Chapter 2: Media Outlet Preferences in Radio, Television & Newspapers

This chapter focuses on specific broadcast outlets. We classify Tanzania’s media landscape by level of reach as defined by our respondents, examine each outlet’s ownership structure, discuss what influences access and viewing patterns for specific outlets and whether some media outlets have a clear advantage in reaching the widest populations.

The audience for the most popular outlets is also broken down by geographic and demographic differences.

2.1 Radio

Previously, we highlighted the predominance of radio in Tanzania’s national media landscape; however, given the country’s large geographic size and low population density, few stations are able to have full national reach. Those with national reach are state-owned TBC Taifa (also known as RTD) and TBC FM, as well as private stations Radio Free Africa, Radio One and Clouds FM. Each one of these stations appears in the list of stations Tanzanians nationwide said they listen to most often (Figure 11).
Radio broadcasting in Tanzania first began in 1951 as a government operation. In 1956, while still under colonial control, the state-owned Tanganyika Broadcasting Corporation (TBC) began broadcasting nationally. Following independence, TBC was placed under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in 1965 and renamed Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam (RTD) or TBC Taifa, its current name. Since that period, TBC Taifa has been used by ruling parties as a propaganda outlet. Following liberalization in 1992, the Tanzanian government allowed the establishment of private radio stations. BBC reports that there has been an increase in the number of licensed radio stations in Tanzania, from 14 in 2000 to more than 47 stations in 2006. This increase is exhausting the frequencies for broadcasting in the capital, Dar es Salaam. Frequencies for broadcasting for new stations are only available in other regions within Tanzania (more regional analysis in next chapter).

Radio Free Africa is the most popular radio station in the country and is owned by the Sahara Media Group, Ltd. This company also owns Kiss FM, which broadcasts in English, and the television station Star TV. Star TV is available throughout the country, 24 hours a day and its broadcasts are in Kiswahili. Radio Free Africa is more popular among men and rural residents. Among age groups, the youngest group – those between 15-24 – listens to it most often. (For demographic breakdown of audience, see Appendix 1.)

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1 BBC AMDI, Pg 30
2 Official Website for Radio Free Africa; see here: http://radiofreeafricatz.com/about/
**TBC Taifa** (also known as RTD) is the state-owned nationally available station broadcasting in Kiswahili. **TBC FM** started broadcasting after liberalization in 1992, when many private stations became available throughout the country. It was established to compete with the private stations’ more commercial and entertainment-related content -- it broadcasts mainly music and entertainment programs in Kiswahili.

The popularity and reach of **state-owned TBC stations** is due partly to the funding available to them from the government. Commercial stations on the other hand have limited resources to invest in better technology to ensure better reach. Since many commercial stations have less reach than state radio does, they also receive lower revenues from advertising, thus putting them into a cycle of low growth.

Although it has been accused of having very little editorial independence in the past, TBC Taifa now invites representatives of opposition political parties to air their views in a move toward more balanced and fair coverage.³ Prominent media practitioners interviewed by AfroBarometer stated that:

“........there is a need for the TBC to do more and to be increasingly accessible to the public on platforms such as mobile phones and the internet, adding that TBC had a greater advantage over other broadcasters to do this, since it had greater resources at its disposal.”⁴

However, they also agreed that TBC was also far better at local programming and broadcasting locally relevant content to audiences across all regions. TBC Taifa and TBC FM are equally popular nationally.

*(For demographic breakdown of audience, see Appendix 1.)*

**Radio One** is a private commercial station owned by IPP Media and broadcasting in Kiswahili. It enjoys higher preference among those with Tier 4 income levels *(For demographic breakdown of audience, see Appendix 1.)*

**Radio Maria** is a religious radio station run by The World Family of Radio Maria, a non-governmental organization (NGO) which was legally established in 1998. They have radio stations all over the world including African nations such as Zambia, Mozambique, Uganda, Kenya, etc.⁵ *(For demographic breakdown of audience, see Appendix 1.)*

**Clouds FM** is an entertainment-oriented radio station which reaches all the major cities and towns in Tanzania. Most of its shows are in Kiswahili and the rest are in English.⁶ They have political news updates at the top of every hour and business news once a day. Due to its reach in cities and surrounding

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³ African Media Barometer 2010, Pg 37

⁴Ibid

⁵ Official Website for Radio Maria
http://www.radiomaria.org/index.asp?LNG=ENG&MNU=01&SUB=00&SLC=MNU&PRG=NONE

⁶ Official Website for Clouds FM http://www.cloudsfm.co.tz/pdf_docs/CLOUDS_Fm_Station_Profile.pdf
suburbs, its audiences are also more urban. They also tend to be disproportionately Tier 4 income-earning respondents (For demographic breakdown of audience, see Appendix 1.)

**Language Diversity in Radio**

Along with owning popular Kiswahili radio stations that reach a national audience, each of the top companies also owns channels that broadcast in English. For instance, stations such as East Africa Radio, Kiss FM and Choice FM all broadcast in English, and are all part of holding companies. East Africa Radio belongs to IPP Media (which owns Radio One), Kiss FM belongs to Sahara Communication (which owns RFA) and Choice FM has the same owners as Clouds FM. Most of these stations cater to youth and feature entertainment programming.

Although most Tanzanians speak and understand Kiswahili and a quarter of them also speak English, Tanzania has close to 120 ethnic groups, each of which has its own language. Although Kiswahili and English are the languages of the political, social and educational sphere, local media must take on the task of preserving regional languages.

This is not the case, however, and thus a crucial information gap exists due to the lack of radio stations in regional languages. Most stations broadcast in Kiswahili and English, and those who barely speak these two languages face obstacles to receiving information. AfroBarometer’s 2010 study reports that Radio Orkonerei in Manyara, which broadcasts for the Maasai people in their indigenous language, was noted as one of the few media outlets using a local language. 7 Besides this notable exception, few sources of news and information exist in regional languages.

**Participation in Radio Call-in Shows**

Previous studies in Tanzania 8 have reported that radio in Tanzania has become more interactive over time, with more radio call-in shows to encourage participation. Unfortunately, our survey shows that while respondents may listen to these call-in shows, radio is seen more as a medium for passive entertainment than as a forum for voicing one’s opinion. As Figure 12 shows, although 76 percent of radio listeners listen to radio call-in shows, only 5 percent had actually called in to one of these shows in the last 12 months.

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7 Afrobarometer 2010, Pg 13
8 BBC AMDI, Pg 17
Television viewing has yet to become a popular and established medium all across Tanzania. Among those who do watch television, viewers are disproportionately urban and have high incomes (see Chapter 1 for more details).
Three stations have large enough reach to be considered national stations (see Figure 13). These are state-run TBC 1 (also known as Televisheni ya Taifa (TVT)), Independent Television (ITV) and Star TV. All these channels are free to watch. 9 Less popular are Channel 10 and East Africa Television (EATV).

The BBC reports that there are currently 27 television channels, with the majority broadcasting only at the district level, acting as national broadcast relays. Cable television is available in major cities, but is still very rare.

**TBC 1** went on air only in 2001, and attracts audiences from all income groups, age groups, gender and locations (*for a demographic breakdown of audience, see Appendix 1*).

**Independent Television** (ITV) broadcasts in both Kiswahili and English and is owned by the IPP media group. The ITV audience is more urban, and it is watched in a higher proportion by women (*for a demographic breakdown of audience, see Appendix 1*). A look at its schedule shows a combination of movies and television shows interspersed with news in English from Al Jazeera, BBC, CNN and the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC).

Overall, the BBC AMDI report claims that Tanzanian TV broadcasts little original content, and borrows heavily from foreign broadcasters. 10 Tanzanian TV has had some success in local programming recently, though, mainly due to the local soap operas and the growth of the music industry in Tanzania.

**Star TV** began broadcasting in 2000 from Mwanza. It expanded to Arusha and Dar es Salaam in 2001, but synchronized TV programming in Mwanza, Arusha and Dar es Salaam did not take place until 2003. Star TV audiences are more rural (*for a demographic breakdown of audience, see Appendix 1*). The satellite signal is free, thus making Star TV programming accessible to an even bigger audience – those who receive TV from cable TV operators or via direct to home satellite equipment.

**East African Television** (EATV) is also owned by IPP media. It seems to be more popular among younger audiences and those who have higher incomes (*for a demographic breakdown of audience, see Appendix 1*).

### 2.3 Newspapers

Tanzania’s newspapers were nationalized until the resignation of President Julius Nyerere in 1985. The private press has grown tremendously since the introduction of multi-party democracy in 1992; by 2006, there were more than 537 registered newspapers, including 12 active dailies and more than 50 weeklies. 11

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9 BBC AMDI, Pg 18

10 BBC AMDI, 2005, Pg 19

Most of the major newspapers in Tanzania are published in Kiswahili, so readership is not affected by those who don’t read in English, as happens in countries such as Zambia. The major problem with newspaper readership is circulation (see more in non-users section). Circulation is mostly limited to the urban areas in the key regions – Arusha, Moshi, Mbeya, Zanzibar and Mwanza. The most widely read newspapers are printed and distributed from Dar es Salaam, although there are some regional newspapers in some parts of Tanzania. (For a demographic breakdown of readers, see Appendix 1.)

Figure 14

**Tanzania: Top Newspapers National Level**

Percentage of respondents who mentioned this newspaper as one that they read most often (respondents could mention up to 3 newspapers)

- Nipashe: 41%
- Mwananchi: 32%
- Ijuma: 24%
- Mwanaspoti: 21%
- Mtanzania: 16%
- Majira: 16%
- Uwazi: 12%
- Kiu: 11%
- Sani: 10%