

SECOND MEDIA MONITORING REPORT OF THE 2014 MALAWI TRIPARTITE ELECTIONS

(2 - 22 April 2014)



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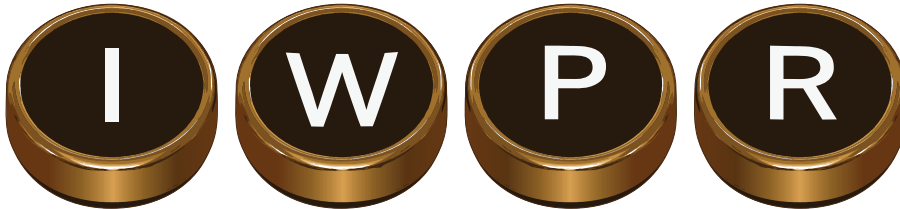
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Second Media Monitoring Report of the 2014 Malawi Tripartite Elections

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This is the second media report of the IWPR/USAID/DFID Media Monitoring Project. It covers the period 2nd -22nd April 2014. This report includes outputs of thirteen radio stations (including the two state radio stations), two television stations, two newspaper groups, seven news websites, five Facebook groups and Twitter. In total 4,371 news items were collected and analysed from the various media.

The issues under investigation and methodology remain the same.

2.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2.1 RADIO

Coverage of Tripartite Elections

Coverage patterns are similar to those noted in the 1st Media Monitoring Report (22nd March-2nd April). Local Government elections continued to receive the least coverage. Figure 1 below illustrates differences on the coverage of the tripartite elections.

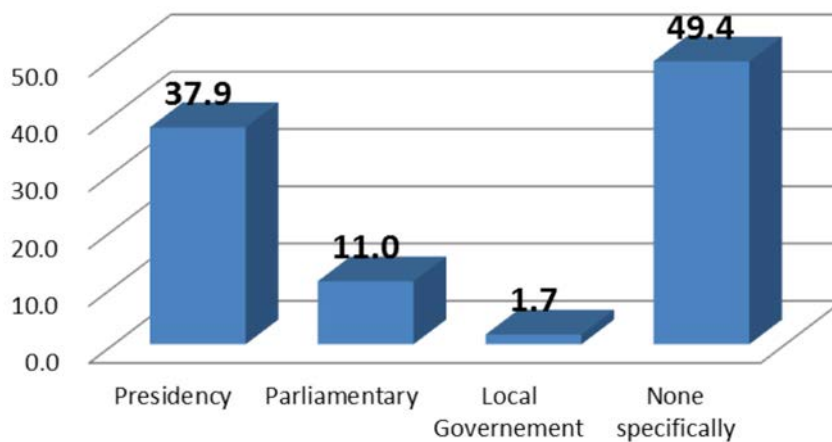


Figure 1: Radio Coverage of Tripartite Elections (%)

Most of the presidential coverage was given to the PP presidential aspirant however, in this period the PPM presidential aspirant received more coverage than previously (> 1%).

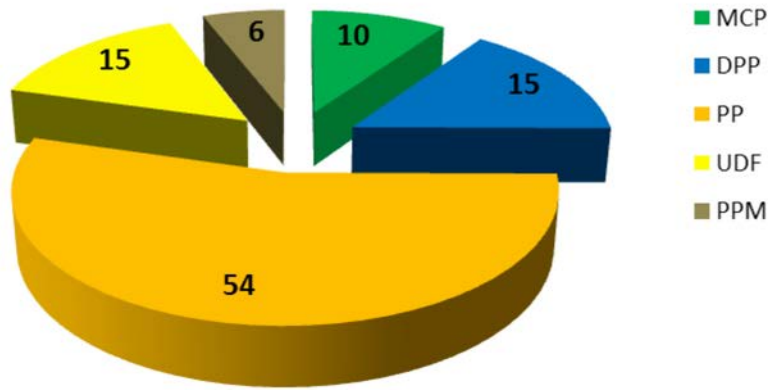


Figure 2: Radio Coverage of Presidential Aspirants (%)

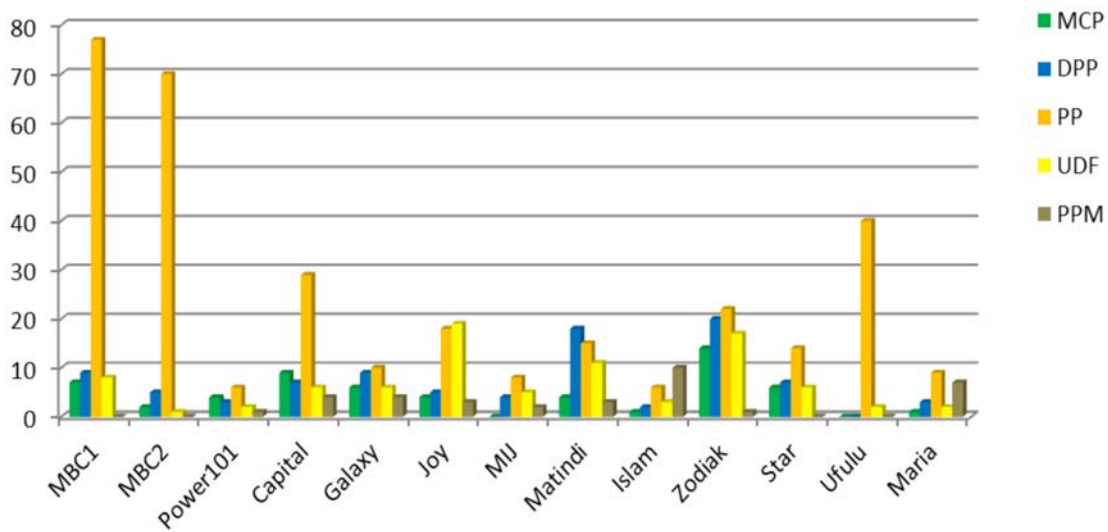


Figure 3: Coverage of Presidential Aspirants by Radio Stations (%)

Topical Issues

The topmost issues featured in news bulletins were: the Electoral process (32%, N=1034), Law and order (9%, N=302), Cashgate and other corruption issues (8%, N=277), Economy (8%, N=275), Gender, youth and disability (209) and Agriculture (196).

Topical Issues

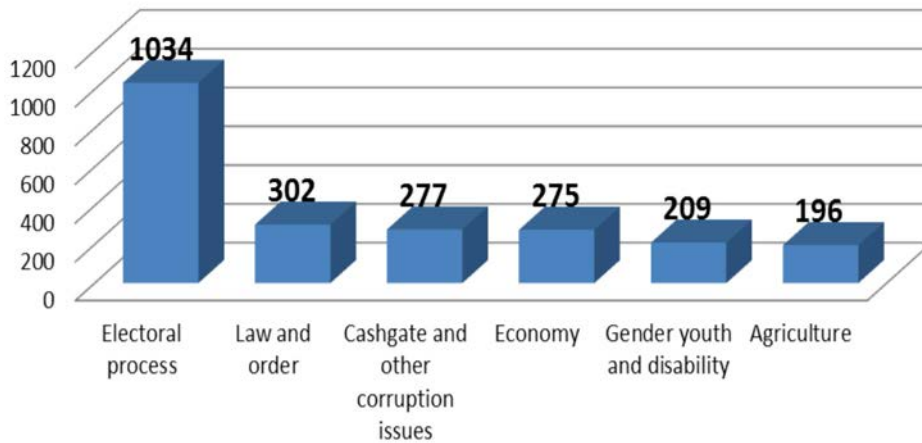


Figure 4: Topical Issues (N)

Table 1 below illustrates the coverage of issues by radio stations. Cashgate and other corruption issues received more coverage from MBC1 than previously (2 news items only).

	MBC1	MBC2	Power 101	Capital	Galaxy	Joy	MIJ	Matindi	Islam	Zodiak	Star	Ufulu	Maria
Electoral process	118	20	25	92	59	133	89	122	111	92	83	42	48
Law and order	19	4	5	14	32	35	2	50	51	50	23	6	11
Cashgate & other issues	137	24	30	106	91	168	91	172	162	142	106	48	59
Economy	27	19	6	20	28	22	15	41	37	25	15	17	3
Gender youth and disability	26	10	10	7	18	21	3	27	32	17	20	10	8
Agriculture	35	34	4	7	8	22	6	13	13	19	12	17	6

Table 1: Topical Issues according to Radio Station

Tone of Coverage

The overall tone of coverage still remains mostly neutral (50%, N=860). Articles which had a positive tone were more (31%, N=531) than articles with a negative tone (18%, N=315).

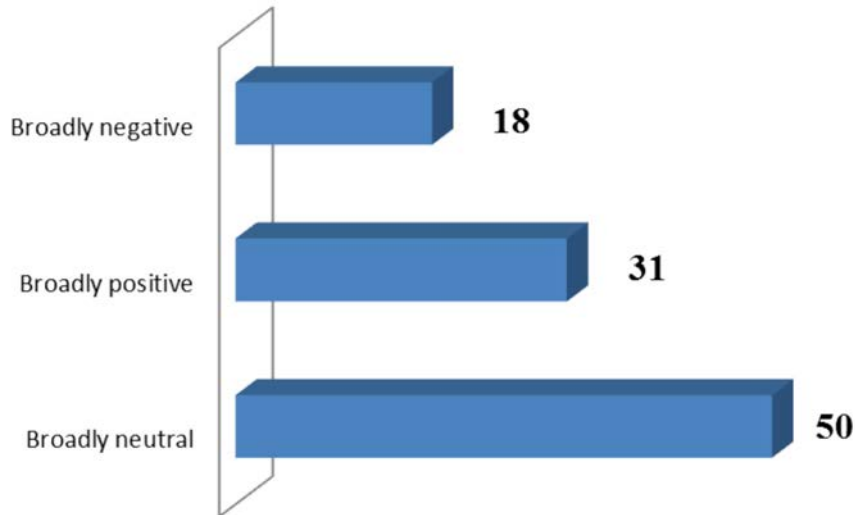


Figure 5: Overall Tone of Coverage on Radio

The Peoples Party continued to receive most of the positive as well as most of the negative coverage. See Figure 6 and 7 below.

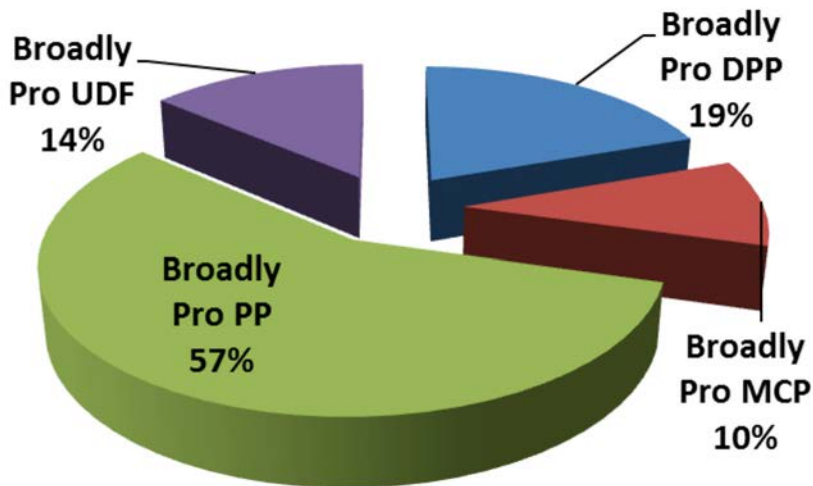


Figure 6: Positive Tone of Coverage by Radio

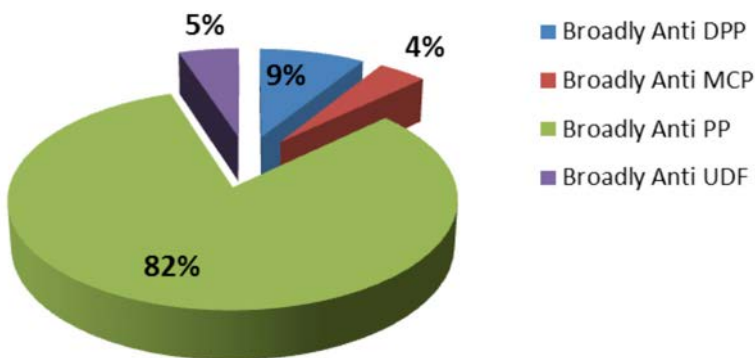


Figure 7: Negative Coverage by Radio

Figures 8, 9 and 10 below provide more detail on tone of coverage according to radio stations. The state radios, MBC 1 and 2, and Ufulu gave most of the positive coverage to the Peoples Party. Matindi, Zodiak and Galaxy gave most of the negative coverage to the Peoples Party. The DPP got most of its positive coverage from Matindi and Galaxy while MCP got most positive coverage from Matindi. The UDF got most of its positive coverage from Joy and Matindi.

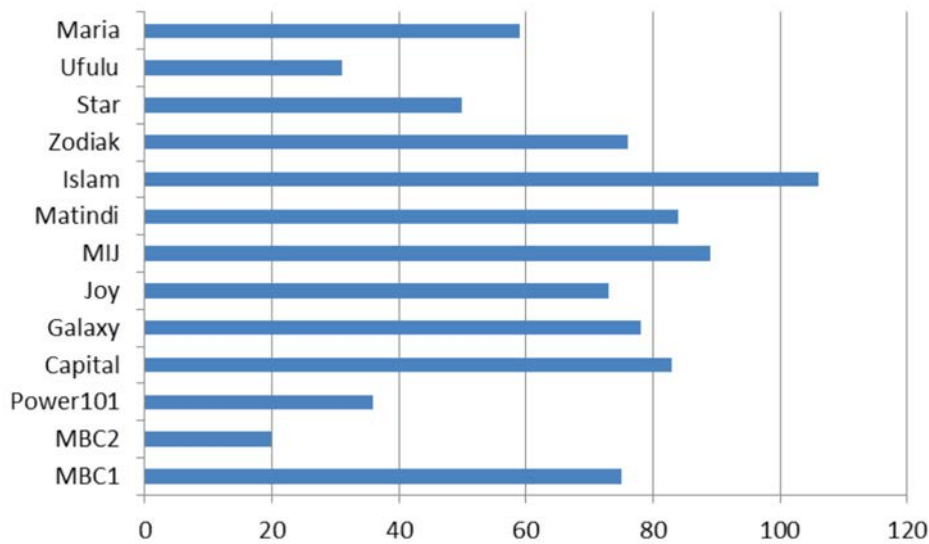


Figure 8: Neutral Tone according to Radio Station

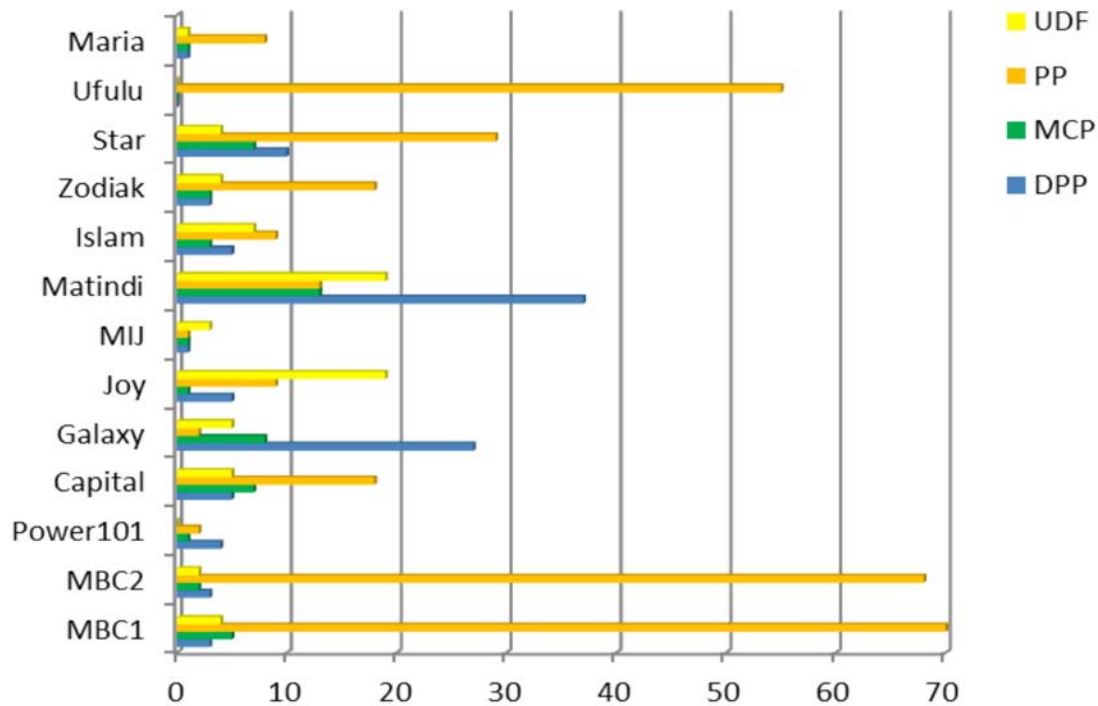


Figure 9: Positive Tone Coverage by Radio Station

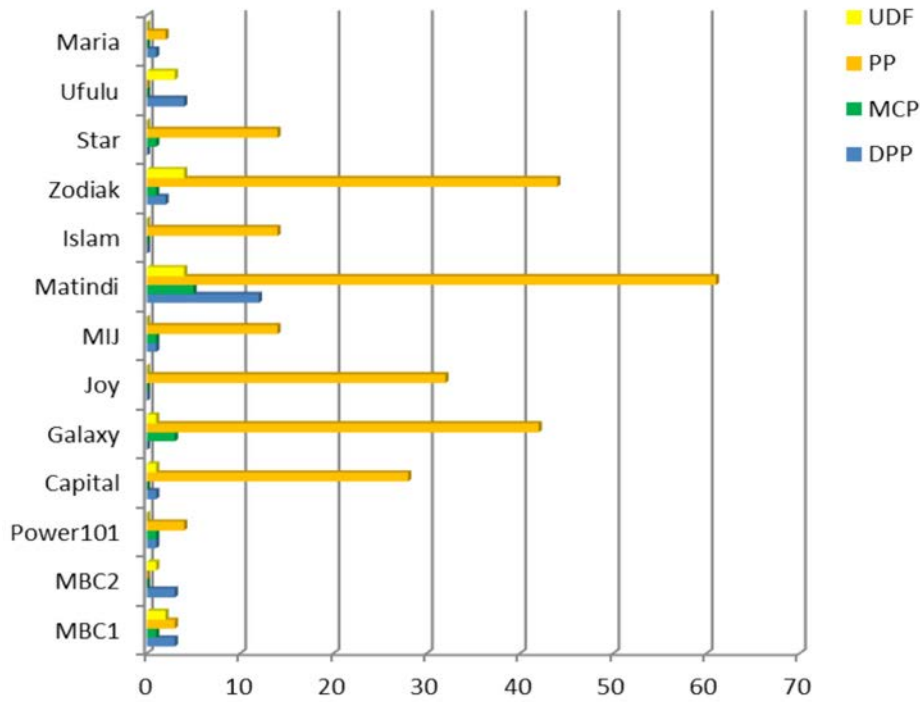


Figure 10: Negative Tone by Radio Station

2.2 TELEVISION

The project monitored two television stations: MBC TV and Times TV. 535 news items were collected and analysed.

Coverage of Tripartite Elections

Most coverage was given to presidential elections (MBC TV, 59.7%, N=218; Times TV, 35%, N=58) and the least coverage was given to local government elections with only 8 (2.2%) news items on MBC TV and 2 (1%) news items on Times TV.

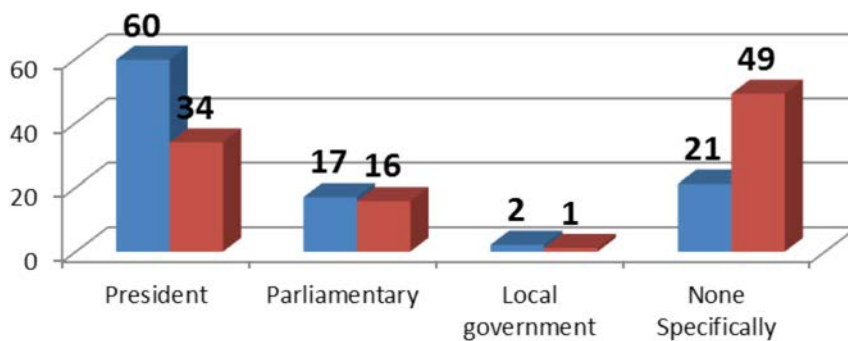


Figure 11: Coverage of Tripartite elections (%)

On MBC TV, most coverage for the presidential aspirants was given to the PP presidential candidate and the least coverage to the MCP presidential aspirant. The Times TV gave equally most coverage to the PP presidential aspirant while the UDF presidential coverage got zero coverage. See Figure 12 below.

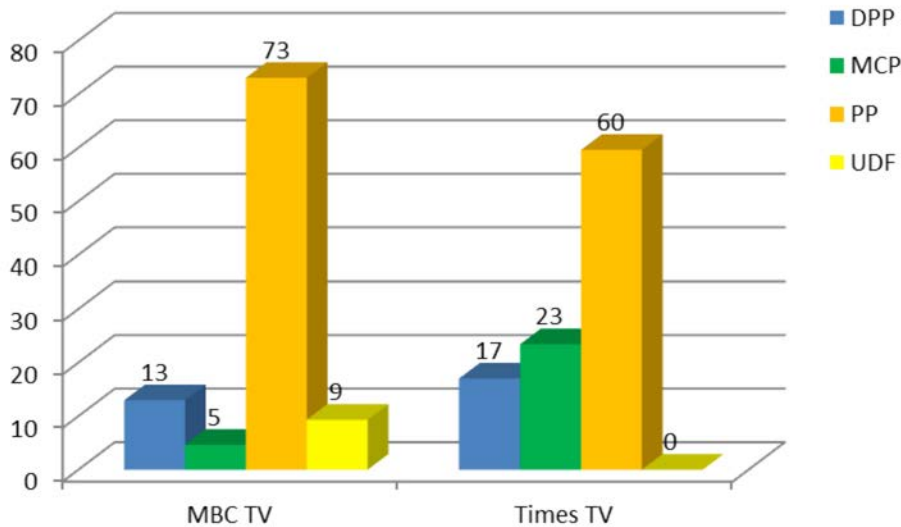


Figure 12: Coverage of Presidential Aspirants on Television.

Topical Issues

Data on topical issues are presented in Figures 13 and 14 below. The main issues covered by MBC TV were the Electoral process (27%, N=220), Agriculture (11%, N=93), Economy (8%, N=68) and Gender, youth and disability (6%, N=53). However, Law and order issues got minimal coverage (2%, N=13) during this period and Education got more coverage (6%, N=47) than previously.

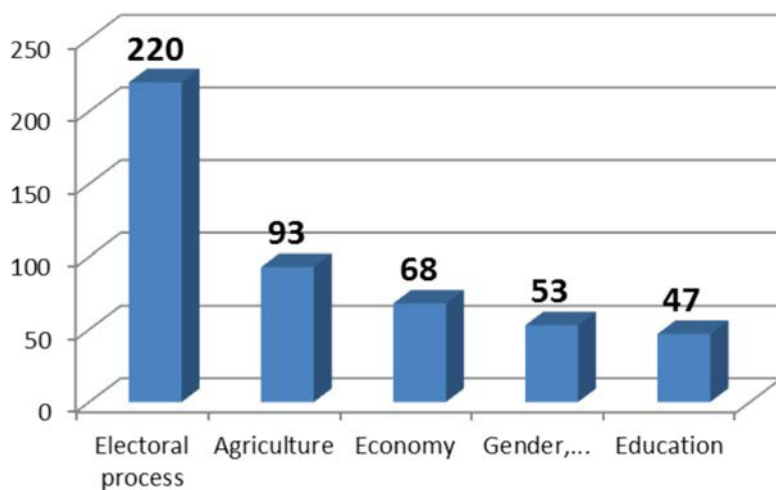


Figure 13: Topical Issues on MBC TV.

The main issues covered on Times TV were similar to those covered by MBC TV except for Law & order and Cashgate & other corruption issues which received more coverage than on MBC TV.

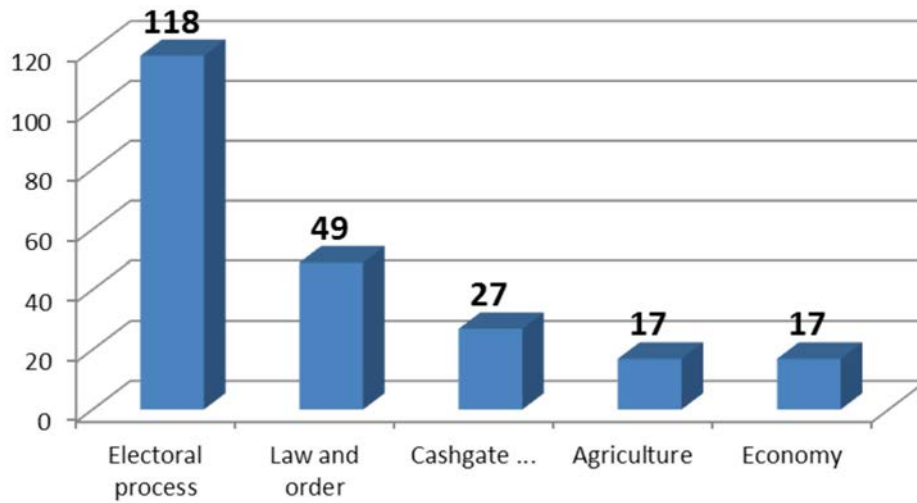


Figure 14: Topical Issues on Times TV.

Tone of Coverage

The overall tone of coverage on TV was mostly neutral. There was also significantly a higher number of articles which had a positive rather than a negative tone. See Figure 15 below.

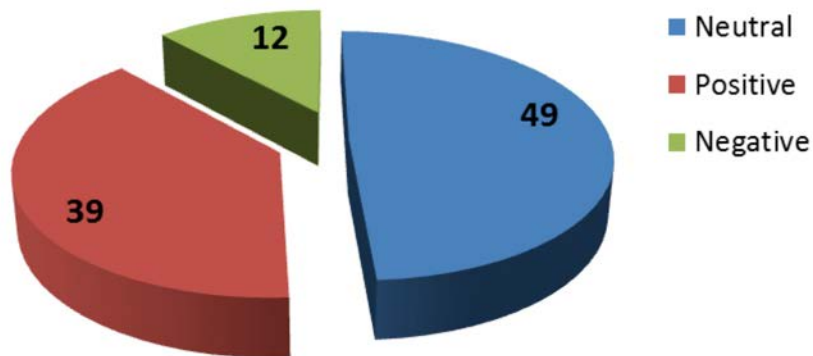


Figure 15: Overall Tone of Coverage

MBC TV gave most of its positive coverage to PP. The Times TV gave considerable amount of positive coverage to PP, DPP and MCP. See Figure 16 below.

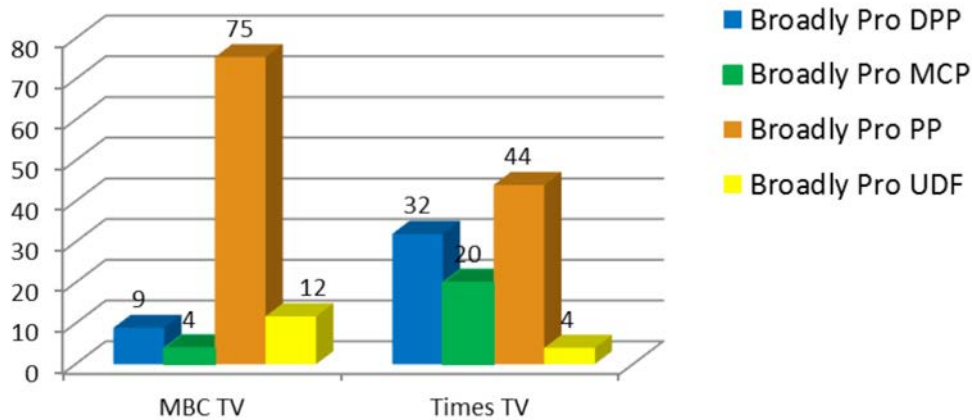


Figure 16: Positive Tone of Coverage by Television Station

The Times TV had the highest number of news items which were classified as broadly anti PP while MBC TV had no news items which could be classified as broadly anti PP and anti MCP. However there were more items which could be classified as broadly anti UDF and anti DPP. See Figure 17 below.

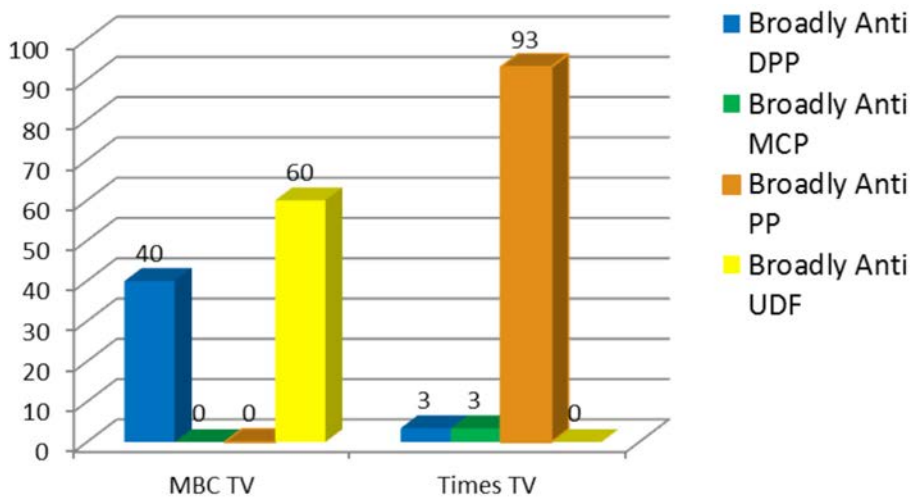


Figure 17: Negative Tone of Coverage

2.3 NEWSPAPERS

The project monitored and analysed a total of 641 articles from the two print media houses.

Coverage of Tripartite Elections

Figure 18 below presents findings on coverage of tripartite elections by The Times Group and The Nations Group with a view to finding out which of the three elections were receiving most coverage.

Newspapers Coverage of Tripartite Elections

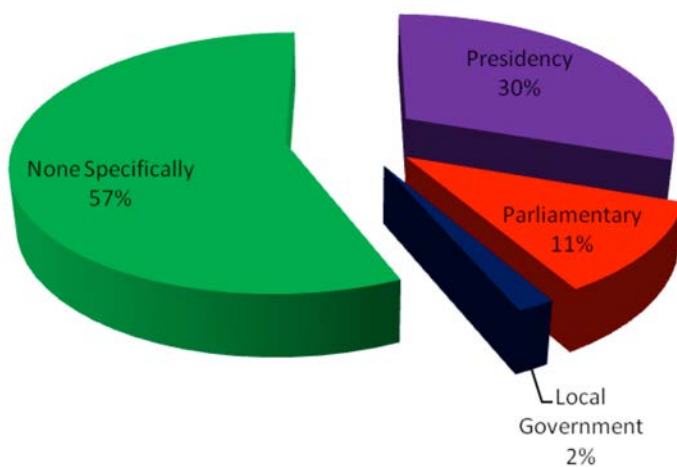


Figure 18: Coverage of Tripartite Elections by Newspapers

The figure shows that most coverage was given to the presidential election (30%, N=193), followed by Parliamentary, (11%, N=72), and similar to the last report, the Local government elections received the least coverage, (2%, N=12). There were articles that did not specifically indicate the type of election being covered. (57%, N= 360). In general, the newspapers' pattern of coverage was similar to the trend identified in the first report.

Topical Issues

Figure 19 presents the topical issues discussed by both The Times Group and Nation Group Publications Limited.

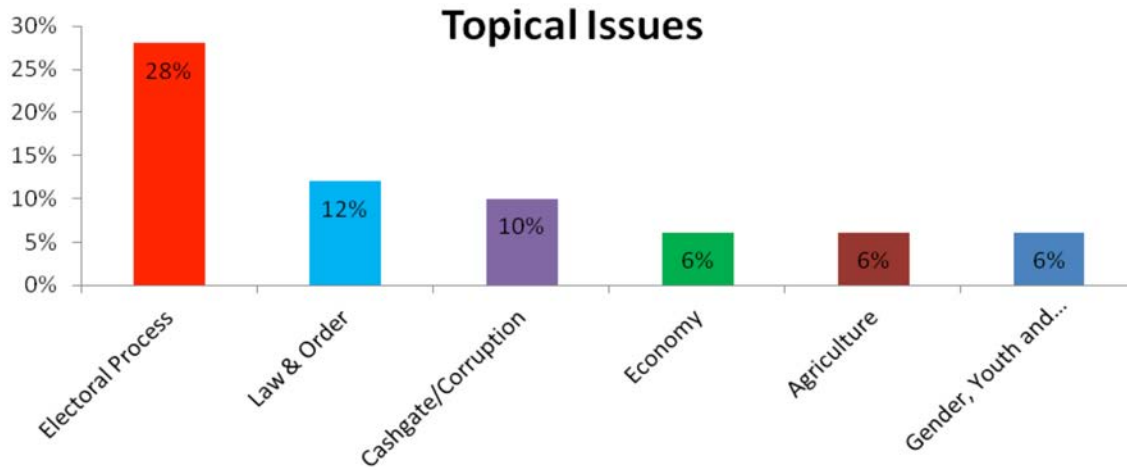


Figure 19: Topical Issues covered by Newspapers.

The figure above shows that the electoral process received most coverage (28% N=304); followed by Law and Order or public security (12%, N=130), Cashgate or Corruption (10%, N=105). The other topical issues covered were Economy, Agriculture, including Gender, Youth and Disability with 6% (N=78) each respectively. The trend is similar to the first media monitoring results that covered the period 22nd March to 2nd April 2014.

Tone of Coverage

Tone of coverage of the newspapers

The Times Group - articles where positive Tone detected, by party

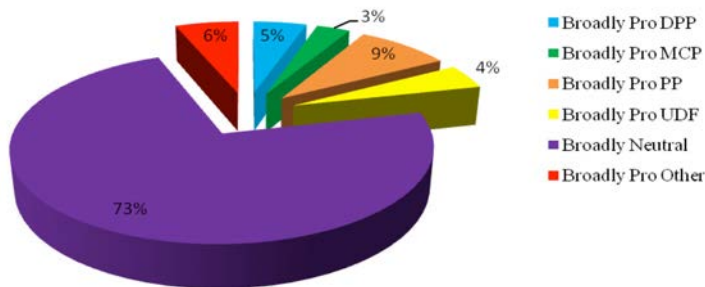


Figure 20: Positive Tone of Coverage by Times Group

Figure 20 shows that coverage that was deemed positive. The analysis shows that the PP received most positive coverage of 9% (N=28), followed by DPP, 5% (N=16), then UDF, 4% (N=14), MCP 3% (N=10) and the other parties at 6% (N=19). However, most of the Times articles were neutral in tone (73% N=232).

The Nation Group - articles where positive tone detected by party

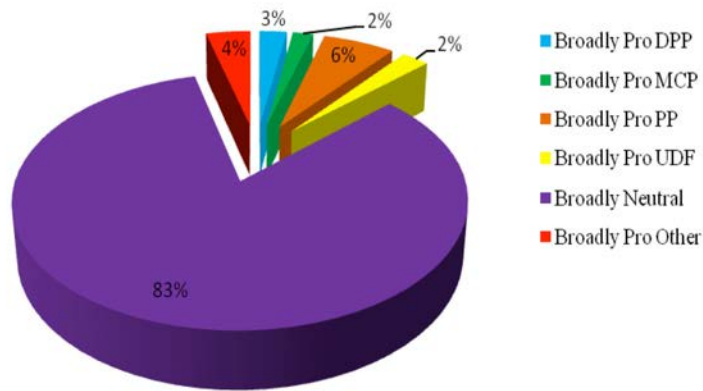


Figure 21: Positive Tone coverage by The Nations Group

The figure above presents data on those articles deemed positive in The Nation Group newspapers. The overall tone of coverage, just as with The Times Group, was mostly neutral (83%, N=276). However, there was significant positive coverage towards PP (6%, N=21), followed by other parties (4%, N=13), DPP (3%, N=8), MCP and UDF (2%, N=6) respectively.

Apart from the positive stance, the Project also analysed those articles deemed negative in tone in The Times Group newspapers by party. Figure 22 below shows that The Times Group newspapers were broadly anti-PP (91%, N=51), followed by the DPP and UDF (4%, N=2) respectively, then the MCP, (2%, N=1). The pattern is almost similar to the phase one monitoring results. The remaining articles (N=585) were neutral in tone.

The Times Group - articles where negative tone of coverage detected, by party

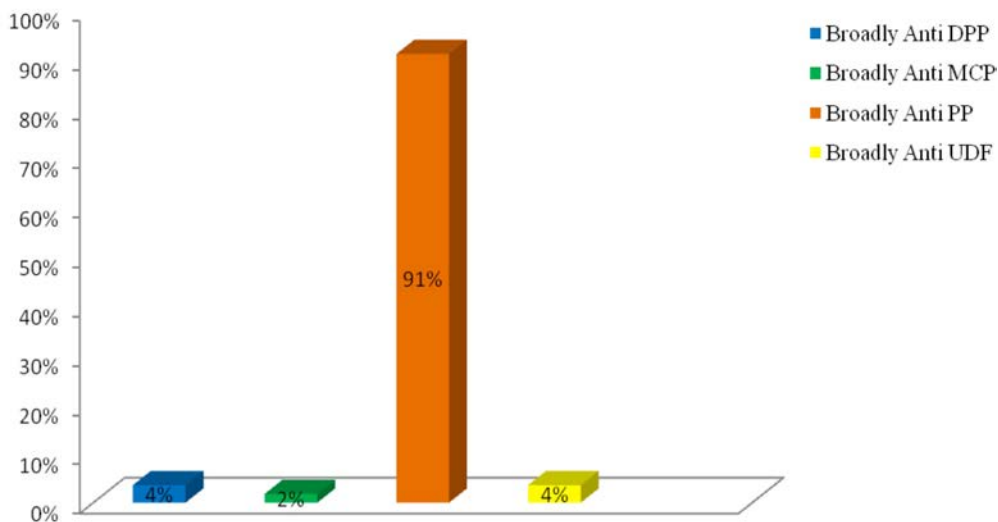


Figure 22: Tone of coverage by The Times Group

Figure 23 shows The Nation Group newspapers coverage of articles deemed negative in tone. Similar to the previous report, this analysis found the following: broadly Anti PP, (68%, N=30) followed by Anti UDF, 11% (N=5), the other parties at 9% (N=4), then Anti DPP 7% (N=3) and Anti MCP 5% (N=2). The remaining articles were either positive or neutral towards the parties.

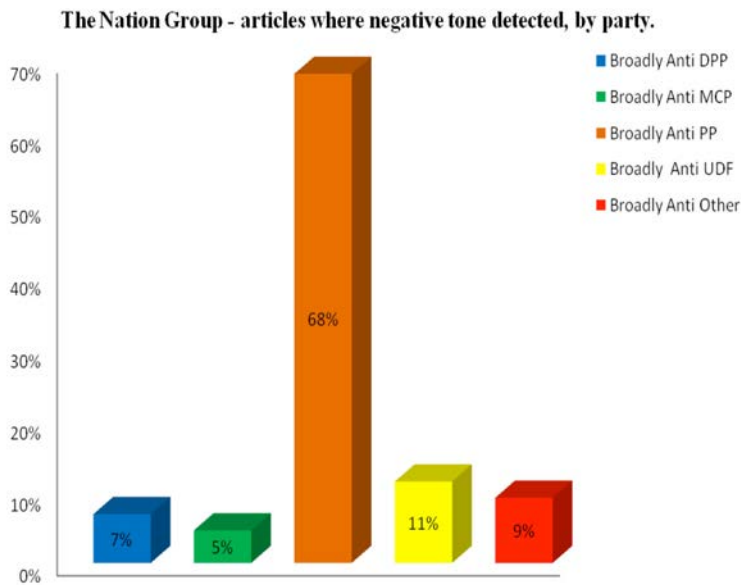


Figure 22: Tone of coverage by The Times Group

2.4 NEWS WEBSITES

The project monitored seven news websites Figure 24 shows that most entries came from Nyasatimes ((32.2%, N=137) followed by Malawi Voice (27.4%, N=74), Mana Online (17.4%, N=74), Malawi24 (16.5%, N=68) and Maravi Post (15.1%, N=64). There were not a significant number of articles on The Oracle Times (1.4%, N=6) and Banthu Times (.5, N=2). On Facebook, we monitored 152 entries found in the following Groups - . My Malawi My Views which had the highest number of entries: (83.6%, N=114), followed by Malawi Freedom Network (16.5%, N=25), Malawi@50 (3.1, N=4) and Malawi Breaking News (3.8, N=5). In total, 152 chats were monitored. Of these, the traffic was heaviest on My Malawi My Views where we monitored 78 (88.6%) chats, followed by Malawi Freedom Network N=4 (4.5%), Malawi@50 N=3 (3.4%) and Malawi Breaking News N=3, (3.4%). Data on coverage of tripartite elections on Facebook is summarized in Figure 7. Focus is mainly on presidential elections (83%) then the Parliamentary (6%) and then Local Government (3%).

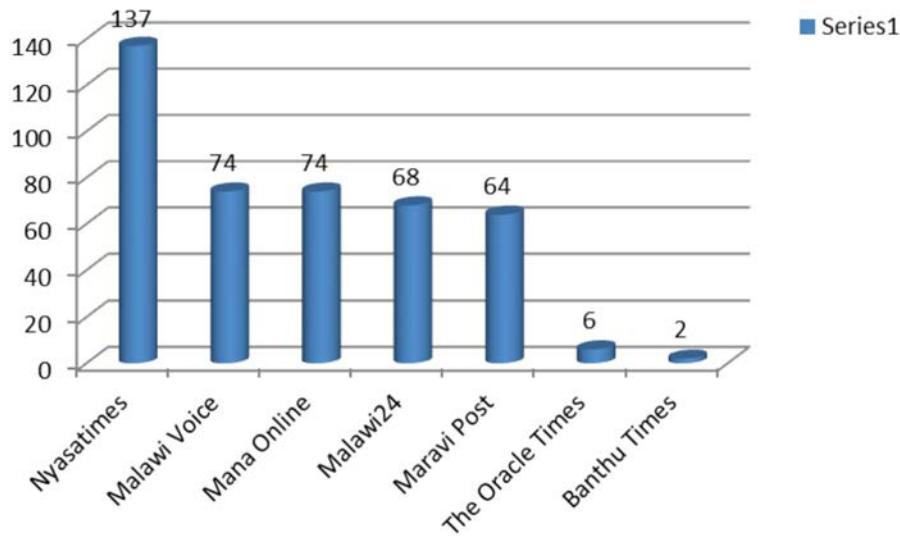


Figure 24: Number of News websites monitored

Coverage of Tripartite Elections on News Websites

The breakdown of coverage of the tripartite elections on news websites are presented in Figure 25.

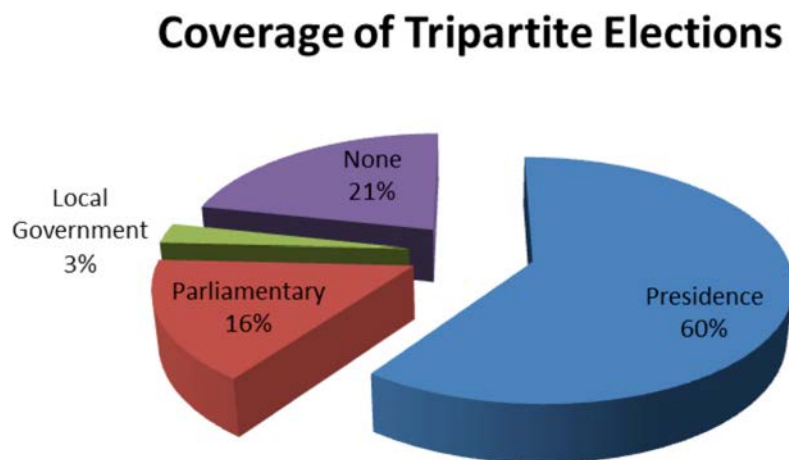


Figure 25: Coverage of Tripartite Elections on News Websites(N=425)

As observed in the first report, and in the other media reported on earlier on, the news websites are still giving far more coverage to the presidential elections than to the other two elections. It has to be noted that the presidential election sets the tone of the tripartite elections and the focus remains on how many votes the presidential candidate will amass which in turn will influence the distribution of the parliamentary and local government seats.

The first past the post system (FPPS) and non compliance to Section 65 of the Malawi Constitution encourages MPs to cross the floor in parliament once a presidential winner has been declared. This may explain why the presidential candidates get the lion share of the coverage, or are directly quoted, in the various media monitored (see Figure 26).

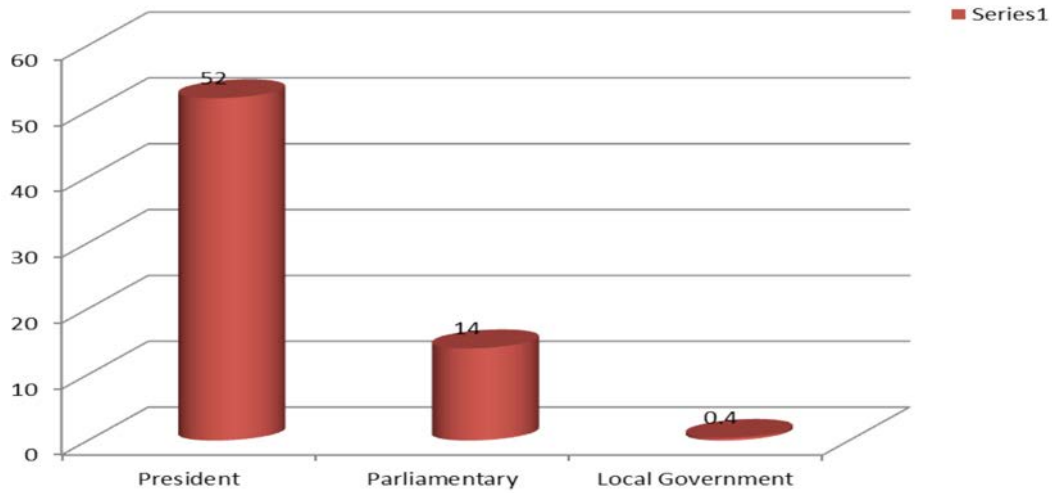


Figure 26: Politicians mentioned on News Websites (%)

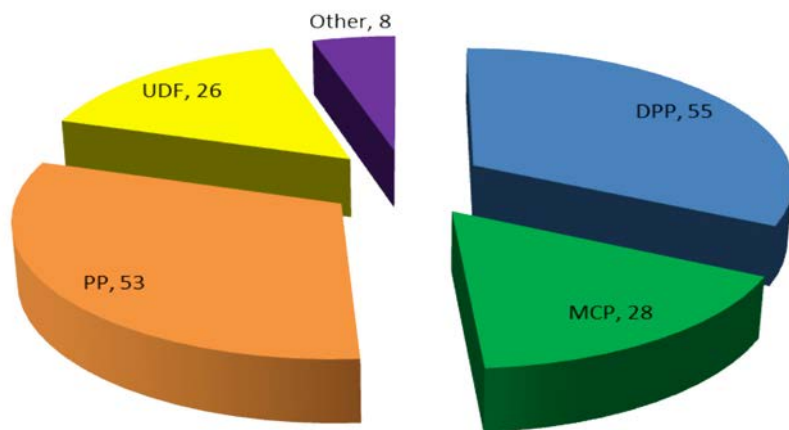


Figure 27: Party Presidents mentioned on news websites (N=425)

Topical Issues on News Websites

Figure 28 summarises data on topical issues discussed on news websites.

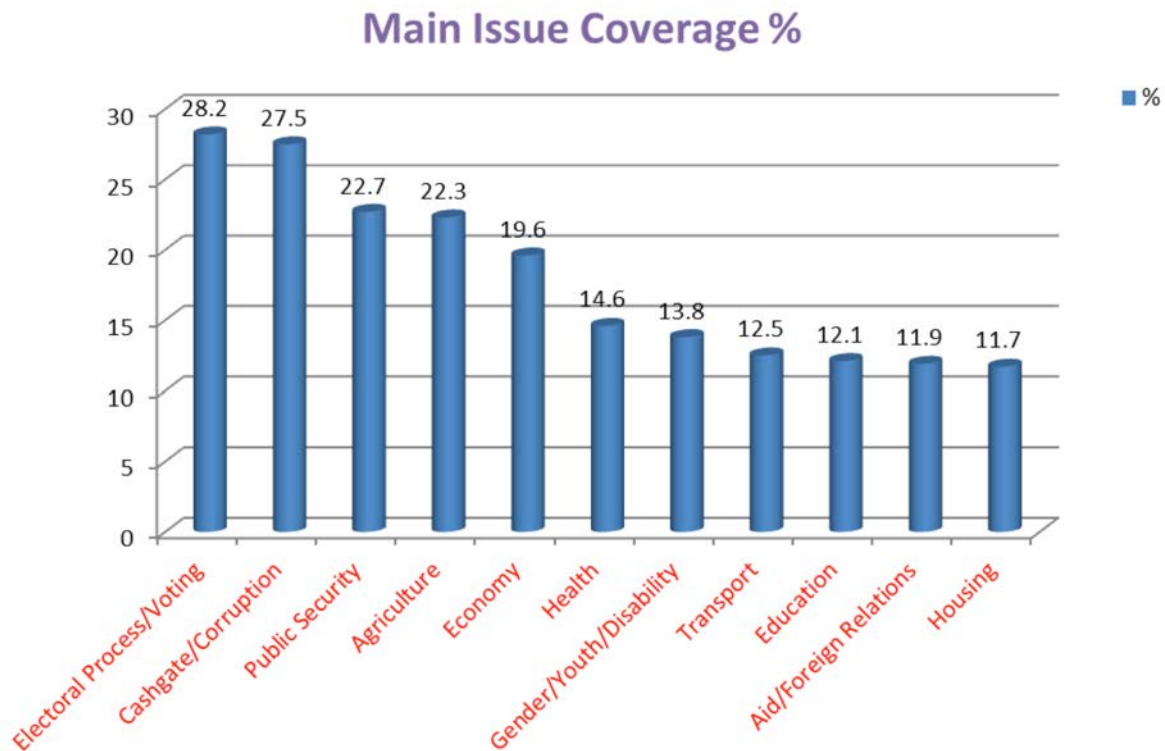


Figure 28: Issue coverage on news websites

The main issues continue to be the electoral process or voting procedures (28.2%, N=150) followed by cashgate/corruption (27.5%, N=143) public security (22.7%, N=118), Agriculture (22.3%, N=116) and the economy (19.6%, N=102). Interestingly, news websites are discussing more issues affecting the Malawian nation than the other media. One issue that has received continued low coverage in all media is that of the law relating to homosexuality.

Tone of coverage

Figures 29 and 30 present data on the tone of coverage. Figure 29 reveals that the tone of coverage was as follows: broadly neutral (38.1%) proDPP (16.7%) but antiPP (N=150) followed by antiDPP (N=28) and antiUDF (N=22), (see Figure 30). Unlike in the first report where PP received the highest scores for both positive and negative tone, this data shows that DPP received more positive coverage whilst PP received the most negative coverage.

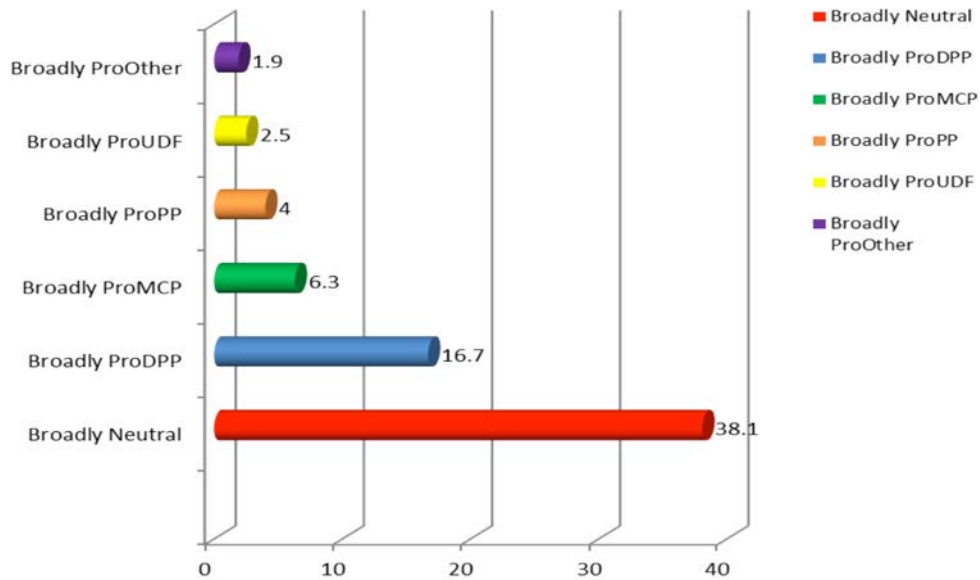


Figure 29: Positive Tone of Coverage on news websites

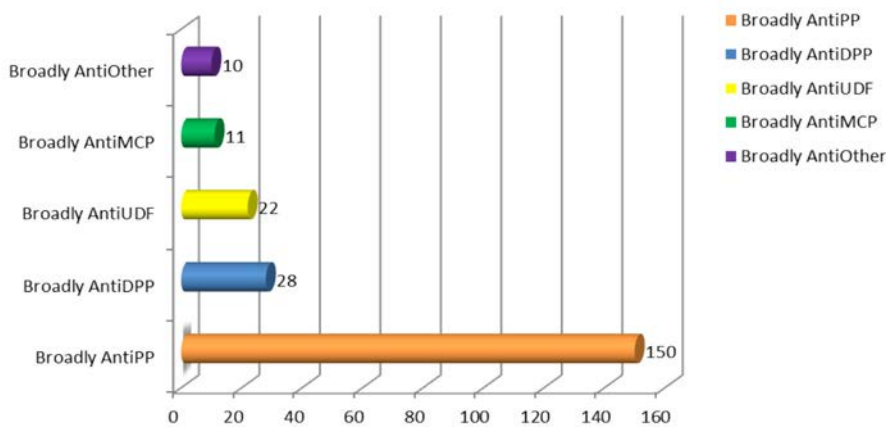


Figure 30: Negative tone coverage on news websites

2.5 FACEBOOK

During this monitoring period, seven Facebook groups were monitored. 665 entries were collected mainly from My Malawi My views (84.6%, N=515), Malawi Freedom Network (12.9%, N=86), Malawi Breaking News (4.7%, N=22), Malawi @50 (.7, N=50). New groups which were not in the first report, but were monitored during this period, include Kusanthula Zakukhosi Pa Malawi (2.5%, N=15) My Malawi My Land (1.1%, N=7) and Malawi Daily (1.1, N=7). Most entries came from My Malawi my Views. The analysis excludes groups with less than 2% entries (see Figure 31).

FACEBOOK Groups Monitored

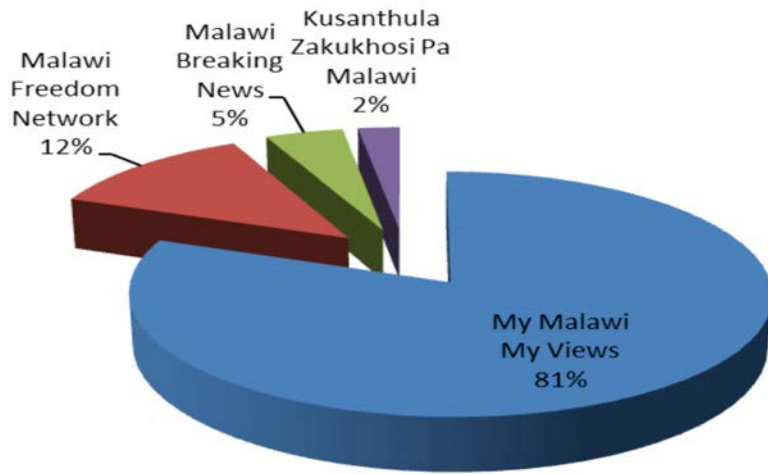


Figure 31: Facebook Groups monitored and analysed

Coverage of Tripartite elections on Facebook

Similar to the other media and the first report, Facebook gave far and away the most coverage to presidential elections (82.1%, N=544)

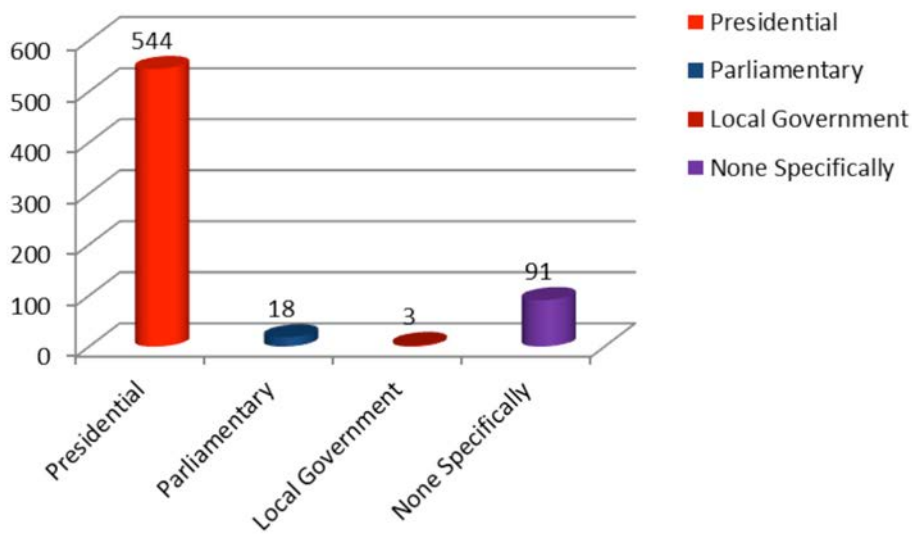


Figure 32: Coverage of Tripartite Elections by Facebook

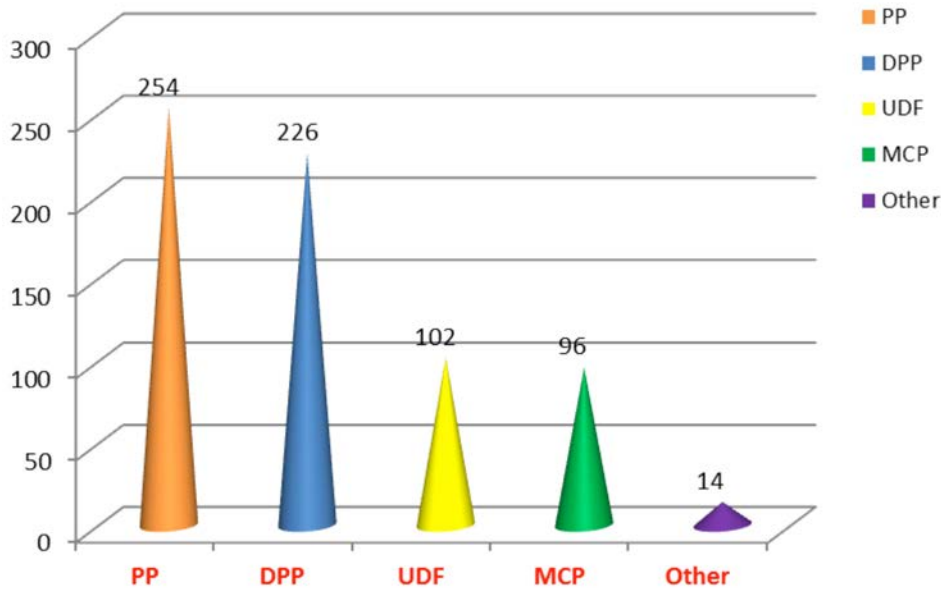


Figure 33: Party Presidential candidates mentioned in Facebook

Two main party presidents dominated the chats on Facebook: PP (38.3, N=254) followed by DPP (34%, N=226). Other parties mentioned (3.2%, N=14) included AFORD, PPM, Umodzi Party, Petra, etc.

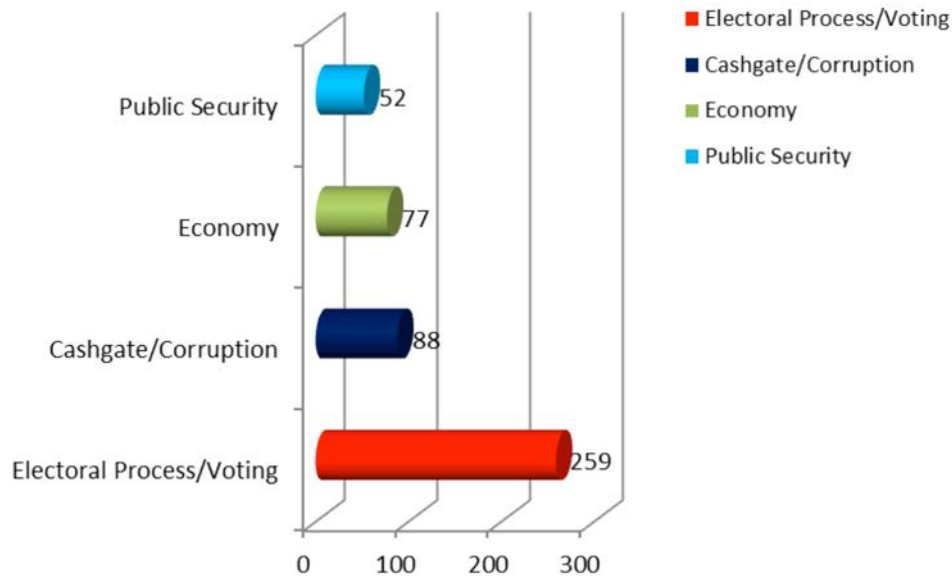


Figure 34: Issue Coverage on Facebook

Facebook mainly discussed issues pertaining to: electoral process or voting procedures (39%, N=259), Cashgate and other corruption related issues (34%, N=88), Economy (11.8%, N=77) and Public Security (8.3%, N=52).

Positive Tone, N=425

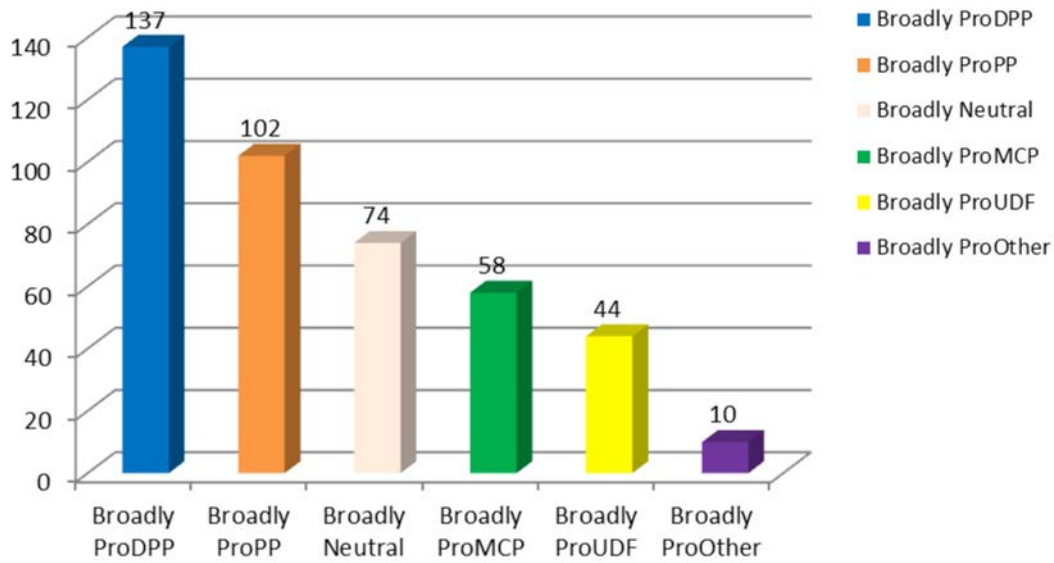


Figure 35: Positive tone of coverage on Facebook

There is lack of neutrality on Facebook (11.1%, N=74). Most of the chats are mainly ProDPP (20.6%, N=137) and ProPP (15.3%, N=102) followed by chats deemed neutral tone. This might mean that particular groups are more political than other more non-political groups.

2.6 TWITTER

For the first time the project analysed 226 twitter entries in relation to the forthcoming 20th May elections.

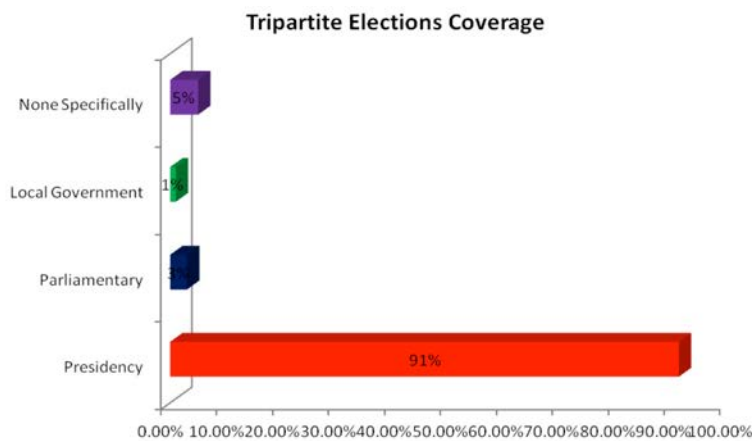


Figure 36: Coverage of Tripartite Elections

Twitter results reveal that more coverage was given to the presidential elections (91%, N=206) than the parliamentary and local government elections. The main issues on Twitter were the electoral process N=65 health (N=16), then religion, and Gender, Youth and Disability with same number of entries (N=12) respectively.

Topical issues on Twitter

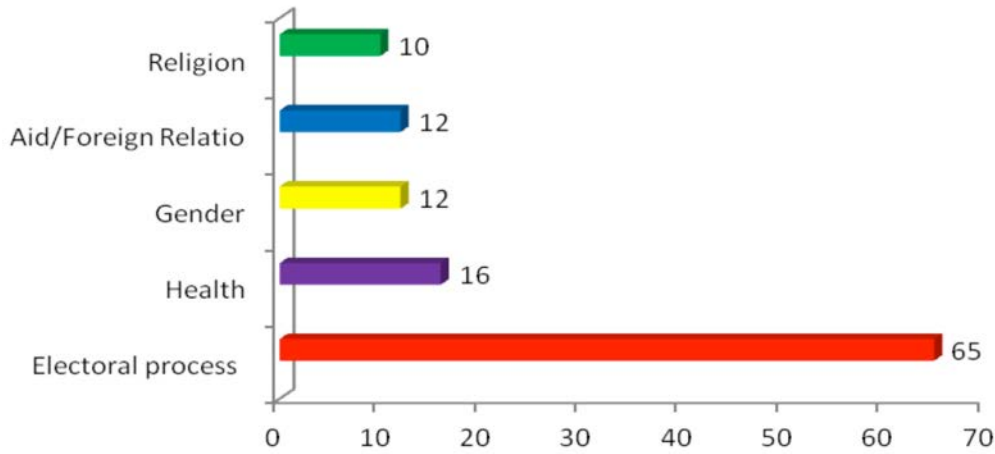


Figure 37: Topical Issues on Twitter

Data on the tone is presented in Figures 38 and 39. There were no neutral (0%) posts. Posts that were positive tone were as follows: ProUDF (27%), ProPP (26%), ProMCP (24%) and ProDPP (21%).

Twitter positive Tone of Coverage detected by party

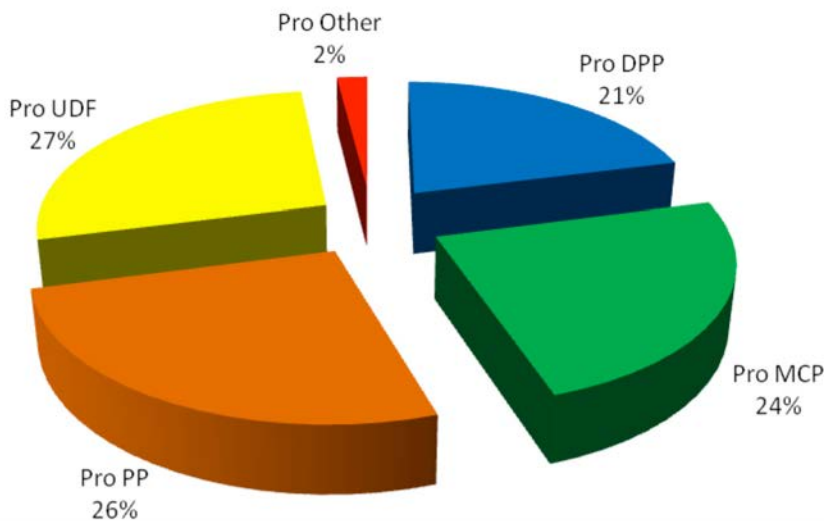


Figure 38: Positive tone of coverage by Twitter

Twitter negative tone of coverage detected by party

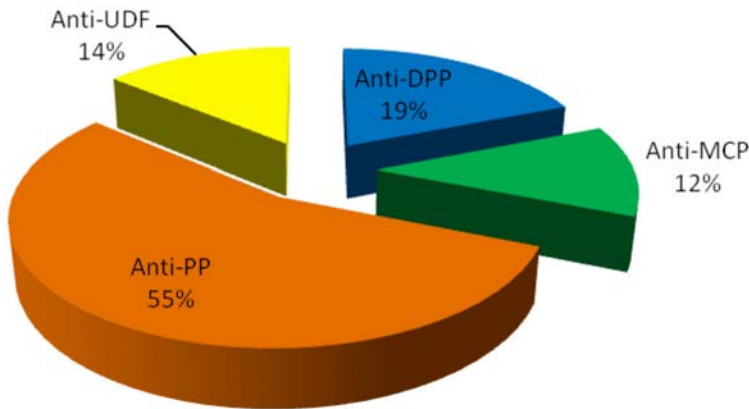


Figure 39: Negative tone of coverage by Twitter

The main negative posts were aimed against the PP (55%) and the DPP (19%).

2.7 OVERALL COVERAGE AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This section reports on the overall performance of the various media monitored in terms of significance of coverage of presidential aspirants, issues coverage and tone. It further summarises the findings on the basis of the findings.

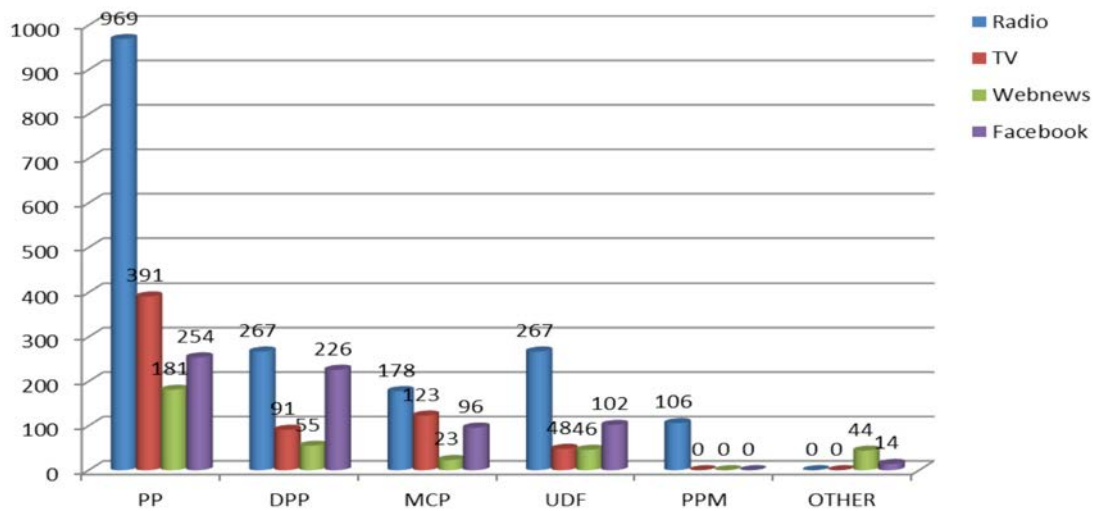


Figure 40: Overall media coverage of political parties

PP received significant coverage from all media (radio, TV, Webnews and Facebook) except on Facebook.

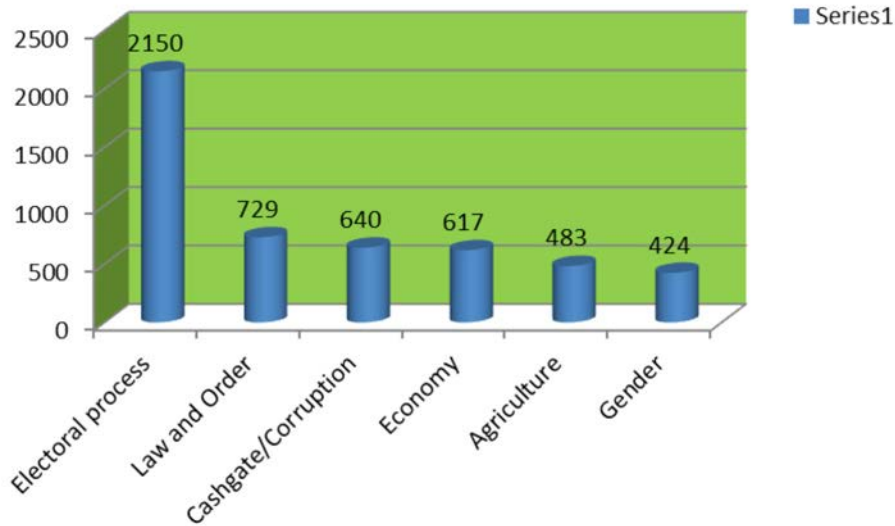


Figure 41: Overall Media Issue Coverage

The dominant issues covered by the media are mainly the electoral process (N=2150), followed by law and order or public security, Cashgate and related corruption issues and the economy.

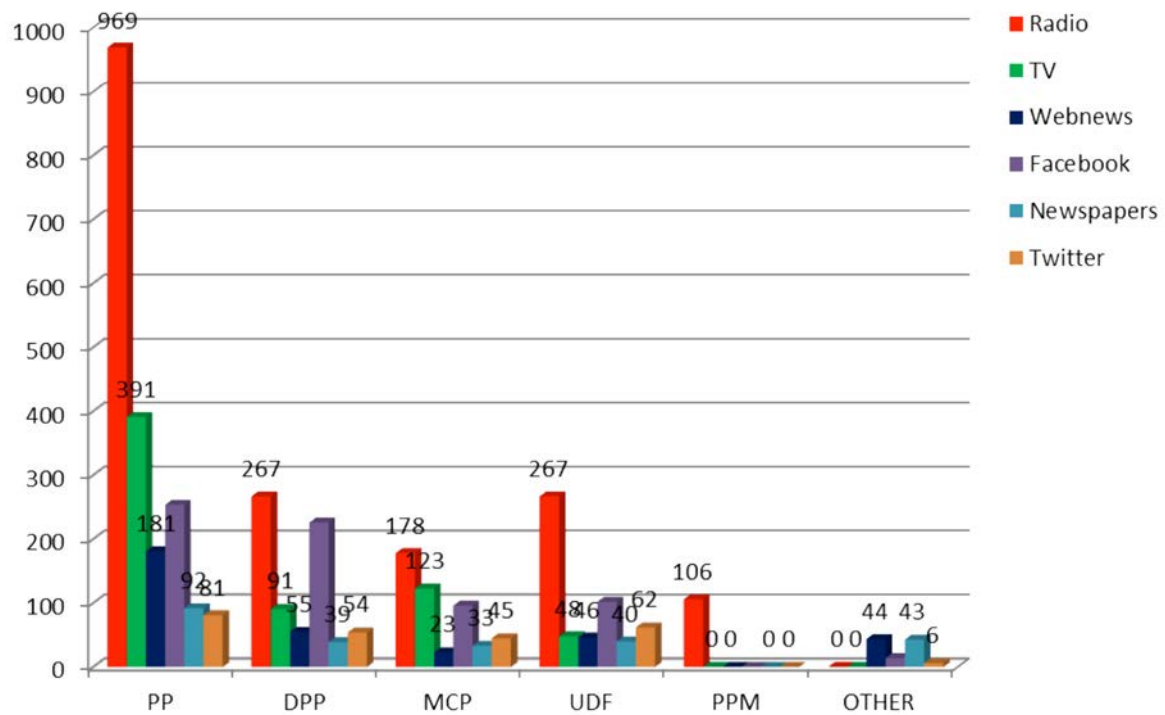


Figure 42: Overall (N) Media Coverage of Presidential Aspirants

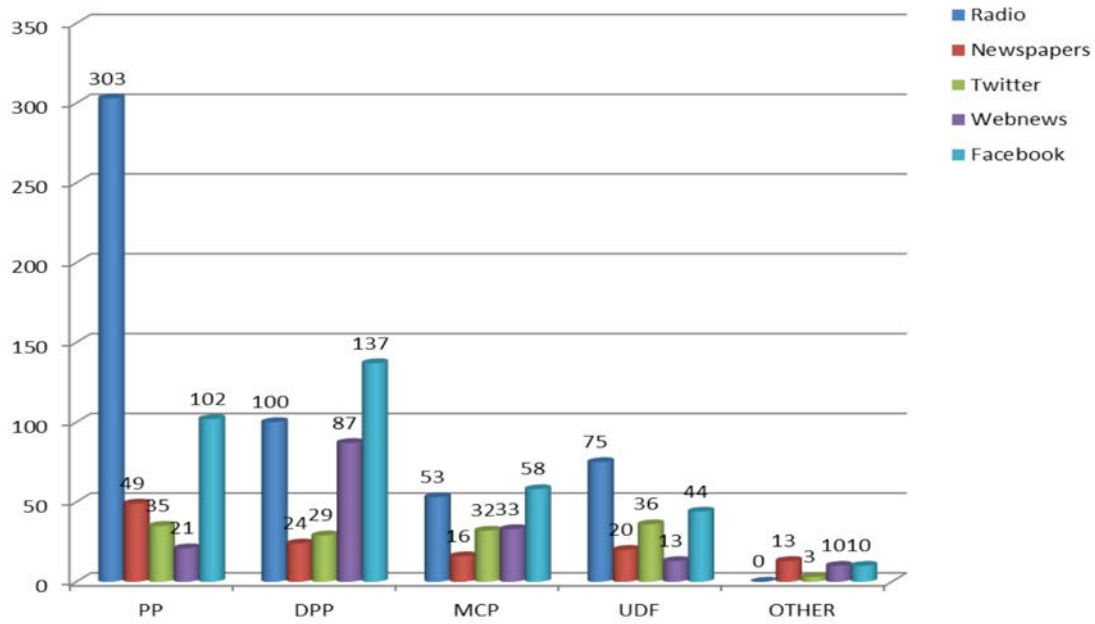


Figure 43: Overall Media Positive Tone coverage

PP continued to receive significant positive and negative tone coverage from the media especially the radio. DPP is dominant on Facebook and news Websites.

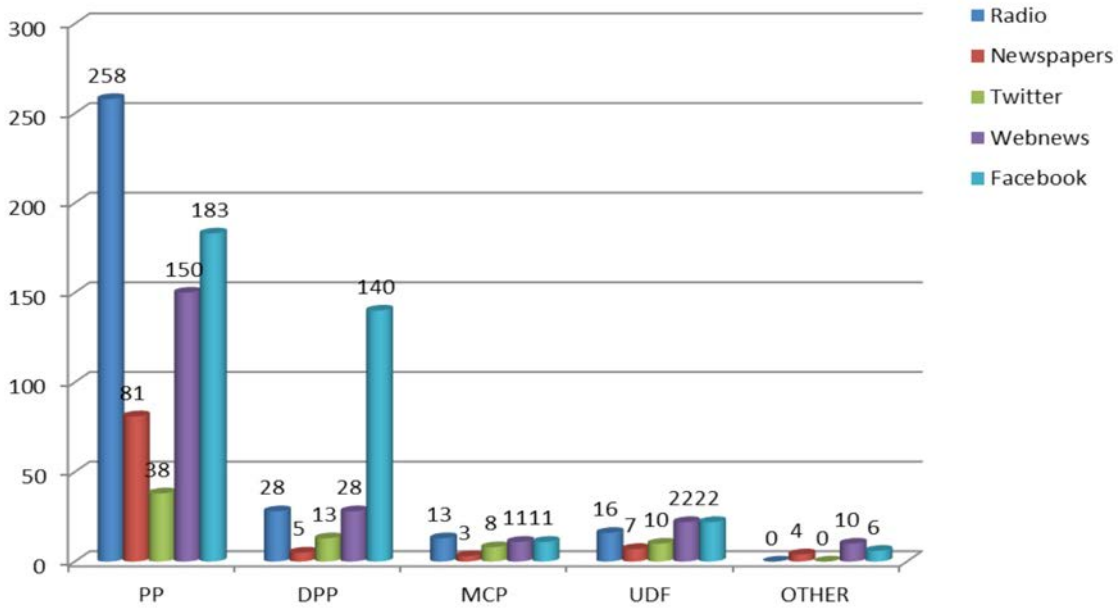


Figure 44: Overall Media Negative Tone Coverage

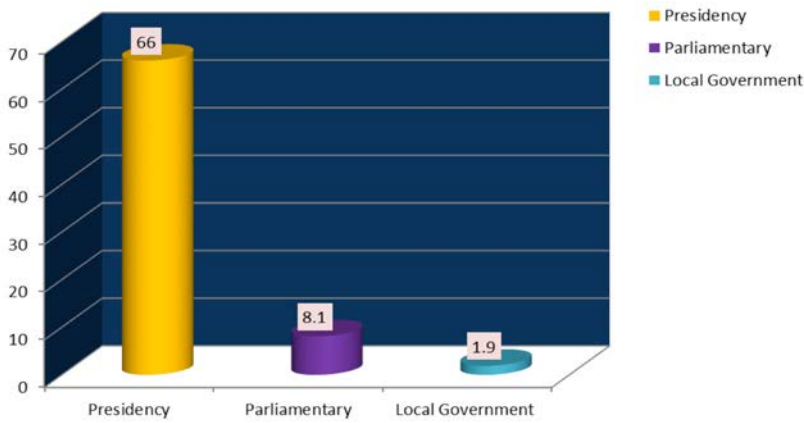


Figure 45: Overall Media Coverage of Tripartite elections(%)

Presidential elections received overwhelmingly more coverage than the parliamentary and local government elections.

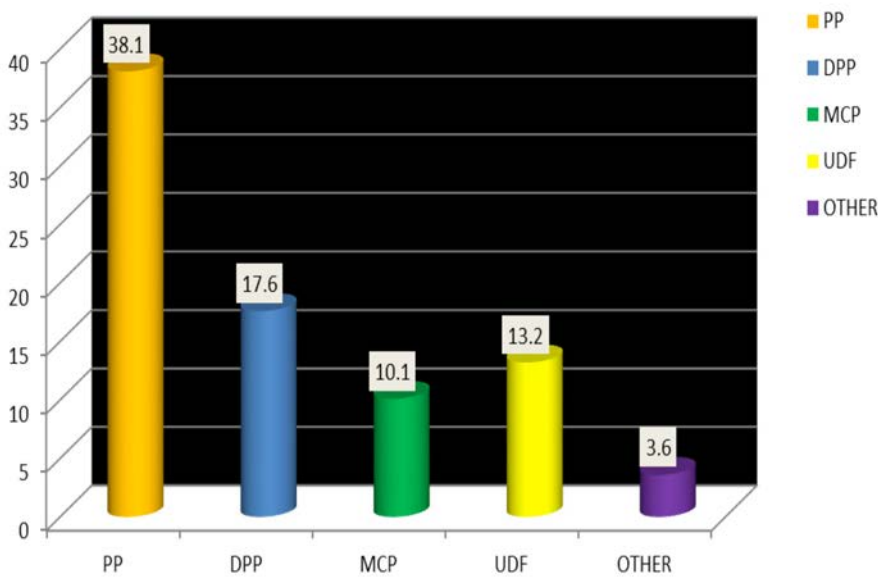


Figure 46: Overall Party Presidents mentioned in the Media(%)

Overall, the PP presidential candidate received more favourable coverage than any other party president.

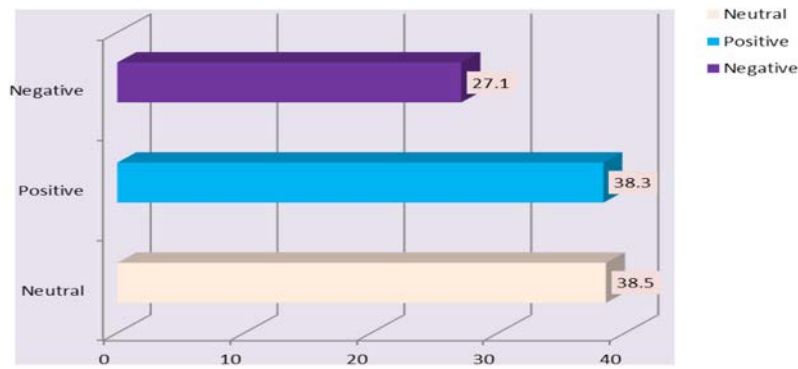


Figure 47: Overall Media Tone Coverage (%).

Overall, the tone of coverage was broadly neutral and positive.

3.0 SUMMARY

No significant difference was found between what was reported in the first report and this one except that the neutrality of tone on social media (Facebook and Twitter) has declined.

The media continues to give by far and away the most coverage of the tripartite elections to the presidential race rather than the parliamentary and local government elections because (1) of the electoral system of FPPS, (2) the incumbent PP president is constantly in the news, partly because of the politicisation of 'development' projects which when inaugurated become political rallies. The main issues preoccupying the media are the electoral process, public security, cashgate, and economy.

Overall, the majority of the coverage monitored was found to be broadly neutral in tone except for Twitter and Facebook. Both state radio and TV continued to give overwhelmingly more favourable coverage to the PP than to any other party.

