

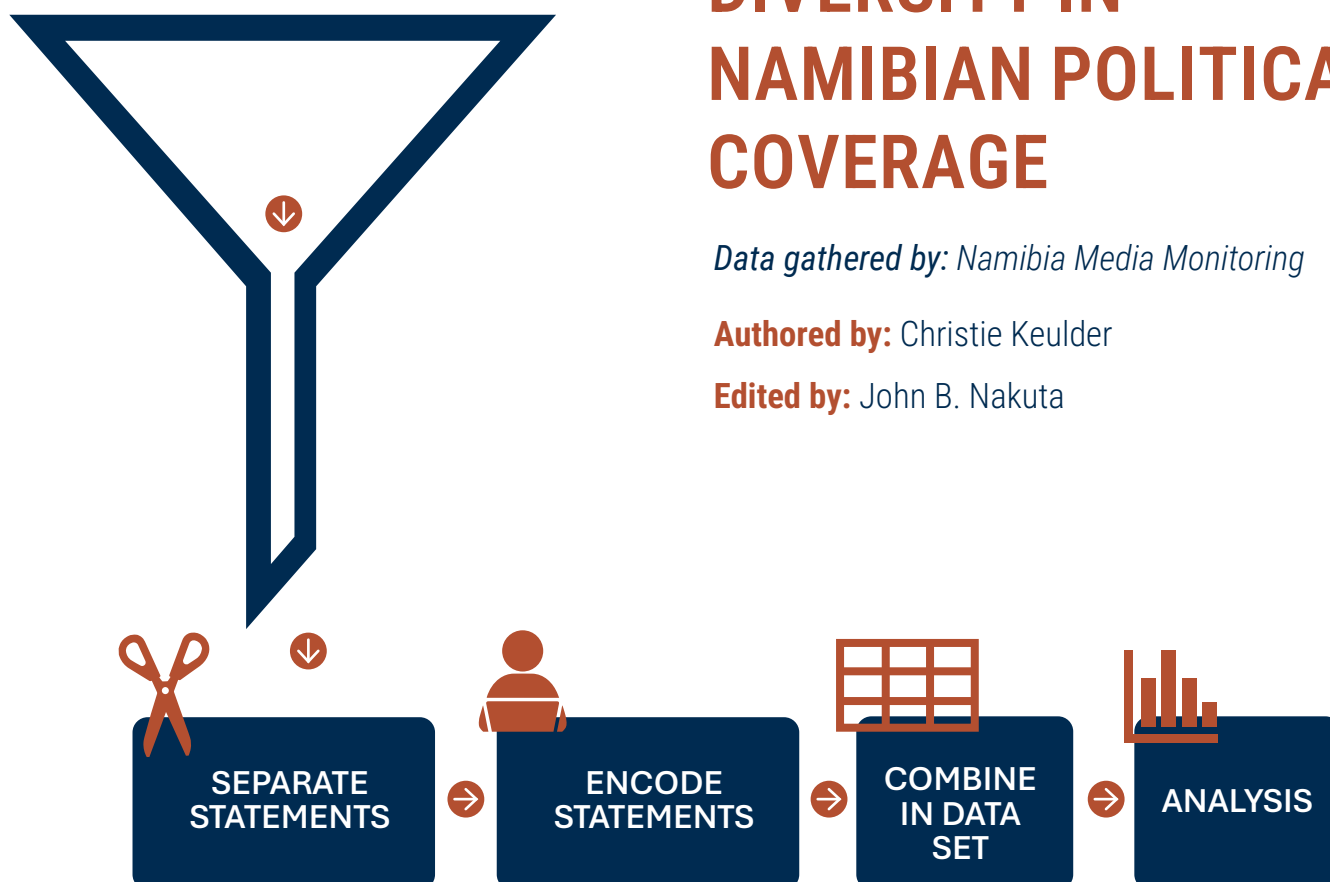


MEDIA METRICS: EVALUATING SENTIMENT RATIOS AND ISSUE DIVERSITY IN NAMIBIAN POLITICAL COVERAGE

Data gathered by: Namibia Media Monitoring

Authored by: Christie Keulder

Edited by: John B. Nakuta



Title:

Media Monitoring Report (21 July to 20 August)

Media Metrics: Evaluating sentiment ratios and issue diversity in Namibian political coverage

Author:

Christie Keulder

Editor:

John B. Nakuta

Publisher:

Office of the Media Ombudsman for Namibia

Date of Publication:

25 June 2025

ISSN: 2026-9196**Cover Concept:**

Peter Deselaers

Cover Design:

Clara Mupopiwa

Editing and Proofreading:

Elizabeth Kalambo M'ule

Design and Layout:

Conwell Creations for the NMT Media Foundation

Copyright:

© Office of the Media Ombudsman for Namibia

Contact:

mediaombudsman.namibia@gmail.com

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	7
2	The Importance of Media Monitoring During Elections	7
3	The Methodology	8
4	Key Definitions.....	8
5	Media Bias.....	9
6	Key Metrics	11
6.1	Statement-to-Size Ratio (SSR)	11
6.2	Positive to Negative Coverage Ratio (PNR).....	12
6.3	Neutral to Total Coverage Ratio (NTR)	12
6.4	Issue Diversity Index (IDI)	13
6.5	Tracking Trends Over Time	13
7	How To Use This Report	15
7.1	The Media	15
7.2	Political Parties	16
8	Key Issues Shaping Media Coverage	17
9	Party Coverage	18
9.1	Volume of Coverage by Party	18
9.2	Share of Coverage by Party	19
9.3	Ratings by Party.....	20
10	Sentiment Ratios	21
10.1	Positive- to-Negative Ratio (PNR)	21
10.2	Neutral-to-Total Ratio (NTR)	21
11	Statement-to-Size Ratio (SSR)	22
12	The Issue-Diversity-Index (IDI).....	23
13	Top Three Individual Parties.....	25
13.1	SWAPO Party of Namibia.....	25
13.2	Popular Democratic Movement (PDM)	27
13.3	Namibia Economic Freedom Fighters (NEFF)	29
14	Political Parties Online	33
14.1	Mentions and Unique Authors.....	33
14.2	Hashtags (#).....	34
15	Appendix 1: Media Sources Coded and Analysed	35
16	Appendix 2: Registered Political Parties	36

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Volume of Coverage by Party – Statements Received.....	18
Figure 2: Share of Coverage by Party (%)	19
Figure 3: Ratings by Party (%)	20
Figure 4: Positive-to-Negative Ratio (PNR) by Party.....	21
Figure 5: Neutral-to-Total Ratio (NTR) by Party	22
Figure 6: Statement-to-Size Ratio (SSR) by Political Party.....	23
Figure 7:IDI by Party (July/August).....	24
Figure 8: Swap Coverage by Media House	25
Figure 9: SWAPO Coverage by Media Type.....	26
Figure 10: SWAPO Party Most Important Issues Covered (Statements).....	27
Figure 11: PDM Coverage by Media House	28
Figure 12: PDM Coverage by Type of Media	28
Figure 13: NEFF Coverage by Media House (%)	30
Figure 14: NEFF Coverage by Media Type (%).....	30
Figure 15: NEFF Issue Coverage (Statements).....	32
Figure 16: Political Parties – Total Mentions and Unique Authors	34
Figure 17: Hashtags Used	34
Figure 18: Media Sources.....	35
Figure 19: Online media monitored through Brandwatch	35
Figure 20: Registered Political Parties 2024.....	36

List of Abbreviations

ADM:	Action Democratic Movement
APP:	All People's Party
AR:	Affirmative Repositioning
BCP:	Body of Christ Party
CoD:	Congress of Democrats
ECN:	Electoral Commission of Namibia
IDI:	Issue Diversity Index
IPC:	Independent Patriots for Change
LPM:	Landless People's Movement
MAG:	Monitor Action Group
NBC:	Namibian Broadcasting Corporation
NDP:	National Democratic Party of Namibia
NEFC:	National Empowerment Fighting Corruption
NEFF:	Namibia Economic Freedom Fighters
NPF:	National Patriotic Front of Namibia
NTR:	Neutral to Total Coverage Ratio
NUDO:	National Unity Democratic Organisation of Namibia
PDM:	Popular Democratic Movement
PNR:	Positive to Negative Coverage Ratio
RDP:	Rally for Democracy and Progress
RP:	Republican Party of Namibia
SSR:	Statement-to-Size Ratio
SWANU:	South West Africa National Union
SWAPO:	SWAPO Party of Namibia
UDF:	United Democratic Front of Namibia
UNP:	United Namibians Party
UPM:	United People's Movement
WRP:	Workers Revolutionary Party

Executive Summary

The document presents a comprehensive analysis of media coverage during the 2024 Namibian Presidential and National Assembly elections, conducted by the Media Ombudsman of Namibia. Spanning the period from July 21 to August 20, 2024, the report evaluates media sentiment, issue diversity, and political party representation across legacy and online platforms. Supported by metrics such as the Statement-to-Size Ratio (SSR), Positive-to-Negative Coverage Ratio (PNR), Neutral-to-Total Ratio (NTR), and Issue Diversity Index (IDI), the study aims to ensure balanced, transparent, and ethical journalism during the electoral process. These tools help identify biases, track trends, and assess proportionality in media attention relative to party size and voter base.

Key findings reveal significant shifts in media focus and sentiment. The ruling SWAPO Party maintained the largest share of coverage (32%) but saw a decline from previous months, signaling diversification in media narratives. The Popular Democratic Movement (PDM) experienced a surge in coverage (19%) driven by its elective congress and manifesto launch, with overwhelmingly positive sentiment (PNR of 42.4). Conversely, the Namibia Economic Freedom Fighters (NEFF) faced heightened scrutiny due to legal battles over deregistration, resulting in predominantly negative coverage (PNR of 0.12) but balanced neutral reporting (NTR of 0.67). Emerging parties like the Affirmative Repositioning (AR) movement gained traction, reflecting media responsiveness to new political actors.

The report underscores the role of media in shaping public discourse, particularly through issue diversity. While SWAPO and PDM benefited from broad issue coverage, NEFF's narrative remained concentrated on legal challenges, limiting its broader appeal. Online engagement spiked during critical events, such as NEFF's deregistration and AR's registration, with social media hashtags like #nbcnews amplifying reach. Traditional media, especially newspapers, dominated detailed political reporting, while radio and television catered to broader, immediate audiences.

Ultimately, the analysis emphasizes the importance of impartial media in fostering informed democratic participation. By highlighting disparities in coverage and sentiment, the report advocates for ethical journalism, equitable representation, and strategic communication by political parties to enhance voter trust and engagement. The findings serve as a benchmark for accountability, ensuring media remains a pillar of Namibia's democratic integrity during pivotal electoral moments.

1 Introduction

In Namibia, the media plays a pivotal role in fostering a vibrant democracy by keeping the public informed and engaged in public life. This responsibility is enshrined in the Namibian Constitution, which not only encourages active citizen participation but also guarantees media freedom as a fundamental right. Given the critical importance of the media in shaping public discourse, Namibian journalists are bound by a Code of Ethics that ensures that media practitioners adhere to international standards of accuracy, fairness, independence, and respect for privacy, thereby upholding the integrity of the profession.

To maintain these high standards and to provide a mechanism for accountability, the EFN has instituted the office of the Media Ombudsman, along with a Media Complaints Committee and an Appeals Chairperson. This self-regulatory system allows the Namibian media to be judged by their peers, ensuring that complaints are handled efficiently and with authority, without the need for lengthy court proceedings.

Aligned with its mandate to promote responsible journalism and protect the public's right to accurate and fair information, the Media Ombudsman of Namibia has undertaken a comprehensive media monitoring project focused on the 2024 National Assembly and Presidential elections. This project serves as a critical tool in assessing how both legacy and online media are covering key issues during the election period. By analysing the content disseminated through various media platforms, the project aims to ensure that the media adheres to its ethical obligations, providing the public with reliable and unbiased information necessary for informed participation in the democratic process.

The media monitoring project not only supports the Media Ombudsman's mission to uphold journalistic standards but also contributes to the broader goal of sustaining a healthy democracy in Namibia. Through this initiative, the Media Ombudsman seeks to ensure that the media remains a trustworthy pillar of the electoral process, offering a clear, accurate, and fair representation of the events and issues that will shape the future of the nation.

2 The Importance of Media Monitoring During Elections

Impartial and comprehensive media analysis is essential for promoting transparency, accountability, and fairness in the electoral process. By critically examining media content and identifying biases, misinformation, and disinformation, stakeholders can safeguard the integrity of elections, combat electoral manipulation, and ensure that voters have access to accurate and relevant information to make informed choices. Through systematic media monitoring, stakeholders can promote a more transparent, inclusive, and democratic electoral process, thereby strengthening public trust and confidence in democratic institutions and values.

In today's digital age, where information flows freely across various media platforms, it is essential to critically examine the narratives, framing, and dissemination of electoral information to uphold democratic principles and safeguard the integrity of elections. By conducting thorough media monitoring and analysis, stakeholders can gain valuable insights into how electoral events and issues are portrayed, interpreted, and disseminated to the public, thereby facilitating informed decision-making and fostering greater transparency and accountability in the electoral process.

One of the primary reasons for conducting impartial and comprehensive media analysis in the context of elections is to identify and mitigate biases that may influence public perceptions and electoral outcomes. Media outlets, intentionally or unintentionally, may exhibit biases in their coverage of electoral events, favouring certain political parties, candidates, or viewpoints. By critically examining media content through the lens of impartial analysis, researchers can uncover subtle biases in framing, language, and selection of sources, enabling stakeholders to address discrepancies and promote fair and balanced coverage of electoral issues.

3 The Methodology

Media monitoring is a systematic process of observing, collecting, and analysing various forms of media content to gain insights into prevailing narratives, trends, and perspectives within the media landscape. It encompasses a broad range of media sources, including traditional outlets such as newspapers, television, and radio, as well as digital platforms like social media, news websites, and online forums. The primary objective of media monitoring is to provide stakeholders with a comprehensive understanding of how information is disseminated and interpreted across different channels, thereby informing decision-making processes, shaping public opinion, and influencing policy outcomes.

Implementation of content analysis involves several key steps, including data collection, coding, and analysis. Researchers collect a representative sample of media content relevant to the research objectives, utilising a combination of sampling techniques to ensure diversity and representativeness. They then systematically code the selected media artefacts according to the predefined coding scheme, recording relevant information and attributes for each unit of analysis. Finally, researchers analyse the coded data to identify patterns, trends, and relationships, using statistical techniques, qualitative interpretation, or a combination of both approaches to draw meaningful conclusions and insights from the media content.

4 Key Definitions

Emoji: In the context of monitoring and analysing online media, an emoji is a small digital icon or graphic used to express emotions, ideas, or concepts in online communication. Emojis are commonly used in social media posts, comments, messages, and other forms of digital communication to convey sentiments quickly and visually. They can range from simple facial expressions, such as smiling or frowning faces, to more complex images representing objects, activities, or symbols.

Monitoring emojis provides valuable insights into the emotional tone and sentiment of online conversations. By analysing the types and frequencies of emojis used in relation to specific topics, brands, or events, researchers can gauge public sentiment, mood, and reactions. For example, a prevalence of positive emojis (like smiling faces or thumbs-ups) might indicate favourable public opinion, while negative emojis (such as angry faces or thumbs-downs) could suggest dissatisfaction or criticism. Additionally, certain emojis may be used in specific contexts or communities, providing insights into cultural or social trends.

Hashtags (#): In the context of monitoring online media, a hashtag is a word or phrase preceded by the pound or hash symbol (#). It is used on social media platforms to categorise content and make it easily searchable. Hashtags help group posts or discussions under a specific topic, theme, or event, allowing users to find and participate in conversations relevant to their interests.

Monitoring hashtags in online media provides valuable insights into the popularity and trends of specific topics, the level of audience engagement, and the overall sentiment around a discussion. By tracking hashtags, organizations can identify key influencers and communities, understand geographical trends, and gauge the effectiveness of campaigns. Hashtags also allow real-time event tracking, enabling immediate feedback and engagement. In essence, hashtags are a powerful tool to analyse and understand the dynamics of online conversations and public interest.

Impression: An impression refers to the number of times a piece of content, such as an advertisement, article, or social media post, is displayed or viewed on a user's screen. Each time the content appears on a user's device, it counts as one impression, regardless of whether the user interacts with it (e.g., clicks, likes, or shares). Impressions are a key metric in digital marketing and media analysis as they help measure the potential reach and visibility of the content. High impression numbers indicate that the content has been widely shown to audiences, although it does not necessarily mean that the audience is engaged with the content.

Mention: A mention refers to any instance where a specific keyword, phrase, brand, person, or topic is referenced or discussed across digital platforms. This can include social media posts, blogs, news articles, forums, or any other online content. Mentions are tracked to assess the volume of discussion and the context in which the subject is being talked about. Monitoring mentions helps organisations understand how often and in what manner they are being discussed online, which is crucial for reputation management, marketing, and public relations strategies.

Statement: A statement is a discrete unit of information, opinion, or commentary presented within a media piece. It typically consists of a complete sentence or a brief segment of text or speech that conveys a specific idea, claim, or viewpoint. Statements are used as the basic elements of analysis, allowing researchers to quantify and assess the frequency, tone, and context in which particular topics, issues, or opinions are expressed within a given media outlet or across multiple outlets. By analysing statements, researchers can identify patterns, biases, and the overall narrative structure in media coverage.

Unique Author: In the context of online media monitoring and analysis, "unique authors" refers to the distinct individuals or entities who create or publish content that includes mentions of a specific topic, brand, or keyword. Each unique author is counted only once, regardless of how many times they have mentioned the topic in their content. Tracking unique authors helps measure the breadth of conversation and the diversity of voices contributing to the discussion. This metric is important for understanding the reach and influence of content across different platforms and identifying key influencers and contributors in a particular online conversation.

5 Media Bias

The concept of media bias has been central to the study of mass communication and journalism since the mid-20th century. Media bias refers to the perceived or actual partiality in news coverage, where particular perspectives, ideologies, or narratives are given prominence over others. As media institutions play a key role in shaping public opinion, understanding and identifying bias in media reporting, particularly in elections, is crucial for a functioning democracy. At the same time, it is a very complex concept that is often misunderstood.

Media bias is generally understood as the tendency of media outlets to report news in a way that systematically favours one perspective or narrative over another. This bias can manifest through selective omission, word choice, framing, slating and the ascription of credibility to different sources. Media bias can be either deliberate and intentional or unintentional and unconscious.

In the context of this study, media bias is defined as *a conscious act or choice that is sustained over time*. This perspective highlights the importance of intention, arguing that bias is not merely about an isolated instance of one-sided reporting but involves a systematic tendency to present news in a skewed manner. Moreover, the bias must have influence—it must affect public perceptions, opinions, or behaviours to be relevant. In other words, its impact is moot if the bias is not volitional and sustained.

Media bias is often categorised into two high-level types: ideology and spin. *Ideological bias* reflects a media outlet's desire to influence readers' opinions in a particular ideological direction. For example, specific media organisations may consistently present stories that align with one particular political viewpoint, framing events to support that ideology. In the context of election coverage, ideological bias can manifest in the selective coverage of specific candidates, the portrayal of political parties, or the emphasis on issues that align with the media outlet's preferred ideological stance.

Unlike ideological bias, *spin bias* is less about advancing a political agenda and more about crafting a compelling or memorable story. Spin can involve sensationalising certain elements of a story to attract audience attention, often at the expense of nuanced, balanced reporting. While spin bias might not overtly promote one political view, it can shape the audience's perception by emphasising certain angles or details that make the story more dramatic or engaging.

While bias is often assumed to be deliberate, there is increasing recognition that it can also be unintentional. *Unconscious biases* can emerge from journalists, editors, and media executives' personal backgrounds, experiences, and assumptions. For example, the cultural or social background of reporters may shape the questions they ask, the sources they trust, or the way they frame a story, even if they do not consciously intend to present a biased perspective.

Unintentional bias can also arise from institutional factors, such as the media's need to attract audiences or to comply with market pressures. In this case, media outlets may unintentionally slant their coverage towards more sensational or emotional stories, which tend to draw more attention and engagement, even if they do not consciously aim to influence public opinion.

There are several mechanisms through which media bias manifests in reporting. First, media bias can be expressed by omitting critical facts or perspectives from a news story. Simply by choosing what to report and what to leave out, media outlets can shape the audience's understanding of events.

Second, how a story is framed or the context in which it is presented can also introduce bias. A news outlet may choose to frame an event in terms of conflict, morality, or economics, which can influence how the audience interprets the story.

Third, source credibility is another mechanism responsible for bias. Here, varying degrees of credibility are ascribed to different sources. By privileging certain voices while marginalising others, the media can tilt the balance of a story towards a particular perspective.

Media bias is a nuanced and multi-dimensional concept beyond the mere volume of coverage that political parties or candidates receive. Especially during elections, media coverage can significantly influence public opinion and electoral outcomes, making it essential to analyse how different parties are portrayed in the media. For the study on media coverage of the 2024 National Assembly and Presidential elections in Namibia, several key metrics will be used to comprehensively understand party coverage. These metrics—such as the statement-to-size ratio, the positive-to-negative coverage ratio, and the neutral-to-total ratio—allow for a more nuanced analysis of the media’s role in shaping the electoral landscape.

6 Key Metrics

6.1 Statement-to-Size Ratio (SSR)

A common misconception in the analysis of media bias is that the amount of coverage a party or candidate receives directly correlates with bias. However, this approach overlooks an important factor: party size. Larger political parties tend to naturally receive more media attention due to their prominence in the political landscape. Simply tracking the volume of coverage would not provide an accurate picture of media bias because smaller parties are inherently less likely to receive the same level of attention as larger, more established parties.

To address this, the statement-to-size ratio (SSR) is introduced as a key metric. The formula is:

$$SSR = \frac{C_i}{S_i}$$

Where C_i represents the volume of coverage for party i (e.g., number of statements, articles, or mentions) and S_i is the relative size of party i (e.g., the proportion of seats or percentage of vote share).

This ratio adjusts the volume of coverage based on the relative size of the political party, accounting for the fact that larger parties would typically generate more news due to their organisational and electoral presence. By weighting the volume of coverage against party size, the statement-to-size ratio ensures that disproportionate coverage of smaller parties is not overlooked and excessive focus on larger parties is adjusted for. A high score indicates that a party is receiving more media coverage relative to its size, potentially signalling disproportionate attention. In contrast, a low score means that a party gets less coverage than expected based on its size, which may suggest underrepresentation.

Finally, it was converted to percentages to make the SSR more interpretable and relatable. Using percentages can help in quickly gauging the proportionality of media coverage relative to the size of the voting base, making comparisons across different parties more straightforward and intuitive. For example, a 0.02 ratio converted to 2% can be easily understood as two statements per 100 votes, which can be more intuitively grasped than explaining what a 0.02 ratio signifies. Furthermore, using percentages allows for a standardised comparison across all parties, regardless of their total votes or statement counts. There is one caveat: the SSR ratio is impossible to calculate for new parties like the IPC and AR that did not contest the 2019 elections and, therefore, do not feature in the discussion of the SSR.

6.2 Positive to Negative Coverage Ratio (PNR)

Another critical aspect of media bias is the slant or tone of coverage. Media outlets can report on political parties and candidates in ways that influence public perceptions positively or negatively. However, understanding bias cannot be reduced to a simple count of positive or negative statements. The context leading to these ratings, as well as the sustained nature of positive or negative portrayals, matters significantly.

The study uses the positive-to-negative coverage ratio to capture this dynamic. This ratio assesses the balance of positive and negative reporting for each political party and calculates a net score, providing insight into whether a party is predominantly portrayed in a positive or negative light. The formula is:

$$PNR = \frac{P_i}{N_i}$$

Where P_i is the number of positive mentions or coverage of party i and N_i is the number of negative mentions or coverage of party i .

A high ratio suggests that a party is portrayed predominantly positively, indicating favourable media coverage. In contrast, a low ratio indicates that the party mainly receives negative coverage, signalling unfavourable or critical reporting. This ratio offers a way to quantify and track these trends over the election period, shedding light on whether certain parties are disproportionately praised or criticised.

6.3 Neutral to Total Coverage Ratio (NTR)

While positive and negative coverage is important in understanding bias, a significant portion of media reporting may be presented in a neutral tone. Neutral coverage is essential to journalistic integrity, as it allows the media to inform the public without overtly influencing their opinions. However, a lack of neutral reporting can signal media bias, particularly if parties are frequently reported on with an overtly positive or negative slant.

$$NTR = \frac{N_i}{T_i}$$

Where N_i is the number of neutral mentions or articles about party i and T_i is the total volume of coverage for party i (i.e., the sum of positive, negative, and neutral coverage).

The neutral-to-total coverage ratio helps track the extent to which parties are being reported on in an impartial, unbiased manner. This metric calculates the proportion of neutral coverage relative to the total amount of coverage a party receives, providing a measure of how often media outlets adhere to objective reporting standards. A high neutral-to-total ratio suggests that the media offers balanced, fact-based reporting, while a low ratio indicates a tendency towards slanted or opinionated coverage.

The neutral-to-total ratio is particularly useful when combined with the positive-to-negative coverage ratio, as it helps researchers understand whether parties are receiving largely neutral coverage or if media outlets are consistently framing them in a positive or negative light. For example, a party that has a low neutral-to-total ratio but a high positive-to-negative ratio may be the beneficiary of favourable media bias. In contrast, a low neutral-to-total ratio coupled with negative coverage could indicate that a party is being unfairly targeted.

6.4 Issue Diversity Index (IDI)

As stated above, media coverage of elections plays a crucial role in shaping public discourse, influencing how voters perceive the key issues at stake. During elections, media outlets may focus on a wide range of topics, such as the economy, healthcare, education, and corruption. However, this coverage can either be highly diversified, giving attention to a broad array of issues, or concentrated, focusing narrowly on a few select topics. To measure this, the Issue Diversity Index (IDI) provides a robust tool for quantifying the diversity or concentration of election issues reported by the media.

The IDI is adapted from the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI), which is typically used to assess market concentration. In the context of media coverage, the IDI measures how evenly media outlets distribute their focus across different election issues. The index is calculated using the following formula:

$$IDI = 1 - \sum (S_i^2)$$

Where S_i is the proportion of coverage allocated to issue i relative to the total coverage of all issues.

The IDI ranges from 0 to 1, where a value closer to 1 indicates high diversity in issue coverage, and a value closer to 0 signifies greater concentration. A high IDI score indicates diverse media coverage, meaning that election issues are being presented across a broad range of topics. This diversity allows voters to engage with multiple facets of the political landscape, making more informed decisions at the polls. For example, if the media equally covers economic policy, education reform, healthcare, and corruption, the IDI would yield a high score, reflecting a healthy balance in coverage. Such diversity is critical in elections because it exposes voters to different policy discussions, which in turn broadens the electorate's understanding of key issues.

In contrast, a low IDI score signals that media coverage is concentrated on a few issues, potentially skewing public perception. For instance, if the media focuses predominantly on one issue, such as the economy, while largely ignoring others, like education or healthcare, the IDI would be low, indicating concentrated coverage. This narrow focus can shape public discourse by reinforcing certain narratives while marginalising others, which can lead to an imbalanced electoral debate. Voters may miss out on important issues that are underreported, ultimately affecting their decision-making process at the polls.

6.5 Tracking Trends Over Time

When analysing media coverage, identifying trends is crucial for understanding how the portrayal of political parties or candidates evolves. A trend refers to a consistent pattern or direction in data over a given period rather than isolated or random fluctuations. At least three data points are typically required to determine a reliable trend. However, for a more robust and meaningful analysis, it is preferable to have a longer series of data points (such as this project's monthly observations throughout the election period) to ensure that any observed changes are part of a sustained pattern, not merely short-term noise.

One of the strengths of these metrics is their ability to track changes in media coverage patterns over time. Political parties' coverage in media is rarely static; it can evolve depending on external factors such as shifts in public opinion, changes in political strategy, or the emergence of new electoral issues.

By employing metrics like the statement-to-size ratio, the positive-to-negative coverage ratio, and the neutral-to-total ratio, the study can monitor how media coverage develops throughout the election campaign.

For instance, a more minor party might initially receive minimal coverage, but as the election approaches and its campaign gains traction, the statement-to-size ratio may rise. Similarly, a party that starts off with neutral or positive coverage might see a shift towards more negative reporting as public opinion changes or controversies arise. By analysing these trends, the study provides a more dynamic and comprehensive picture of media bias, accounting for tone, volume, and neutrality shifts throughout the electoral process.

When examining trends using the **statement-to-size ratio**, a rising trend over time suggests that a smaller party is receiving increasing attention in the media, perhaps due to gaining political traction or visibility. Conversely, a declining trend indicates that the media is gradually focusing less on a party relative to its size. Readers should interpret these trends by considering the political context—whether a shift in media attention aligns with campaign events, public interest, or changes in the party's strategy.

A rising trend in the **positive-to-negative coverage ratio** suggests that a party is increasingly being portrayed in a positive light, which could boost its public image as the election approaches. A downward trend, on the other hand, signals a shift towards more critical or negative coverage, potentially harming the party's public standing. Readers should consider whether these trends coincide with significant political events, controversies, or policy announcements, as these often influence the tone of media reporting.

A stable or increasing trend in the **neutral-to-total ratio** reflects consistent, balanced reporting over time, indicating that the media is maintaining impartiality in its coverage. However, if the neutral-to-total ratio decreases, it suggests that the media is becoming more opinionated, with fewer neutral reports and more slanted coverage. Readers should pay attention to these shifts, as a decline in neutral coverage may indicate that media outlets are increasingly engaging in biased reporting, whether positive or negative.

The Issue Diversity Index is particularly useful for understanding how media coverage evolves over the course of an election campaign. By tracking the IDI over time, we can monitor whether the media's focus shifts or remains concentrated on specific issues. For example, a campaign may start with a diverse range of issues being discussed. Still, as the election draws nearer, media coverage may concentrate on a specific topic, such as a scandal or a significant policy debate. The IDI can capture these shifts, allowing researchers to analyse how the media's agenda-setting influences the public conversation.

7 How To Use This Report

7.1 The Media

Content analysis, as demonstrated in this detailed examination of media coverage across Namibian political parties, offers invaluable insights that media outlets can leverage to refine their reporting practices and editorial strategies. By systematically assessing the breadth and depth of their content, media organisations can achieve a more balanced and nuanced portrayal of political entities, which is crucial for fostering a well-informed public.

Firstly, content analysis allows media organisations to identify biases or gaps in their reporting. By quantifying the diversity of issues covered (as indicated by the Issue Diversity Index) and assessing the sentiment and neutrality of coverage (through ratios like the Positive to Negative Ratio and Neutral to Total Ratio), media can critically evaluate whether their coverage is skewed or overly concentrated on certain topics. This introspection can prompt adjustments in editorial focus, ensuring a broader and more equitable representation of political perspectives, which is especially important in diverse political landscapes.

Additionally, content analysis can guide media outlets in enhancing the quality of political reporting. By understanding which issues receive more attention and which are neglected, editors can allocate resources more effectively, promoting comprehensive coverage that spans a broader array of subjects. This balanced approach not only enriches the public discourse but also strengthens the media's role as a pillar of democracy by providing the electorate with the comprehensive information needed to make informed decisions.

Moreover, the metrics derived from content analysis, such as the IDI and sentiment ratios, provide benchmarks for journalistic standards. Media outlets can use these benchmarks to maintain or improve their standards of fairness and objectivity. Regular monitoring against these benchmarks can help publications and broadcasters maintain public trust and credibility, which are paramount in retaining audience engagement and loyalty.

Content analysis also serves as a foundation for developing internal training and development for journalists and editors. With insights from content analysis, media organisations can tailor training programs that address identified shortcomings in coverage, enhance understanding of media bias, and foster skills for balanced reporting. These training programs can empower media professionals to approach political reporting with a nuanced understanding of the complexities involved, promoting ethical journalism practices.

Content analysis should, therefore, not be seen as a tool for critique but as a strategic asset that media outlets can use to elevate the quality and impact of their reporting. By embracing the detailed insights offered by content analysis, media organisations can not only improve their own editorial outputs but also contribute positively to the broader political ecosystem, ensuring that their influence on public opinion and democracy is both constructive and balanced.

7.2 Political Parties

Content analysis of media coverage provides a wealth of insights that political parties can harness to fine-tune their communication strategies, understand public perception, and ultimately enhance their electoral appeal. By systematically evaluating how different issues related to their party are covered, political entities can make informed decisions that could significantly impact their public image and effectiveness in engaging with the electorate.

Firstly, content analysis helps political parties identify which of their policies or themes are gaining traction in the media and which are not. This can inform parties about the effectiveness of their messaging and the resonance of their policy proposals with the public. For instance, if certain key policies are not receiving sufficient media attention, a party might choose to amplify these topics in their direct communications or public appearances to ensure they are part of the public discourse. Conversely, if negative themes are predominating, it provides an opportunity for parties to reassess their strategies or clarify misconceptions.

Furthermore, by understanding the diversity of issues covered (as measured by the Issue Diversity Index), political parties can gauge whether their intended messages are being diluted. A high diversity index, while indicative of broad coverage, may also suggest that the party's core message is getting lost amid numerous less central issues. Parties can use this insight to sharpen their focus on key strategic issues that will help consolidate their identity and appeal to their base and swing voters.

The sentiment ratios provided by content analysis, such as the Positive to Negative Ratio and Neutral to Total Ratio, are especially valuable. These ratios can reveal how favourably or unfavourably a party is viewed in media portrayals. Armed with this knowledge, parties can undertake targeted reputation management efforts, design campaigns to counteract negative sentiments or strengthen positive narratives in the media. This kind of proactive management can be crucial in shaping public perception ahead of elections.

Additionally, content analysis can aid political parties in understanding their comparative media positioning against competitors. This benchmarking can drive competitive strategies, helping parties to capitalise on their strengths or exploit opponents' weaknesses in media coverage. It also encourages parties to innovate and differentiate themselves in ways most likely to capture media and public interest.

Lastly, parties can use content analysis to inform their internal training and development. Insights derived from how different issues are covered can guide the development of spokesperson training, ensuring that party representatives are better equipped to handle media interactions, focus on strategic issues, and navigate away from potentially harmful topics.

In conclusion, content analysis is an invaluable tool for political parties aiming to navigate the complex media landscape effectively. It not only mirrors how they are currently perceived in relation to their strategic intentions but also provides a roadmap for adjusting communication tactics. By embracing the detailed insights offered by analysis such as is provided by this project, political parties can enhance their public communication strategies, achieve greater resonance with voters, and ultimately improve their performance in the electoral arena.

8 Key Issues Shaping Media Coverage

During the period under review, several key issues emerged that significantly influenced media coverage of Namibia's political landscape.

Political Parties Deregistration and Registration: The Electoral Commission's decision to deregister the Namibian Economic Freedom Fighters (NEFF) and approve the registration of the Action Democratic Movement (ADM), the United Namibians Party (UNP), and the Affirmative Repositioning (AR) movement as political parties continues to attract significant media focus.

Rise of the Affirmative Repositioning Movement: Led by Job Amupanda, the AR movement looks to position itself as a key player targeting the youth vote. This strategic focus on younger voters may signal a potential shift towards a more youth-oriented agenda in Namibian politics, which could reshape the political landscape in the upcoming elections. The party's media coverage increased significantly following its registration.

Challenges Faced by NEFF: NEFF's deregistration has led to legal challenges and demands for reinstatement, highlighting the party's determination to contest the decision. NEFF's legal victory and re-registration ensured the party remained in the media's focus.

PDM Holds its Elective Congress: The PDM held its elective congress in Katima Mulilo. Immediately after that, it announced its list of candidates for the upcoming election and became the first party to launch its 2024 Election Manifesto. As a result, the party attracted significant media attention.

9 Party Coverage

9.1 Volume of Coverage by Party

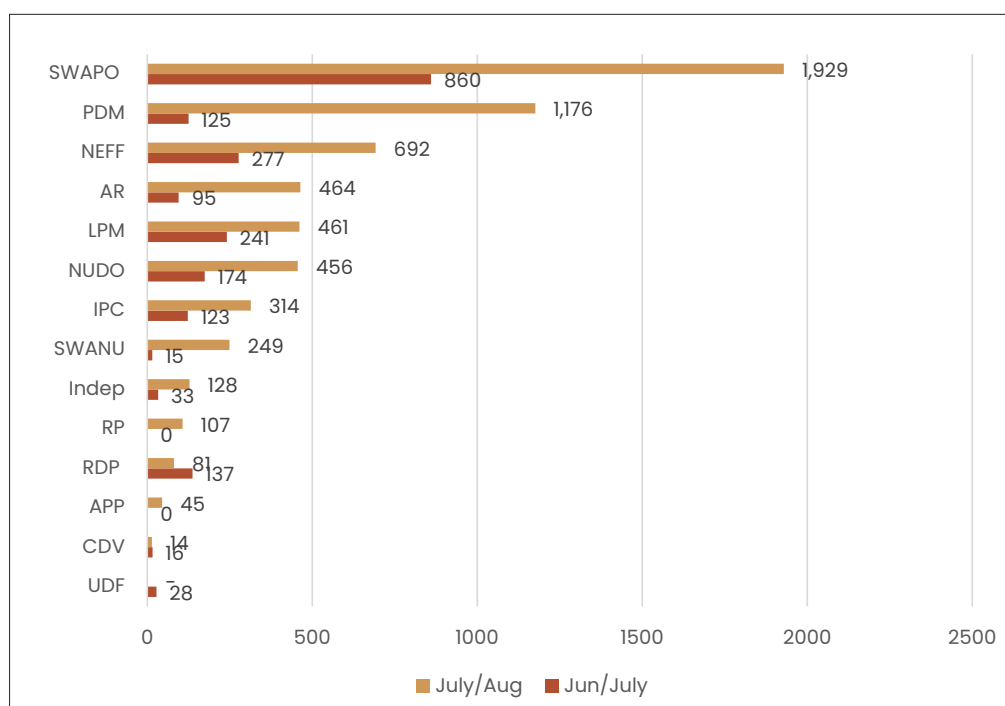
Overall, the total media coverage of all parties combined surged from 2,124 mentions in June/July to 6,116 in July/August, marking a substantial overall increase (188%). This escalation in coverage indicates a ramp-up in media activities possibly related to the forthcoming elections, highlighting a period of vigorous political engagement and public interest as parties started rolling out their manifestos and preparing to launch their lists of candidates.

The data in Figure 1 reveals both increases and decreases in the volume of coverage for various parties, with significant variations that suggest a highly active political environment leading up to the elections. Noteworthy is the absence of data for the UDF in July/August, possibly indicating a lack of significant activity from the party. Meanwhile, the CDV experienced a slight decrease in coverage by 12.5%, from 16 mentions to 14, hinting at a marginal reduction in media interest or party activities. Overall, the CDV's volume of coverage remains low.

Several parties saw dramatic increases in their media coverage. SWANU's coverage skyrocketed by 1560%, from a mere 15 mentions to 249, marking a substantial rise in media visibility triggered by coverage of the prolonged in-fighting among members of the party leadership. Similarly, the AR saw its coverage increase from 95 to 464 mentions, a robust growth of 388.4%, reflecting heightened media interest due to the registration of the party with the ECN of Namibia.

Moreover, two of the most prominent political entities, SWAPO and PDM, also experienced substantial increases in coverage, with SWAPO's media mentions nearly doubling from 860 to 1,929, an increase of 124.3%, and PDM's coverage rising by 841.6%, from 125 to 1,176. This suggests an intensified focus on these parties. In the case of the PDM, the party's elective congress attracted substantive coverage, whilst in the case of SWAPO, various campaign-related activities attracted media attention.

Figure 1: Volume of Coverage by Party - Statements Received



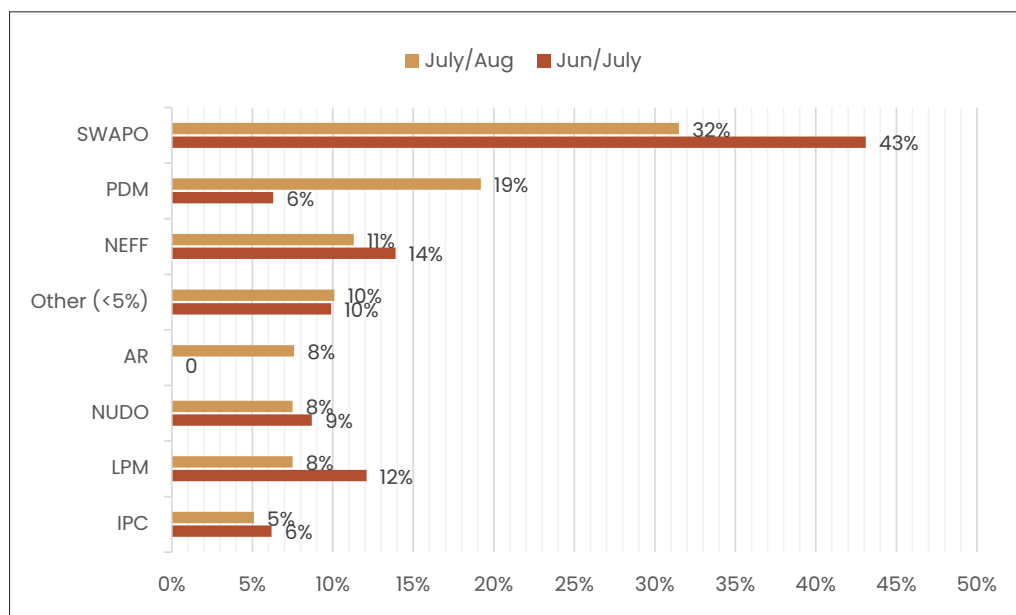
The NEFF's coverage also demonstrated significant growth, highlighting the increased media attention the party garnered over the reviewed period. In June/July, the NEFF received 277 mentions, which surged to 692 by July/August, representing a growth of 149.8%. This substantial increase in media visibility for the NEFF could be attributed to its continued legal battle with the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN).

9.2 Share of Coverage by Party

The analysis of media coverage proportions for various political parties in Namibia from June/July to July/August reveals significant shifts that underscore the evolving political landscape and the media's role in shaping public discourse (Figure 3). These shifts reflect the media's responsiveness to current events and the strategic initiatives by some parties, such as the PDM elective congress, the NEFF's legal struggle to remain a registered party, SWANU's very public leadership battles.

Figure 2 furthermore indicates a marked decrease in the proportion of coverage for SWAPO, from 43% to 32%, suggesting a diversification in media focus away from the traditionally dominant party towards other emerging entities. This 11 percentage point reduction, although leaving SWAPO still with the largest share, points to a relative broadening of the political narrative covered by the media. On the other hand, the PDM saw a significant increase in coverage, soaring from 6% to 19%. This dramatic rise by 13 percentage points indicates an increased media and public interest in the PDM, possibly due to its elective congress that attracted heightened attention.

Figure 2: Share of Coverage by Party (%)



The Landless People's Movement (LPM) experienced a substantial decrease in media visibility, dropping from 12% to 8%. Other parties that experienced a decline in coverage include the NEFF (3 percentage points), IPC (1 percentage point) and NUDO (1 percentage point).

Conversely, the appearance of the Affirmative Repositioning (AR) movement in the July/August data, capturing 8% of the coverage, highlights its emerging role or heightened activities that have drawn media attention. This emergence is significant as it indicates media responsiveness to new or previously underrepresented voices in the political discourse. The most minor parties (see "Other") showed stability in their coverage.

These shifts in media coverage proportions point to more diversified media coverage of parties, which suggests a healthier democratic space where multiple voices can be heard, potentially leading to a more informed electorate. It remains to be seen if this diversification represents a temporary or more sustained shift in media reporting.

9.3 Ratings by Party

The data in Figure 3 shows that the Affirmative Repositioning (AR) movement shows a balanced media sentiment with relatively low negative coverage at 8%, a substantial 63% neutral coverage, and a significant 29% positive coverage, suggesting a generally favourable media portrayal.

In contrast, the Independent Patriots for Change (IPC) experiences a challenging media environment with a high 41% negative coverage, balanced by 37% neutral and a lower 22% positive coverage, indicating a more critical media stance towards IPC.

The Popular Democratic Movement (PDM) enjoys a predominantly positive media presence, with 1% negative coverage and a high 44% positive coverage, complemented by 55% neutral coverage. This suggests that its elective congress attracted mostly favourable media coverage. The Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP), on the other hand, faces a challenging media landscape with the highest negative coverage at 57%, although this is mitigated somewhat by a 43% neutral coverage.

Figure 3: Ratings by Party (%)

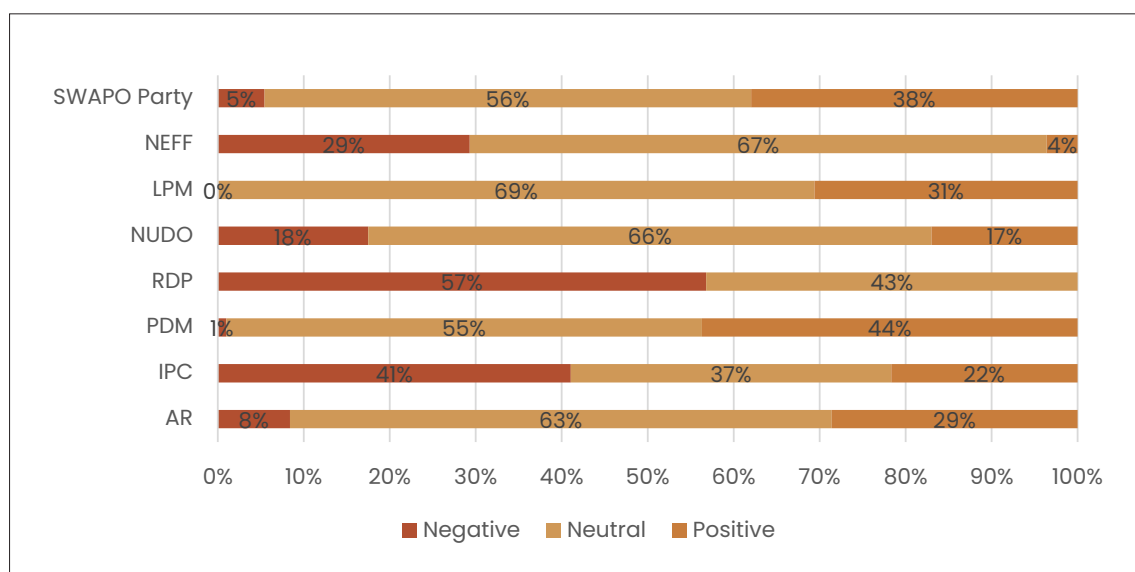


Figure 3 also shows that NUDO and the Landless People's Movement (LPM) show differing media sentiments with NUDO facing 18% negative and 17% positive coverage, while LPM experiences no negative coverage and a healthy 31% positive rating, possibly reflecting a supportive media environment. Despite a high 29% negative rating, the NEFF receives a very low 4% positive coverage, which suggests that its ongoing legal battles could adversely affect its public image.

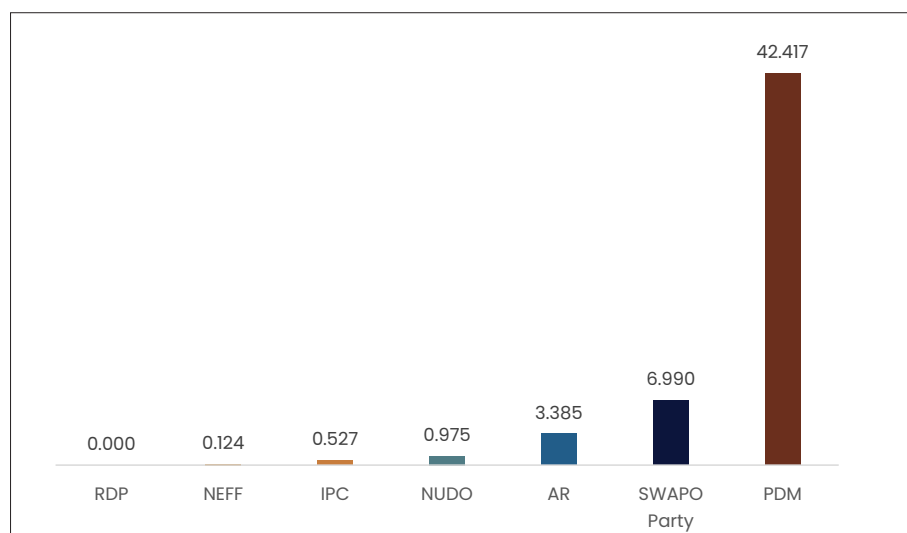
The traditionally dominant SWAPO Party sees mixed but overall positive media sentiment, with only 5% negative and a substantial 38% positive coverage. This suggests that the party continues to receive a favourable portrayal relative to some smaller other parties.

10 Sentiment Ratios

10.1 Positive- to-Negative Ratio (PNR)

As we proposed earlier, the Positive to Negative Ratio (PNR) is a crucial indicator of the overall sentiment of media coverage toward political parties. For instance, the PDM exhibits an exceptionally high PNR of 42.417, which indicates an overwhelmingly positive portrayal relative to the negative mentions. Such a favourable media representation can significantly enhance the party's public image, potentially influencing voter perceptions and election outcomes positively. A high PNR suggests that the media frequently highlights the party's achievements or viewpoints favourably, which could translate into higher voter trust and support.

Figure 4: Positive-to-Negative Ratio (PNR) by Party



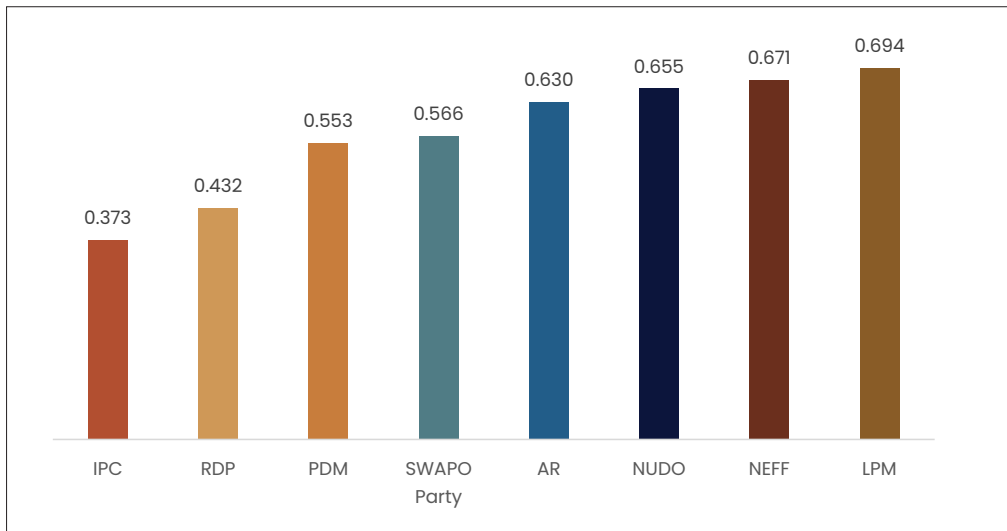
Conversely, Figure 4 also shows that parties like the Independent Patriots for Change (IPC), with a PNR of 0.527, and the Namibia Economic Freedom Fighters (NEFF), with a PNR of 0.124, face a substantially more negative media environment. This imbalance indicates that negative coverage substantially outweighs positive mentions, which may erode public trust and paint a challenging picture for these parties. For IPC and NEFF, the low PNR could hinder their ability to attract new supporters and may necessitate strategic communication efforts to counteract the prevalent negative narratives in the media.

The disparity in PNR among parties also underscores the strategic importance of media relations in political campaigns. Parties with low PNRs may need to invest more in public relations and media engagement to shift the narrative toward more balanced or positive coverage. In contrast, parties like the SWAPO Party, which enjoys a high PNR of 6.990, benefit from an already favourable media stance, allowing them to focus more on reinforcing their strengths and policy proposals rather than countering negative press.

10.2 Neutral-to-Total Ratio (NTR)

As was stated earlier, the Neutral to Total Ratio (NTR) measures the extent of unbiased, neutral reporting in media coverage of political parties. A high NTR, such as seen with the Landless People's Movement (LPM) at 0.694 and the Namibia Economic Freedom Fighters (NEFF) at 0.671, suggests that a significant portion of the coverage is impartial (Figure 5). This type of coverage is crucial for providing the electorate with factual and unbiased information, allowing voters to make informed decisions without the influence of media bias.

Figure 5: Neutral-to-Total Ratio (NTR) by Party



Neutral reporting, indicated by a high NTR, contributes to a healthy democratic process by ensuring that all political parties are given a fair platform to communicate their policies and viewpoints. For example, even though NEFF faces a low PNR, its relatively high NTR indicates that most of its coverage is balanced, which could help mitigate the impact of negative sentiments and provide a more comprehensive view of the party to the public.

In cases where the NTR is lower, as with the Independent Patriots for Change (IPC) at 0.373, it indicates that a larger proportion of media coverage is either positive or negative rather than neutral. This skew can lead to a polarised perception of the party, potentially influencing voter behaviour based on a less balanced portrayal of the party's activities and stances.

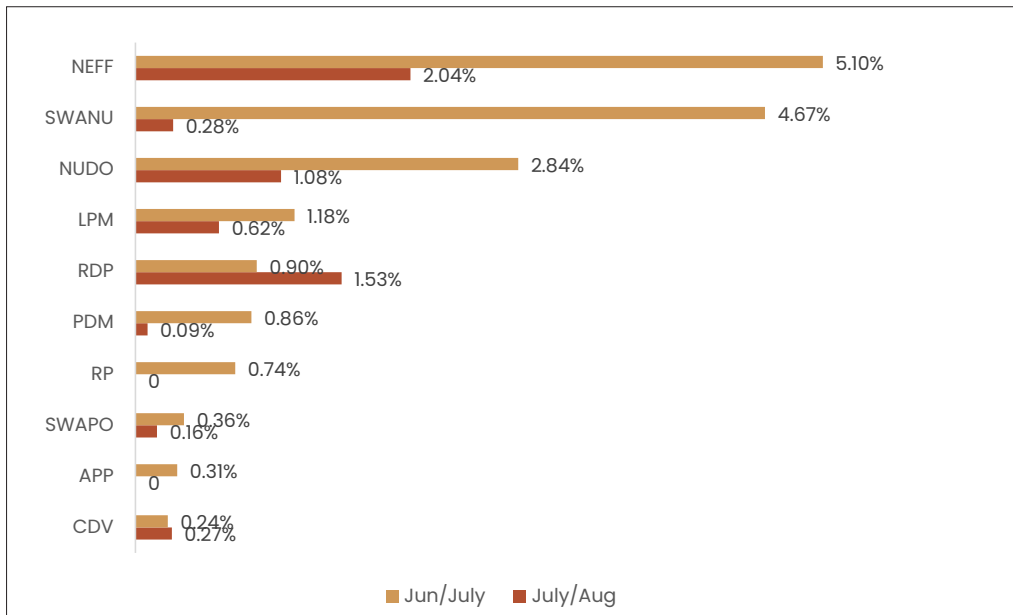
The analysis of NTR across different parties highlights the varying degrees of media impartiality and its potential effects on public perception and political engagement. High levels of neutral reporting ensure that the public discourse remains focused on substantive issues rather than being overshadowed by biased media portrayals. As political landscapes evolve, the role of neutral media coverage becomes increasingly important in fostering an environment where all voices are heard and accurately represented.

11 Statement-to-Size Ratio (SSR)

The analysis of media coverage across various political parties quantified through the statement-to-size ratios, offers a unique perspective on how media attention is distributed relative to the size of each party's voter base. This metric, calculated as the number of media statements per 100 votes received in the 2019 elections, helps illuminate the proportionality—or lack thereof—of media coverage that different parties receive.

Figure 6 shows that for the period of June/July and July/August, the data reveals significant disparities in media coverage among the parties. Notably, the Namibia Economic Freedom Fighters (NEFF) and the South West Africa National Union (SWANU) experienced the highest statement-to-size ratios in July/August, with NEFF receiving about 5.10 and SWANU 4.67 media statements per 100 votes. These figures suggest a disproportionate focus on these parties compared to their electoral base, indicating intense media and public interest or controversy surrounding their activities during this period.

Figure 6: Statement-to-Size Ratio (SSR) by Political Party



Conversely, Figure 6 also shows that larger parties such as the Popular Democratic Movement (PDM) and the ruling party, SWAPO, showed much lower ratios (0.86% and 0.36%, respectively, in July/August). Despite having a larger absolute number of media statements, when adjusted for their substantial voter base, the media coverage appears less intense relative to their size. This indicates a more normalised level of coverage that aligns more closely with their electoral significance.

The fluctuating interest in different parties can be attributed to various factors, including political developments, public events, or controversies. For instance, significant legal battles, party congresses, or policy announcements could temporarily spike media interest, influencing the statement-to-size ratios. The high ratios for parties like NEFF and SWANU could, therefore, reflect specific events that drew media attention disproportionately during these months. Understanding these ratios is crucial for political parties if they wish to navigate their public relations and media strategies. Parties with lower ratios may need to enhance their media engagement to ensure that their activities and perspectives are adequately covered and reach their voter base effectively. Conversely, parties experiencing high media attention must manage this spotlight adeptly to harness positive coverage and mitigate any negative impacts.

12 The Issue-Diversity-Index (IDI)

The Issue Diversity Index (IDI) is a statistical measure used to quantify the diversity of topics or issues covered in media representations of political parties or candidates. It evaluates the spread and concentration of media attention across different issues for each party, providing insights into whether the coverage is broadly distributed or focused on a few key areas.

As explained earlier in Sub-section 6.4 above, the IDI ranges from 0 to 1. A value closer to 1 indicates a higher diversity of issues covered, suggesting that media attention is spread across a wide range of topics. Conversely, a value closer to 0 indicates lower diversity, suggesting that coverage is concentrated on a few issues.

Figure 7: IDI by Party (July/August)

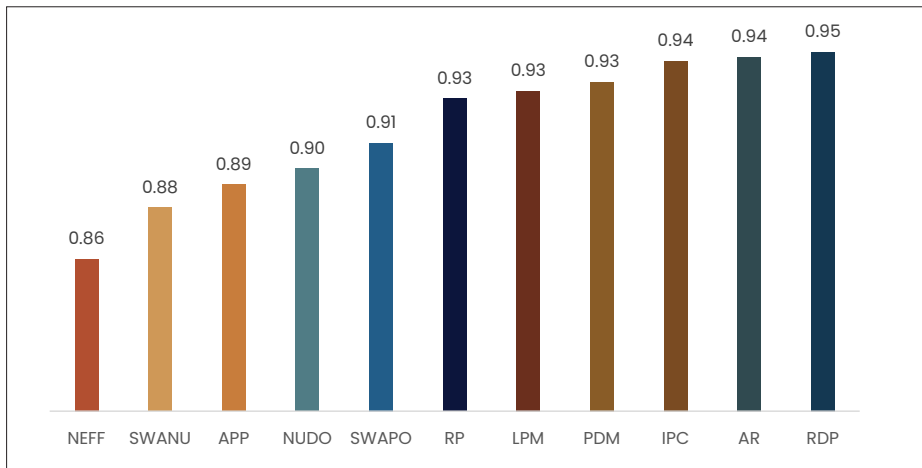


Figure 7 shows the IDI scores for these parties range from 0.86 for NEFF to 0.95 for RDP, indicating varying degrees of diversity in media coverage across a spectrum of political entities. SWAPO, with an IDI of 0.91, had a broad array of issues covered, including major topics like elections and leadership qualities, reflecting its central role in Namibian politics and ongoing governance challenges. This broad coverage suggests a comprehensive portrayal that can help maintain a strong public image and address diverse voter concerns, though it also necessitates careful message management to avoid dilution of key policy communications.

NEFF, scoring the lowest, shows a concentrated media focus on issues like de-registration and legal regulations, which might limit its appeal to broader concerns. The concentrated focus might require a strategy to mitigate the negative focus on the party's legal battle to remain registered. In that way, it risks oversimplifying the party's image and reducing its appeal to a broader electorate.

On the higher end, RDP's highest score of 0.95 indicates a diverse range of issue coverage, from party politics to social stability, suggesting a dynamic interaction with the media. This can be beneficial for portraying RDP as a well-rounded party capable of addressing a wide range of issues. However, it may challenge the party to maintain a focused narrative in voters' minds, seeing that the party has very low volumes of coverage.

LPM and IPC, both scoring 0.94, show significant diversity in their media coverage, addressing issues from campaigning to policy specifics like service delivery and legal reforms. This extensive coverage may enhance their public perception as active and responsive entities within the political landscape, capable of addressing both broad and specific public concerns. The IPC's message is diluted by the lack of substantive volumes of coverage.

Parties like SWANU and APP, with scores of 0.88 and 0.89 respectively, while still relatively diverse, suggest a slightly more focused media strategy, which could either indicate a targeted approach to engage specific voter segments or a need to diversify their issues to avoid being pigeonholed into particular themes. More than most parties, their messages are mitigated by their very low volume of coverage.

When considered together with the data in Figure 1, one has to recognise that issue diversity is most effective when combined with substantive volumes of coverage. When analysing the implications of these IDI scores, it's evident that while high diversity generally provides advantages in terms of broad public engagement and risk mitigation, it also comes with the challenge of maintaining clear and consistent messaging. Conversely, lower diversity scores might simplify messaging and enhance the clarity of party stances but at the cost of engaging a broader audience.

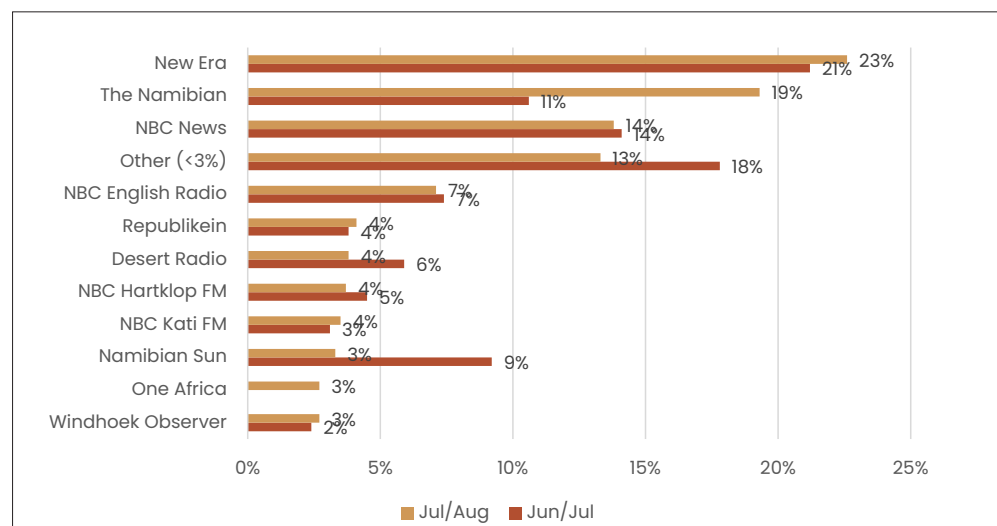
13 Top Three Individual Parties

13.1 SWAPO Party of Namibia

The data in Figure 8 indicates a varied response from media outlets regarding their focus on the SWAPO Party, with some showing increased coverage, others decreasing, and a few maintaining their level of coverage. For instance, New Era shows an increase from 21% to 23%, suggesting a slightly heightened focus on SWAPO. Similarly, The Namibian also saw a substantial increase from 11% to 19%, indicating a stronger editorial focus on the party, reflective of key campaign issues that demanded more in-depth coverage.

Conversely, the Namibian Sun saw a significant reduction in coverage from 9% to 3%. Such a decrease could imply a shift in editorial priorities or a lesser focus on SWAPO-related stories in favour of other news items or political entities for the period under review. The group categorised as 'Other (<3%)', encompassing smaller or less prominent media outlets, also saw a reduction in coverage from 18% to 13%, suggesting a collective decline in focus on SWAPO across these platforms.

Figure 8: Swapo Coverage by Media House

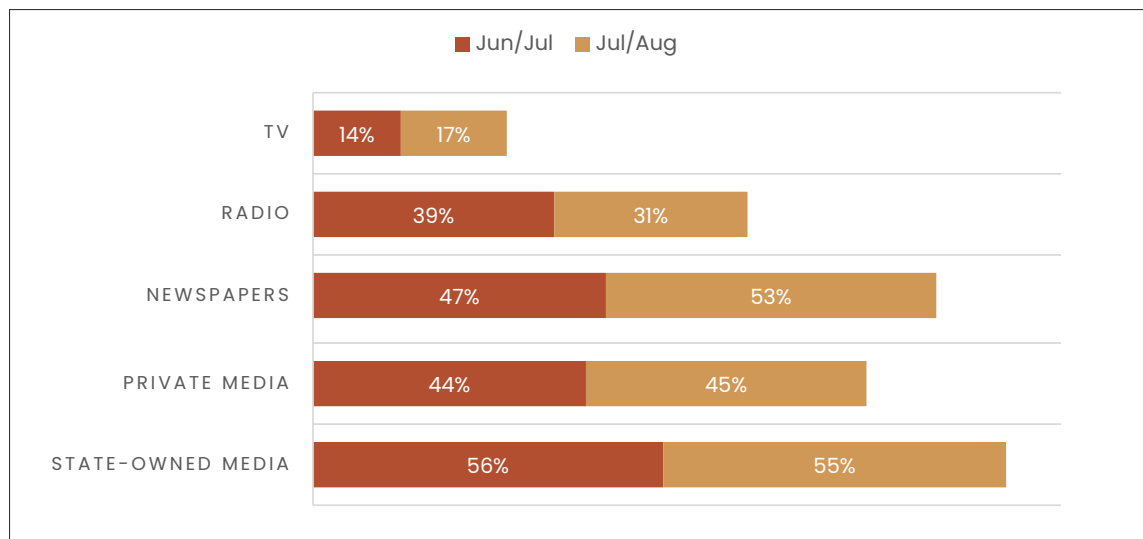


Some outlets like NBC English Radio and NBC News maintained consistent coverage at 7% and 14%, respectively. This consistency might indicate a stable editorial policy regarding national politics and SWAPO coverage, providing a regular flow of information about the party without significant fluctuations. This kind of stability can be crucial for maintaining audience trust and ensuring a balanced flow of information.

Figure 9 shows a slight decrease in the coverage of SWAPO by state-owned media, from 56% in June/July to 55% in July/August. This minor decline might suggest a subtle shift towards more balanced coverage or could reflect a reallocation of focus towards other newsworthy events during the period. Conversely, private media coverage of SWAPO slightly increased from 44% to 45%. This increase in private media might indicate a growing interest or responsiveness to SWAPO-related news, possibly driven by significant political developments warranting increased coverage from non-governmental channels.

A more pronounced shift is observed in the type of media platforms covering SWAPO. Newspapers increased their coverage from 47% to 53%, indicating a significant uptick in printed news focus on SWAPO. This increase could be due to more in-depth reporting on SWAPO, as newspapers often provide more detailed coverage than other media. It also reflects a strategic emphasis by newspapers to capitalise on political reporting during a politically charged period, possibly in the lead-up to elections.

Figure 9: SWAPO Coverage by Media Type



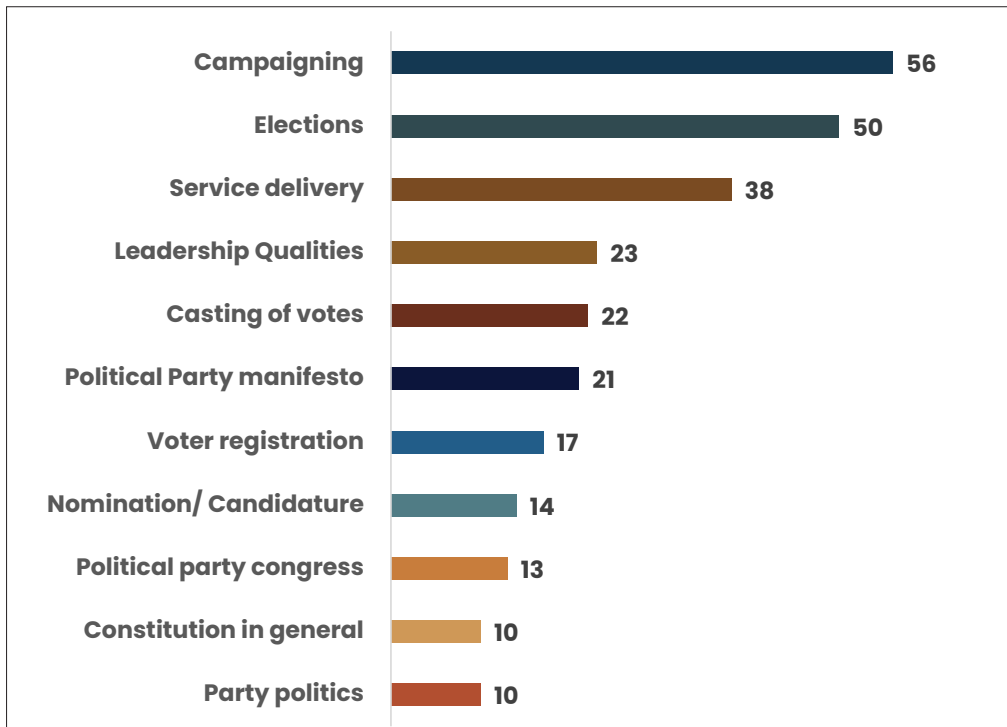
In contrast, radio coverage decreased from 39% to 31%. Radio's more immediate and transient nature might also mean that it fluctuates more with day-to-day changes in news priorities.

Lastly, TV coverage experienced a rise from 14% to 17%. This increase suggests that television stations are dedicating more airtime to SWAPO-related content, possibly due to the visual and dramatic appeal of political events that television can capture more effectively than other media. The visual nature of TV also means it is particularly well-suited to covering large-scale or visually impactful political events, which could have been more prevalent in the observed period.

Figure 10 shows that the most covered themes are 'Campaigning' and 'Elections,' with volumes of 56 and 50 statements respectively. This high level of coverage reflects the media's and public's heightened interest in SWAPO's electoral strategies and activities, suggesting that these areas could be critical in shaping public opinion and voter behaviour. The focus on 'Campaigning' covers a range of activities from rallies to public engagements, which are pivotal in mobilising support and conveying the party's messages to the electorate. Similarly, the coverage of 'Elections' indicates a broad interest in the overall electoral process, which is central to the democratic process.

Other significantly covered themes include 'Service delivery' and 'Leadership Qualities,' with volumes of 38 and 23 statements, respectively. The substantial coverage of 'Service delivery' suggests that the media is keenly observing and reporting on SWAPO's performance in fulfilling its governmental functions and promises, which is a critical assessment criterion for the electorate. This theme's prominence in media coverage could influence voter satisfaction and expectations from the party. Meanwhile, the focus on 'Leadership Qualities' highlights the importance of party leaders' personal characteristics and capabilities, reflecting the media's role in shaping crucial leadership perceptions during election periods.

Figure 10: SWAPO Party Most Important Issues Covered (Statements)

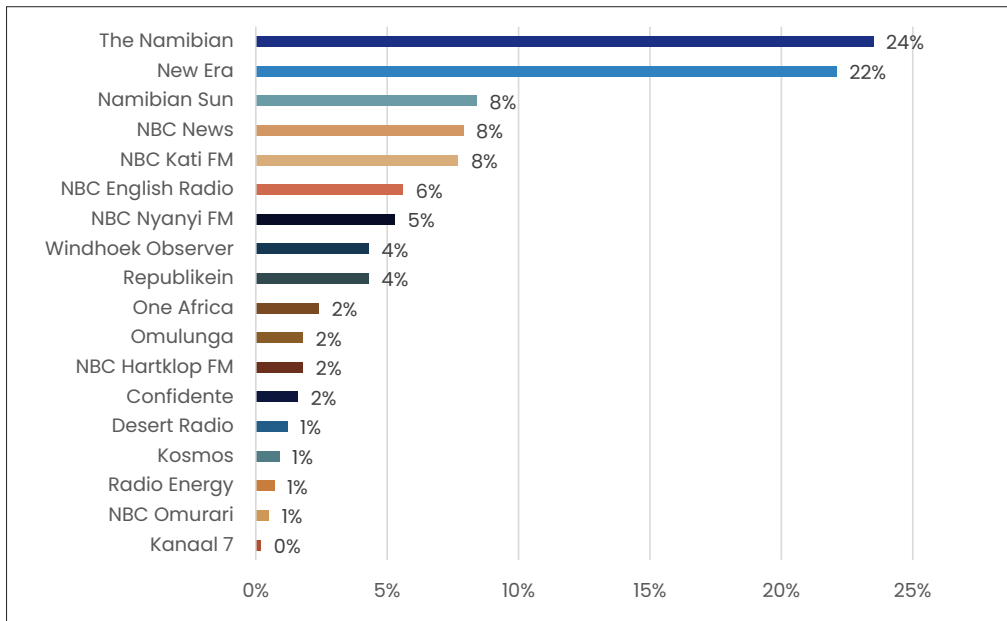


13.2 Popular Democratic Movement (PDM)

The analysis of the media coverage for the Popular Democratic Movement (PDM) across various outlets reveals a substantial influence of specific political events on media attention, particularly the party's elective congress held on 23/24 August in Katima Mulilo. This event, where new leaders and candidates were elected, has significantly shaped the distribution and intensity of the coverage.

The PDM's elective congress was a pivotal factor contributing to the heightened media coverage observed in the data (Figure 11). Notably, The Namibian and New Era lead with the highest coverage at 24% and 22%, respectively, underscoring their role in delivering comprehensive coverage of major political events. This concentrated coverage in top national newspapers is likely due to their focus on detailed reporting of significant political developments, including leadership changes and strategic directions emerging from the congress. Such events are crucial not only for the party's internal dynamics but also for shaping public expectations and perceptions of the party's future trajectory.

Figure 11: PDM Coverage by Media House

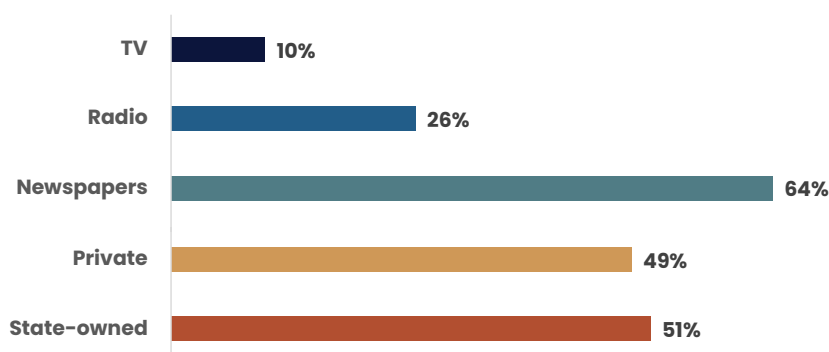


The moderate levels of coverage seen in outlets like NBC News, Namibian Sun, and NBC Kati FM, ranging from 6% to 8%, likely reflect regular updates and specific highlights from the congress, catering to a broader audience. This pattern indicates that while the elective congress was a major event for the PDM, its impact on media coverage varied across different platforms, possibly influenced by each outlet's editorial focus or audience interest.

In contrast, the minimal to no coverage by several other outlets, including Kanaal 7 and NBC Omurari, suggests geographical or demographic discrepancies in media focus. These outlets might cater to audiences less directly impacted by or interested in party-political affairs, such as PDM's internal dynamics, or they may have prioritised other local or national non-political issues during this period.

Figure 12 shows that the coverage of PDM is almost evenly split between state-owned and private media, with 51% and 49%, respectively. This balanced distribution indicates a broad interest in PDM's activities and political stance across different ownership structures. State-owned media's slight majority in coverage could be reflective of its mandate to cover national political developments comprehensively. Conversely, the substantial coverage by private media suggests that PDM's activities resonate well with these outlets' editorial policies and audience interests, possibly due to the party's status as the official opposition.

Figure 12: PDM Coverage by Type of Media



A more detailed look into the media types in Figure 12 reveals that newspapers are the primary medium for PDM coverage, accounting for 64% of all mentions. This dominance underscores the role of print media as a critical platform for detailed political analysis and extensive coverage of political events, likely due to the space available in newspapers for in-depth stories and the traditional preference for print in political reporting.

Radio follows with 26% of the coverage, highlighting its role as an accessible medium for reaching broader audiences, especially in areas where television coverage might be less prevalent or where individuals prefer audio content. The immediacy and local reach of radio make it a vital platform for political parties to communicate effectively with the electorate.

Television accounts for the smallest share at 10%, which may reflect the higher costs associated with TV coverage or a strategic focus by television media on a broader array of topics, limiting the depth of coverage for specific political entities like PDM. Despite its lower percentage, the impact of TV coverage should be considered, given its ability to reach broad audiences and provide a visual context to the political discourse, even if mostly in urban areas.

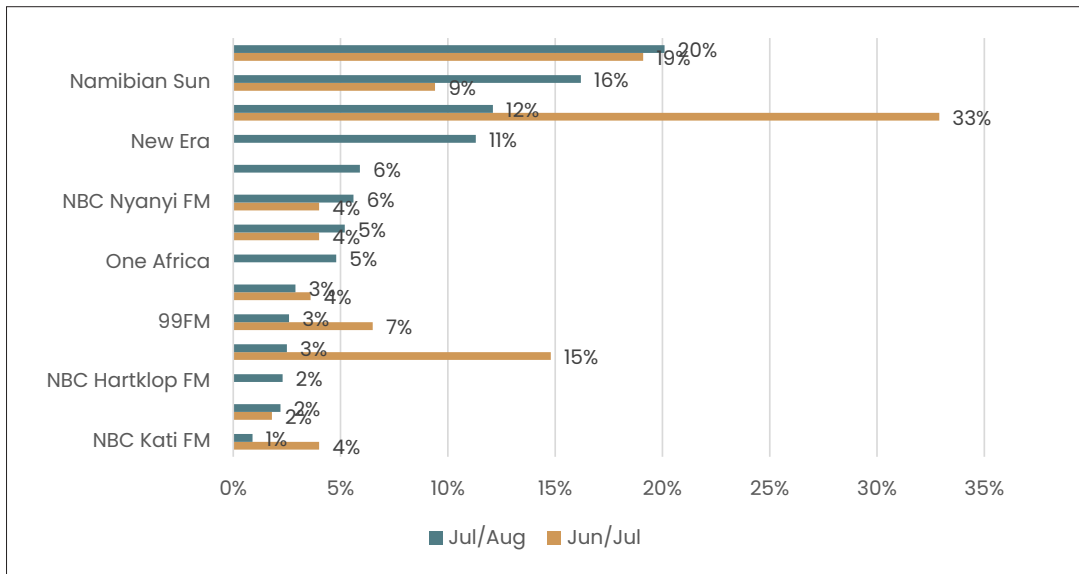
Given the significant impact of the elective congress on media coverage, there is a strategic opportunity for the PDM to leverage this heightened visibility to reinforce its public messaging and policy communication. The focus on new leadership and candidates presents a fresh narrative for the party to promote, aiming to enhance its appeal and clarify its future direction to the electorate. Additionally, understanding the variances in coverage can help PDM tailor its engagement strategies to maximise reach and impact across different media platforms and regions, ensuring a comprehensive communication approach that aligns with its renewed leadership structure and electoral ambitions.

13.3 Namibia Economic Freedom Fighters (NEFF)

The media coverage of the Namibia Economic Freedom Fighters (NEFF) presents an interesting case study of how critical events, such as legal challenges concerning party registration, can influence media interest and coverage dynamics. The data in Figure 13 captures the fluctuating media attention as NEFF continues to navigate its legal issues with the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN).

The 'Republikein' and 'The Namibian' newspapers emerge as the most significant contributors to the coverage of NEFF, with 'Republikein' showing a sharp decrease in attention from 33% in June/July to 12% in July/August, and 'The Namibian' slightly increasing its coverage from 19% to 20%. This substantial coverage likely reflects these outlets' focus on political and legal affairs, providing extensive analysis and updates on NEFF's situation. The decrease in coverage by 'Republikein' could indicate a resolution or de-escalation of NEFF's legal issues, or perhaps a shift in the news cycle to other emerging stories.

Figure 13: NEFF Coverage by Media House (%)

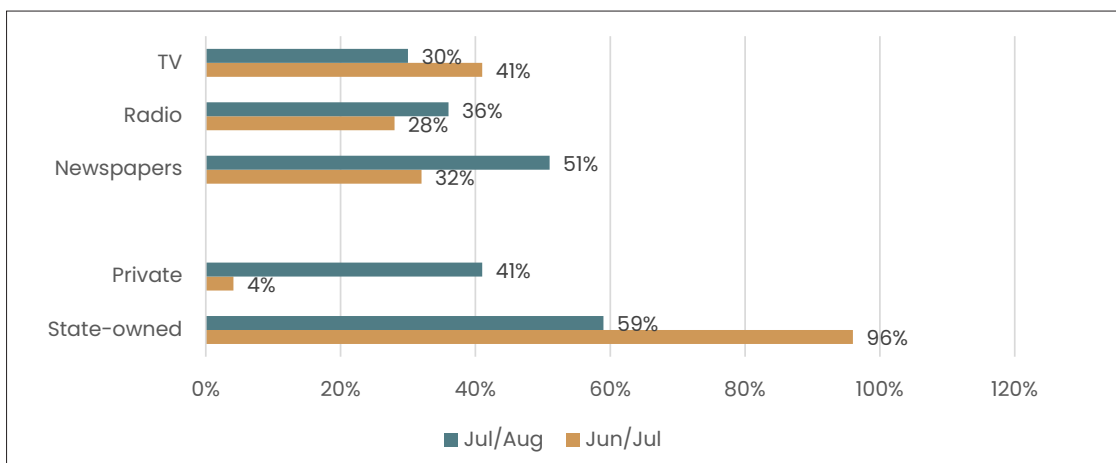


Several media outlets that did not report on NEFF in the earlier month began coverage in July/August, notably 'NBC News', 'One Africa', 'NBC English Radio', 'Informante', and 'New Era', with 'New Era' starting coverage at a significant 11%. This surge could be attributed to escalating developments in NEFF's legal saga, which might have reached critical junctures, prompting broader media attention. Such an uptick is crucial for NEFF, as it increases the party's visibility and provides the public with diverse perspectives on its legal battle and implications for its political future.

Conversely, outlets like 'NBC Kati FM', 'Omulunga', and '99FM' showed notable reductions in their coverage, with 'Omulunga' dropping from 15% to 3% and '99FM' from 7% to 3%. This reduction could reflect a strategic realignment of these outlets towards other stories. Consistent coverage by 'Kosmos' and increased coverage by 'NBC Nyanyani FM' indicate sustained interest, possibly due to the outlets' audience demographics or editorial focus aligning with the unfolding legal narrative.

Figure 14 shows that the distribution of media coverage for the Namibia Economic Freedom Fighters (NEFF) across various platforms presents a telling shift in media dynamics from June/July to July/August. The data in Figure 15 provides insights into how different media types have adjusted their coverage of NEFF, reflecting changes in media strategy or public interest due to the party's successful legal appeal that the ECN did not follow the correct procedure when it deregistered the party in July.

Figure 14: NEFF Coverage by Media Type (%)



One of the most striking changes is the significant shift in coverage from state-owned to private media. In June/July, state-owned media dominated NEFF coverage with 96%, which dramatically decreased to 59% in July/August. Concurrently, coverage by private media increased from a mere 4% to 41%. This shift may indicate a growing interest or willingness on the part of private media to engage more extensively with NEFF's activities or viewpoints, perhaps due to emerging newsworthy events involving NEFF that attracted broader public interest. Additionally, this could reflect a change in the editorial policies of private media or a strategic decision by NEFF to engage more with private outlets to broaden their outreach and diversify their media presence.

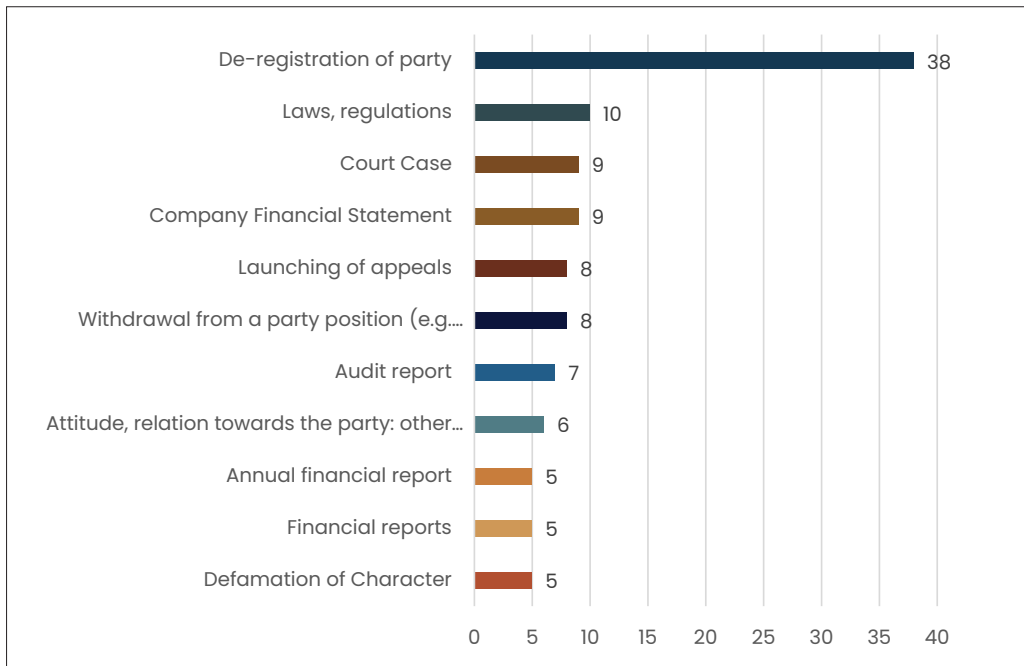
The data in Figure 14 also shows notable variability in the coverage across different media platforms. Newspaper coverage of NEFF increased from 32% to 51%, indicating a heightened focus on providing in-depth analysis, reports, and features on NEFF. This increase could be attributed to NEFF's involvement in the controversial court case that demanded detailed coverage. Radio coverage also increased from 28% to 36%, suggesting that NEFF's issues are being discussed more frequently in on-air programming.

Conversely, TV coverage decreased from 41% to 30%. This reduction could be due to a variety of factors, including the ephemeral nature of TV news cycles, or a strategic shift in TV media to allocate more time to other pressing news items or political entities.

These trends in Figure 14 highlight the dynamic nature of media engagement with political parties like NEFF and underscore the importance of a versatile media strategy that adapts to changing media landscapes and audience interests. For NEFF, understanding these shifts is crucial for effectively managing their public image and ensuring that their key messages reach diverse segments of the population. The decrease in state-owned media coverage and the increase in private and newspaper coverage might also suggest a need for NEFF to cultivate stronger relationships with private media entities and leverage the growing interest to enhance their visibility and impact in public discourse.

Figure 15 highlights various themes that all relate to the NEFF legal problems. The most prominently covered topic is the "De-registration of party," which received 38 mentions, making it the most significant issue in the media. This poses a fundamental threat to the party's existence and its political activities. Such coverage not only reflects the severity and immediacy of the legal challenges faced by NEFF but also highlights the media's role in scrutinising and disseminating critical information regarding political and legal proceedings that have wide-reaching implications for the party and its supporters.

Figure 15: NEFF Issue Coverage (Statements)



Other related issues receiving considerable media attention include “Court Case” and “Laws, regulations” with 9 and 10 mentions, respectively. These topics are closely related to the legal struggles of the party, emphasising the regulatory and judicial framework within which the party operates. Coverage of financial themes such as “Financial reports,” “Annual financial report,” “Audit report,” and “Company Financial Statement”, with 26 statements in total points to financial governance within NEFF as the reason for the legal actions taken against the party.

The focus on these issues is indicative of the challenges NEFF faces in maintaining its legal and financial compliance, which are crucial for its continued operation as a registered political party and for its reputation as a party that is prudent with public funds. The high volume of coverage around the “De-registration of party” issue, in particular, highlights the potential impact of this legal challenge on NEFF’s political landscape presence. This ongoing situation necessitates a robust media and public relations strategy from NEFF to manage public perception and to communicate effectively about its efforts to navigate these challenges.

14 Political Parties Online

14.1 Mentions and Unique Authors

Figure 16 below presents the results of online monitoring of political parties, comparing the volume of mentions and unique authors between three sequential periods: 20 May to 20 June, 20 June to 20 July, and 20 July to 20 August.

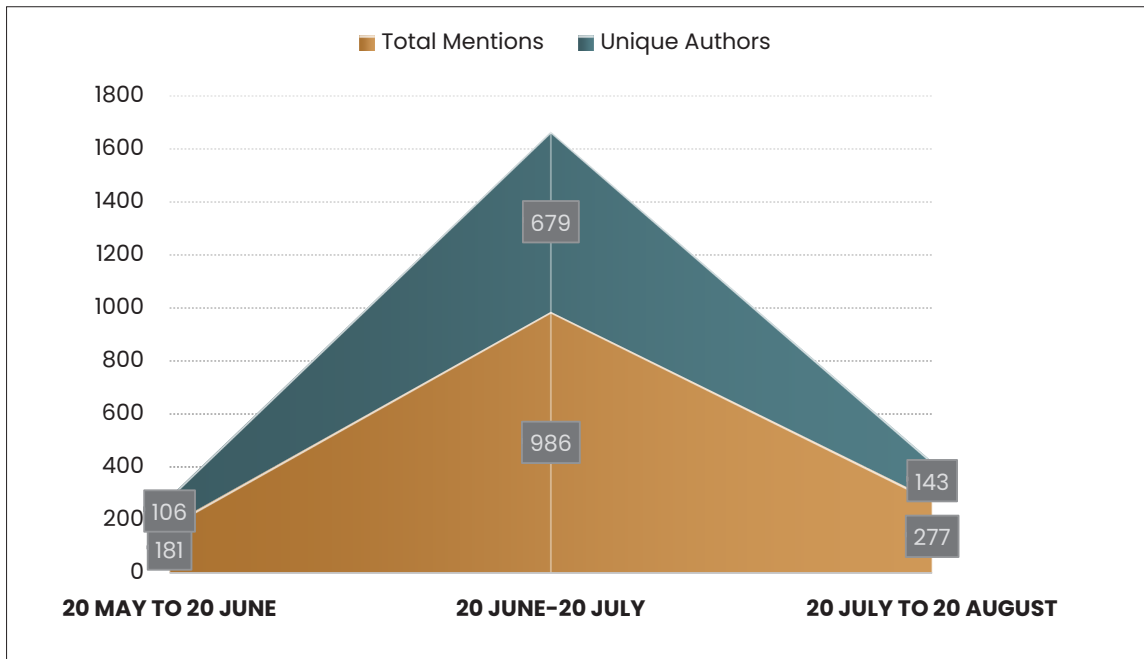
The online coverage of political parties over three distinct periods offers a telling glimpse into the fluctuations of public and media interest. This dynamic showcases how specific events or issues within the political sphere capture attention, driving discourse and engagement across digital platforms.

From May 20 to June 20, the online engagement concerning political parties was moderately robust, with 181 total mentions and 106 unique authors contributing to the discourse. For this study, this level of activity acts as a baseline level of online interest in elections and political parties. It indicates a steady interest in political developments, supported by a diverse group of commentators. Such engagement might reflect ongoing discussions and analyses as parties gear up for upcoming electoral contests, setting the stage for more focused and intensive scrutiny as the elections approach.

The period from June 20 to July 20 witnessed a dramatic spike in both mentions and unique authors, with mentions soaring to 986 and authors increasing to 679. This surge indicates a significant event (such as the deregistration of the NEFF) or a series of events (including the registration of AR as a political party) that catalysed public interest and media attention. As the elections draw near, one can expect more such trigger events, as parties will hold elective congresses to compile their party lists, launch their manifestoes, or other election-related developments that are typically observed as elections draw near. The sharp increase in unique authors points to a broadening of the conversational base, involving a wider array of voices from different perspectives, reflecting a vibrant, engaged public keenly interested in the unfolding political narrative.

Following the peak of activity, the period from July 20 to August 20 saw a reduction in mentions to 277 and unique authors to 143. Although this represents a decline from the previous month's high, the engagement levels remained above the initial observations, suggesting sustained interest in political parties and their election strategies. This continued, albeit reduced, engagement likely indicates that while the intensity of specific events might have waned, ongoing discussions and evaluations of party platforms, candidate performances, and potential electoral outcomes continued to stimulate interest and debate among the electorate.

Figure 16: Political Parties - Total Mentions and Unique Authors



14.2 Hashtags (#)

The data in Figure 17 provides insights into the top hashtags associated with political parties, highlighting their usage, reposts, and the total number of impressions generated.

The hashtags #nbcdigitalnews, #nbcdstv282, #nbcgotv20, and #nbcnews are predominantly used, each appearing in two posts with identical repost counts and exceptionally high impression numbers (269,256 impressions each). This pattern indicates a concentrated effort by the NBC to amplify its content across its digital and television platforms. The use of multiple platform-specific hashtags suggests a strategy to segment content or differentiate coverage across various service offerings like digital streams, satellite (DStv channel 282), and possibly terrestrial (GOtv channel 20) broadcasts.

The substantial number of impressions associated with these NBC-related hashtags suggests that the content tagged was regarded as of significant interest and was promoted effectively to reach a broad audience. High impressions indicate successful content dissemination, likely driven by either the inherent appeal of the content, strategic promotions, or both. For media coverage, particularly in a political context, leveraging such high-visibility tags can enhance the reach and impact of critical news items or political analyses.

Figure 17: Hashtags Used

Top Hashtags	Posts	Reposts	All Posts	Impressions
#nbcdigitalnews	1	1	2	269,256
#nbcdstv282	1	1	2	269,256
#nbcgotv20	1	1	2	269,256
#nbcnews	1	1	2	269,256
#engagement	1	0	1	3,961

15 Appendix 1: Media Sources Coded and Analysed

Figure 18: Media Sources

RADIO	TV	ONLINE	PRINT
NBC English	NBC News	Namibia Economist Online	<i>Allgemeine Zeitung</i>
NBC Oshiwambo	Good Morning Namibia	Erongo Online	Market Watch
NBC Funkhaus	Talk of the Nation	Windhoek Express Online	<i>The Namibian</i>
NBC Damara	Business Today	Informanté Online	<i>New Era</i>
NBC Ngwany FM	One Africa	My Zone online	<i>Republikein</i>
NBC Hartklop FM		OMUTUMWA Online	Sport Wrap
NBC Otjiherero		Business Express Online	The Zone
Eagle FM		Windhoek Observer Online	<i>Namibian Sun</i>
Radio Wave		The Brief Online	Business 7
Omulunga		Namibia Daily News Online	<i>Confidante</i>
Fresh FM		UnWrap Online	Careers, Erongo
Touch FM			<i>Namib Times</i>
Radio Energy			Ewi Iyaanooli
Kosmos			The Focus
Kanaal 7			My Zone
Informanté Radio			Agriforum

Figure 29: Online media monitored through Brandwatch

Social Media Platform
4_chan
Blogs
Broadcast
Facebook
Facebook Public
Forums
Instagram
Legacy Instagram
LinkedIn
Online News
Print
QQ
Reddit
Review
Tumblr
VK
X
YouTube

16 Appendix 2: Registered Political Parties

Figure 20: Registered Political Parties 2024

Party	Abbreviation	Votes % 2019	Seats 2019
Action Democratic Movement Party	ADM	New	0
Affirmative Repositioning	AR	New	0
All People's Party	APP	1.79%	2
Body of Christ Party	BCP	New	0
Congress of Democrats	CoD	0.57%	0
Independent Patriots For Change	IPC	New	0
Landless People's Movement	LPM	4.75%	4
Monitor Action Group	MAG	-	-
National Democratic Party of Namibia	NDP	0.56%	0
National Empowerment Fighting Corruption	NEFC	-	-
National Patriotic Front of Namibia	NPF	0.22%	0
National Unity Democratic Organisation of Namibia	NUDO	0.51%	0
Popular Democratic Movement	PDM	16.65%	16
Rally For Democracy and Progress	RDP	1.09%	1
Republican Party of Namibia	RP	0.56%	2
Swanu of Namibia	SWANU	0.65%	1
SWAPO Party of Namibia	SWAPO	65.45%	63
United Democratic Front of Namibia	UDF	1.79%	2
United People's Movement	UPM	-	-
Workers Revolutionary Party	WRP	0.39%	0

