending video and voice clips. Those who wished we acknowledged their contributions in the same WhatsApp group so they can see they were mentioned, acknowledged, and as an assurance through transparency that their contributions had been received and everyone knew about it. Members applause [sic] contributors through sending *emoji* icons.

In practice, these two platforms were linked when it came to fundraising. Political parties appealed for funds through social media; however actual money was transferred through MMS. 'When you receive funding through the phone it is safer than social media, as the phone number would be the first obvious point of contact for follow-up', commented a CHADEMA ward treasurer.

According to Table 9, websites are the least preferred for fundraising, with over half of party officials and members in the survey saying they had never used a website for fundraising, even for posting an appeal for funds. A lesser number used the donation tab on political party websites; a CHADEMA ward treasurer remarked that 'party members and sponsors used the party website to make party contributions'. Despite the fact that most funds were received through MMS, party officials said they had never evaluated which media reached the highest number of people with information about fund-raising. This was because people receive fund appeals from different media than those used for donations.

Other channels used for political fundraising were loudspeakers mounted on cars, posters, announcements during public rallies, private member blogs, internal party strategy meetings attended by party leaders, appeals through traditional print and electronic media (radio and newspapers), party leaders motivating members to contribute, and appeals to community interest groups. A branch youth secretary from CCM said 'we used party conferences, meetings, or sent a group of party members to visit a certain area with a specific message about fundraising'.

TRANSFORMATIVE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The study showed that an increased use of social media had a transformative effect on previously existing party structures. Social media facilitated new forms

of virtual meetings through cyberspace, involving people who were not statutory members of party structures. The majority of party officials and members in the survey acknowledged that social media had transformed the way they had conducted political campaign activities by creating new, virtual structures. A CUF ward chairperson mentioned that instead of issues being decided in formal meetings and committees as had been the practice, they now 'used social media to conduct online meetings and reach real-time decisions when a quick decision had to be made'. Such virtual meetings were a clear transformation and departure from statutory party structures.

More than three quarters of party officials and members participating in the survey said social media transformed the way their parties organised political campaigns. Organisation was now more informal and involved non-statutory auxiliary staff and different levels, though these changes were more an extension of statutory structures rather than their replacement. This connection between new social media structures and extension, not a replacement of formal structures, was expressed by a CCM ward-level party secretary who said: 'what structures can you change when the party has a constitution?' However, many political party officials, activists and organisers acknowledged that social media gave rise to informal structures which allowed more inclusive, flexible participation, the incorporation of other non-statutory cadres, and deviation from formal structures and rules. A CHADEMA ward secretary said:

WhatsApp has really transformed the way we conduct our fundraising activities. We created WhatsApp groups of our party sponsors and frequent contributors. It has made it easier than ever before to send appeal for funds in an instantaneous manner, including through video and voice clips. When contributors sent in their money, they were immediately acknowledged in the WhatsApp group to ensure transparency and as a confirmation the funds had been received and was known to all who were in office. Other members of the group could applaud contributors by sending WhatsApp clip art showing clapping of hands.

More than half of the study's respondents said the use of social media had strengthened party structures from branch to national level. A member of CHADEMA's national secretariat said:

social media has strengthened our party structure by bringing us closer together in conducting our political activities. It made it possible for us to reach many more people. We were able to plan and execute our

campaign activities in a more transparent, participatory, inclusive manner, and quicker... This was especially true in the case of youth.

This proportion rose if those who said it had strengthened party structures to an average level are taken into account. A member of the ACT branch campaign team confirmed this, saying:

it made it easy for party members, including party agents, in polling stations, to work for long hours. We used mobile phones to send them payments, and to receive payments for them from district level. We used mobile phones to strengthen the implementation of our campaigns by sending them money for purchasing and receiving campaign items such as party flags, loudspeakers, and public rally platforms from one geographically party level to another by using social media and mobile phones in ways that were done during implementation of previous campaigns. Procurement of campaign items in this way was not witnessed before. In the past we had to travel physically and verify the items before purchase. This was slow and time consuming.

The purchase and distribution of campaign items and materials within political parties was previously closely controlled to avoid vandalism in case they fell into the wrong hands.

Communication with party members was one area with a demonstrable impact on the way social media transformed party organisation during general elections. A member of CHADEMA's zonal secretariat said: 'for the first time, through using WhatsApp, we were able to involve Tanzanian party supporters who were far away, including the USA, in planning and implementing our campaign activities. They became active members of our campaign WhatsApp groups without any additional costs at all!'

This shows how social media had transformed party structures by imposing itself as the dominant medium in conducting political party campaign activities, especially political mobilisation, promotion, interaction, and fundraising.

CONCLUSION

Social media is spreading fast across all aspects of society in Tanzania, as in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. However, rapid adoption of social media in and particularly by political parties has attracted the development of a restrictive technological legal environment. While the restrictions are justified, and founded on international conventions on communication, there was little awareness

among their framers on the benefits that come with the use of social media in politics. The study has shown how social media helped all main political parties to perform their key functions in conducting political campaign and elections, thus contributing to higher goals such as achieving more effective governance, and meaningful, peaceful, and informed elections, which ultimately translate to effective plans to achieve long-term and sustainable development goals.

The findings of this study have validated the first hypothesis, showing that despite the enactment of restrictive cybersecurity laws, social media has been effectively institutionalised as a new civic cyberspace to organise political party campaigns during recent elections. The findings have shown that social media was appreciated by both ruling and opposition political parties; however, opposition parties were more affected by the restrictive techno-political environment as their primary role is to challenge political decisions made by the incumbent by proposing alternative policy positions. These findings have also shown that the increasing use of social media in elections had a transformative effect on the way party structure was organised to conduct political mobilisation, promote party ideology, promote both inter-party and intra-party interaction, and fundraising consistent with the study's second hypothesis.

At a practical level, social media was most extensively used in disseminating party ideology, mass mobilisation during elections, and interaction with voters. It was least used in fund-raising. WhatsApp and Facebook were the most widely used social media platforms, with websites and other types of new media being least used. The findings show that political parties preferred a multimedia approach involving traditional media such as posters, loudspeakers and SMSes in order to include voters who were digitally excluded. Income, demographics, and location were found to be barriers to ownership of smartphones which support social media.

Future social media use by political parties will depend to a large extent on techno-political developments in Tanzania, which itself will depend on interparty and party-state relations over the next few years. The introduction and enforcement of the Cybersecurity, Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content), and Statistics acts will be a definitive factor in any future techno-political environmental orientation. Given its advantages and deepening use, technology will probably continue to be used in political activities including elections. Social media users will in all likelihood increasingly assert their freedom of expression in cyberspace to the extent that a determination of what is right or wrong in a future techno-political environment will be made on the basis of social media user demands in Tanzania.

The study established that the use of social media has been institutionalised in key party functions during election campaigns in Tanzania in accordance

with the first hypothesis. Social media use was widespread across party lines, and in an increasing number of campaign functions – most notably mobilisation, and interaction with party members, voters, and general citizens – as proven by the second hypothesis. The prediction is that social media will continue to gain traction in future political space in Tanzania. Voters will probably assert their rights for free speech in cyberspace, leading to reforms on the use of social media in political activities. As both these hypotheses have been validated, the study confirms the irreversible nature of social media use in political party election campaign activities, and is a reminder that the application of cybersecurity laws as they stand remains futile.

Future interventions in this area should strengthen the capacity of law enforcers and the judiciary on cybersecurity issues, and include direct dialogue between enforcers and political parties. Sociological analysis suggests the same benchmark should be used to evaluate freedom of speech in public social space, as in cyberspace. It is hard to justify why what is safely said in one space should be criminal in another. This article recommends that future research should focus on the extent to which the application of new international laws in Africa contravenes existing legislation. Further research is also needed to examine the changing techno-political environment in Africa, the extent to which it limits social media use in elections, and political discourse more generally. The article calls for particular attention to developments on restrictive cybersecurity law in Tanzania, and the extent to which social media users are reacting to protect the freedom of online speech. Further writing should include documentation of case studies on the extent to which international law has impinged on individual human rights among member states.

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